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For immediate release

Yates Community Endowment Establishes Disaster Relief Fund to Help Yates County Neighbors; Cancels Fundraising Gala

The Yates Community Endowment is taking on a pivotal role to help the disaster-stricken Yates County area by creating a fund to accept donations that will be directed to the Keuka Housing Council.

“People are suffering. They have lost homes. Businesses have closed. The lake is a debris field. It just seems wrong to be celebrating at this time” says Rob Corcoran of the Yates Community Endowment Advisory Board’s decision to establish the relief fund and cancel its first-ever fundraising gala, *An Evening Out At Home*, which was to be held on May 31.

The Yates Community Endowment Disaster Relief Fund at Rochester Area Community Foundation will be seeded by a challenge grant from the Nord Family Foundation, which will match, dollar for dollar, all contributions to the fund up to \$15,000.

“One hundred percent of the contributions will go directly to Yates County’s needs. Not one dollar will go toward administrative costs,” says Katie Nord Peterson, co-chair of the Endowment’s Advisory Board and a board member of her family’s foundation.

“It is especially rewarding when the focus is on helping people who are working hard to help themselves,” says Don Sheldon, a board member of the Ohio-based Nord Family Foundation. The Nord Foundation offered a \$100,000 challenge grant in June 2011 to launch the Yates Community Endowment. Donations from local residents exceeded that challenge in less than six months.

The Endowment Advisory Board selected the Keuka Housing Council as the recipient of the relief effort fund contributions because it has been named by Penn Yan Mayor Leigh MacKercher as the lead organization in Yates County for emergency housing and structure repair.

Frank Strong, an Endowment Advisory Board member, feels that the Yates Community Endowment needs to “be here for those affected in the most powerful way we can be. These matching funds are a huge boost to what we would have been able to do alone.”

Donors affiliated with Rochester Area Community Foundation raised more than \$5,000 in two days last week to support the Red Cross and United Way chapters serving the Yates County area.

The Yates Community Endowment Advisory Board members who planned *An Evening Out At Home* are contacting the event sponsors, dinner hosts, and all of the guests who registered for the event.

“Our sponsors and hosts are really coming through,” says Nord Peterson. “Many are taking the money they would have used for the event and donating it to the Endowment’s Disaster Relief Fund.”

To contribute to the relief effort, make an online contribution at www.racf.org/HelpYates or mail checks payable to Yates Community Endowment Disaster Relief Fund, P.O. Box 311, Penn Yan, N.Y. 14527.

For any additional questions, contact Joy Benson, regional coordinator at the Community Foundation, at jbenson@racf.org or 585.341.4412.