

Foundation LETTER

LOCAL CHILDREN RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THEIR OWN IMAGINATIONS

Linda Allen can't go any rainy day — or any day — without a book.

Shakespeare, Janet Evanovich or “The New York Times,” it barely matters what she opens. Books have long been her entertainment, knowledge source and most importantly a lifeline to higher learning.

It's no wonder then that she and her husband Ray — who has a lifetime connection with local education — are behind the implementation of Imagination Library in our region. The program provides free books each month via the mail to children ages birth to 5. Education is a priority area for The Foundation and Imagination Library fosters a love of reading that can enhance learning and literacy.



Darby O'Brien reads a book to a local family during the launch event for Imagination Library at the North Utica Community Center.

Imagination Library illustrates how The Foundation is investing in programs that will help our community to reach our 25/25 goal of having 25 percent of adults in Oneida and Herkimer counties obtain bachelor's degrees by 2025.

The Community Foundation invested \$31,340 for the program's startup while \$3,000 was directed from the donor-advised M&T Bank/Partners Trust Bank Charitable Fund. The Fund will invest

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

FOUNDATION DIGS DEEPER, MAKES BIG IMPACT

The Community Foundation is growing, moving and transforming faster than it ever has in its more than 60-year history.

Over the past several months, that growth has surged. Our leadership goals have allowed us to be even more impactful with the investments we make in our community, and thanks to you, we are growing The Foundation, which allows us to make the investments to transform our two-county area.

Through smart investing and catalytic grantmaking, we are committed like never before to go deeper in our community and lead them to transformation.

In May, we proposed the 25/25 goal. We promised, with the community's support, that we would commit to helping our community to increase the number of bachelor's degrees in Herkimer and Oneida counties by 25 percent by 2025.

With humble appreciation, we also accepted two prestigious community awards — The Herkimer County Chamber of Commerce named The Foundation as the 2013 Appreciate Herkimer County Award for Community Development. And, The Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency presented The Foundation with the 2013 Community Builder Award.

Each award speaks to The Foundation's leadership work and commitment to making investments in the community that will show long-term impact in our four priority areas of economic development, education, arts and culture and health.

The awards have special significance in our continued journey in leadership, but the real reward of our work is seeing the community recognize the importance of investing time, talent and resources into these priority areas.

With the year behind us we can only say thank you. To you. To our community. To the nonprofits we serve. Your time, contributions and service are truly making a difference at The Community Foundation and in our two counties. Thank you.

— With warm regards,
Peggy O'Shea
President & CEO



IMAGINATION LIBRARY

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up to \$15,000 in the program over the next five years.

“If it hadn't been for The Foundation, we never would have been able to get off the ground,” said Linda and Ray, local Rotarians and Foundation donors, who orchestrated the local launch of Imagination Library this summer.

Founded by country singer Dolly Parton in 1996, Imagination Library is widely regarded in the regions it serves. Studies show substantial benefits linked to participants in the program. Children who are read to in their early years do better in school and those involved in Imagination Library show a 15 percent increase in test scores compared to children who had not been read to before kindergarten. Regions' Rotaries oversee the programs and provide some funding.

Currently, the local Imagination Library serves zip codes 13502 north of the Barge Canal, 13354, 13304, 13438, 13324, 13416, 13406 or 13431. At this time, the program expects to support 800 children for five years.

For information about programs that help us meet our 25/25 goal, please contact Vice President for Programs & Community Initiatives Barbara Henderson at 735-8212 or bhenderson@foundationhoc.org.

“ We thought something like this in our area can make a difference in the lives of our children and future of our region. ”

— LINDA ALLEN

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEST CREATES BUZZ



You may have noticed a lot more virtual buzz out there from The Community Foundation. Much of that is due to an emphasis on raising our awareness among social media audiences. A recent Facebook contest showed the good work of some of our nonprofits and gave the community a say in who should receive a \$500 “grant.” The contest, led by our Marketing and Communications Officer Cassandra Baber, was a huge success. Not only did we double our presence on Facebook, but our “friends” got a chance to see the good work happening in our community. Here’s how it went:

- Nonprofits who received grants from The Foundation in 2012 were invited to write a short paragraph sharing with the community how they would use the \$500 if chosen. A small committee of community members chose the top four organizations they believed would best use the \$500 grant.
- Those four chosen organizations’ logos were posted to Facebook with their short paragraph and community members had a three-week period to vote for the nonprofit they thought most deserved the \$500 based on the submitted paragraph.

The contenders were:

John Bosco House, Herkimer Area Resource Center (for their autism movement therapy program), Abraham House and Young Scholars.

And the winner is:

Young Scholars, a program that provides college readiness tools and skill for students at risk of dropping out of high school, received the most votes. With the \$500, Young Scholars will give 16 students the opportunity to attend two intensive writing camps.



Students who participate in The Young Scholars program receive tutoring and guidance during the school day at Thomas R. Proctor High School in Utica.

Foundation Announces Historic Education Goal For Community

At this year’s annual event on May 22, we made an exciting announcement that has the potential to significantly change our community. Over the past three years, The Community Foundation has been expanding its role by actively investing in programs that have substantial impact. We are identifying our most critical needs and created our first goal for the community — 25/25.

25/25 challenges the community to increase the percentage of adults in Herkimer and Oneida counties who have bachelor’s degrees to 25 percent by 2025. Raising these education levels will improve our economy, strengthen families and enhance overall community health.

Through partnership and collaboration, we are building a conveyor belt of services to support success for residents from birth through college and beyond. Aug. 13 marked the first convening for community members to come together to develop ideas and strategies that will help us reach this goal.

If you would like more information about 25/25, please email Vice President for Programs & Community Initiatives Barbara Henderson at 735-8212 or bhenderson@foundationhoc.org.

Remember that all year-end donations **must be postmarked** on or before Dec. 31 to be considered charitable gifts in 2013. Thank you for your continued support of our great community.

FOUNDATION WELCOMES DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

To add to our busy spring, we were fortunate to welcome Kristi Brennan into a newly created position of Director of Development.



Brennan joins the staff with nearly a decade of experience with local nonprofit organizations. Her expertise in fundraising and partnership building is the perfect complement to our fast-growing team.

Before joining The Foundation's team, Brennan was the Director of Development at the YWCA Mohawk Valley. She also was part of the development team at Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson and led development and communications at Girl Scouts-Foothills Council, Inc. as well as marketing and membership for The Fort Schuyler Club.

Brennan has a bachelor's degree in English from Hartwick College. She has served on various boards and as a volunteer for local projects and groups.

Reach Kristi at kbrennan@foundationhoc.org.

CGA PROGRAM DRAWS INTEREST, SUPPORT

The Community Foundation is pleased to announce its newest partnership — the Charitable Gift Annuity Nonprofit Partnership Program. This program gives nonprofits the opportunity to offer charitable gift annuities to their donors who are interested in an option for long-term gift planning.

Through this partnership, philanthropically-minded donors can now support the nonprofit of their choice in perpetuity. We're pleased to welcome our first partners in this program: Mohawk Valley Community College, Hospice & Palliative Care and Presbyterian Homes Services. For information, contact Kristi Brennan at Kbrennan@foundationhoc.org or by calling 735-8212.

2013



CORPORATE PARTNERS PROGRAM

The Corporate Partners of The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc. are area companies that have joined forces with The Foundation to:

- Address broad-based community issues
- Expand and inspire philanthropy
- Build the capacity of nonprofits to excel

We gratefully acknowledge:

Adjusters International
Adirondack Bank
Bank of America
Bank of Utica
Bernie Bus Service, Inc.
Carbone Auto Group
Cathedral Corporation
Charles A. Gaetano Construction Corp.
Clifford Fuel
Excellus BlueCross BlueShield
Fastrac Markets
Jay-K Lumber
M. Griffith Investment Services
NBT Bank
The Observer-Dispatch
Oneida Savings Bank
Pacemaker Steel & Piping Company
Staffworks, Inc.
Strategic Financial Services



Richard Florida speaks as part of The Community Foundation's third annual Corporate Partners-sponsored Speaker Series Sept. 12 at The Stanley Theater.

RICHARD FLORIDA MESSAGE EMPOWERS

Nearly 2,000 people packed the Stanley Theater for The Foundation's third annual Corporate Partners-sponsored Speaker Series. World-renowned urban theorist Richard Florida arrived to a community buzzing with excitement. His message of empowerment ignited the crowd. He described Herkimer and Oneida counties as having the ingredients for a healthy, thriving community. Three of those ingredients — talent, technology, tolerance — coined the three Ts are staples in the community already, he said.

From a new nano-tech center at SUNYIT to innovative entrepreneurs and a creative workforce wrapped around a welcoming community, Oneida and Herkimer counties have the ingredients, he said. And with our prime location in the mega-region spanning from Toronto to Buffalo, the Mohawk Valley can be what it envisions by investing its time, resources and money into its creative workforce and three T's, Richard Florida said.

"The best days are ahead of you," he ended to explosive applause.

We expect great things to transpire from this conversation and look forward to the results of this gift to the community from our generous Corporate Partners. See page four for a listing of our 2013 Corporate Partners.



First Million-Dollar Gift to Foundation Will Forever Address the Plight of Animals

It's not every day a dog visits The Community Foundation, so when shelter dog Madison walked into our door in May, it was a surprise.

But, the pit bull mix carried something on a vest she wore that would shock us.

"Peggy and CF Team, thanks for helping me and all my furry friends!" a note pinned to Madison read. "Lick, lick, lick, Madison."

An envelope came with the note. The envelope held a check written out to The Community Foundation for \$1 million.

The donor — Anita Vitullo — beamed as she discussed the impact her million dollar donation would have on the plight of abandoned, abused and neglected animals in Oneida and Herkimer counties for years and years to come.



Anita marks the very first living donor to make an individual \$1 million-dollar donation to The Community Foundation through a Charitable Gift Annuity.

Now, she can watch her gift impact the area of her community she is most passionate about. And because of The Foundation's smart investing strategies, Anita's wishes and passion for her community will be felt forever.

Thank you, Anita. We — and the Madisons of our community — are forever grateful. And, yes, Madison has found a home!

To make a gift to The Foundation and see your passions grow, contact Director of Development Kristi Brennan at kbrennan@foundationhoc.org or by calling 735-8212.



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NEWEST FUNDS

ALEXANDRA G. KOGUT MEMORIAL FUND

Mark and Becky Kogut will memorialize their beloved daughter Alexandra through the creation of a donor-advised fund from gifts received in her memory. The beautiful way Alex led her life has been an inspiration to many people. The tremendous outpouring of support by the community has embodied the essence of Alex's genuine and compassionate spirit. Grants will be made in her name to reflect her kindness and passions. Through the fund, Alex's endearing spirit will live on forever.

JILLIAN VELARDI MEMORIAL FUND

A donor-advised fund created in memory of Jillian Velardi by friends, family and loved ones through her father Gene Velardi — advisor to the fund. Jillian, 19, passed away in January in a car accident. Her memorial fund will be used for general charitable purposes, beginning with a cosmetology scholarship and someday a scholarship for math and engineering, her career goal. Grants will reflect her zest for life including her love of art, photography, dance, children and her sense of adventure.

W. B. ROMELING MEMORIAL FUND

Before artist and Van Hornesville teacher W. B. "Bus" Romeling died in 1993, he set up a trust to be used to support painters and sculptors. Trustees of his

trust converted the remaining assets to a field-of-interest fund for perpetual stewardship by The Foundation, preserving Romeling's original wishes. Grants will be made in his name to enrich the work of Upstate artists and students who love and live art as he did.

AARON F. & FAITH B. NORTON FUND

The Nortons called Old Forge home and devoted their lives to careers in education and nursing. An unrestricted fund created by Faith Norton through a planned gift, will allow that passion to live forever in the form of grants where the need is the greatest, especially in and around the Old Forge area.

SAGRESTANO FAMILY FUND

A donor-advised fund established by Brian and Christine Sagrestano who will serve as co-advisors in making grant recommendations for the fund. The donors expect to grow the fund and pursue hands-on grantmaking as a family. When the advisement ends, their fund will be distributed to the endowments of pre-selected charities Brian Sagrestano has formed relationships with during his career in nonprofit consulting and development.

Contributions to our funds always are welcomed. Interested in creating a fund? Contact Elayne Johnson, director of fund administration, at ejohnson@foundationhoc.org or 735-8212.