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Greater Rochester After-School Alliance Hires Director to Lead Transition to Larger Role With Out-of-School-Time Programs

Christina Dandino has been hired as director of the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA), leading the transition from an informal volunteer committee to a formal organization.

The goal of this collaborative, an initiative of Rochester Area Community Foundation since 2001, is to strengthen the quality, quantity, and accessibility of out-of-school-time programs in Monroe County for school-age youth in kindergarten through 12th grade. These programs include before-school, after-school, expanded learning, and summer enrichment.

With Dandino working full time, along with a part-time assistant, GRASA will serve as the primary out-of-school-time advocacy organization and be better able to coordinate the system-wide training, coaching and technical assistance that these enrichment opportunities require.

“Chris is the knowledgeable, passionate, and dedicated individual needed to lead GRASA’s work to the next level,” said Mairéad Hartmann, co-chair of GRASA and a program officer at the Community Foundation.

For the past three years, Dandino has been a consultant to GRASA to coordinate the Youth Program Quality Improvement process for out-of-school-time programs. Her position had been supported by a Ford Foundation grant obtained by the Community Foundation. Dandino also spent more than 25 years at the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau and four years on loan to the Rochester City School District for its Safe Schools, Healthy Students initiative supported by a federal grant.



Dandino graduated from the State University College at Geneseo with a dual bachelor's degree in psychology and elementary education and Syracuse University with a master's degree in social work. A native of Rome, Oneida County, Dandino lives in Rochester. She began this new role with GRASA on January 4.

Established in 2001, GRASA is a committee comprised of funders, policymakers, researchers, and family and provider representatives that has operated with volunteer support and in-kind staff from the Community Foundation. It has served as a central point for information on the needs and strengths of out-of-school-time programs, set priorities for these programs, and coordinated responses to state and national funding opportunities.

With \$465,000 in grant support from the Community Foundation, GRASA and many community partners have begun a comprehensive approach to evaluate, improve, and sustain effective and accessible out-of-school-time programs for students, evaluate program data, and assist staff with professional development and access to outside resources.

For more on GRASA, visit www.racf.org/GRASA.