Take Charge of Change for Historic Preservation

Have you ever visited a historic building, walked by a beautiful garden or fountain, or read the plaque by a statue and thought, “Thank goodness someone had the vision to preserve this for generations to come.”

Rochester Area Community Foundation knows that historical treasures don’t preserve themselves, which is why we’re proud to be one of the largest funders of historic preservation projects in our eight-county region. This distinction is thanks in large part to generous people like Elizabeth Holahan and Lloyd Klos, who established endowment funds to protect and preserve local history forever. Only with continued help can we remain a leader in this role.

The Community Foundation has supported Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park in Canandaigua with a number of grants. Most recently, we provided funding for the restoration of two greenhouses and preparation of the vinery and vegetable house for native plant propagation. Photo provided by Sonnenberg Gardens.
Our funding of historical preservation goes beyond projects that maintain local character. We leverage competitive grantmaking resources, donor partnerships, research, and listening to the concerns of community members to find stories that haven’t been told but warrant inclusion in our region’s shared history. For instance, a Community Foundation grant in early 2022 helped create memorials for the previously unmarked graves of Anna Murray Douglass and Annie Douglass, the wife and daughter of Frederick Douglass.

If you agree that every historic preservation project is an opportunity for protectors of the past to become heroes of the future, we’re excited to partner with you. Here are some meaningful ways to get involved.

Make a Gift to Support Historic Preservation
The Foundation’s Historical Preservation Fund allows us to use our expertise to support the organizations and projects that will have the greatest impact preserving historical assets throughout our eight-county region. Because the fund is endowed, contributors can be assured their donations will have impact today and in the future.

Donate

If you want to learn more about setting up your own fund to support historic preservation, click here.

In this video, Community Foundation Board Member Dr. Bill Valenti talks about why historic preservation matters to him.

Learn How Our Work Supports Preservation
Here are some organizations that have received support from Community Foundation grants:

- The Cobblestone Society: A grant will help replace the roof on the Brick House, restore the front door of the Ward House, provide electrical updates to three
buildings, and expand the museum in Orleans County dedicated to the history of cobblestone structures.

- **Greece Historical Society**: A survey of the life and work of Rochester’s first African American architect, Thomas W. Boyde, Jr. is under way. Time is of the essence, as many of his buildings have reached the 50-year mark and may now be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic places, which can help provide legal protection against demolition.

- **The Ibero-American Action League** received support to create an interview series capturing the personal narratives of 25 “Latino pioneers” – community leaders among Rochester’s earliest arrivals of Latin American descent – as a way to preserve the historical narrative of the region’s Latino community.

- **South Farmington Cemetery Association**: With help from a Foundation grant, the association will rehabilitate the interior of the historic cemetery chapel in Ontario County damaged by the tornado of 2015.

**Stay Connected to the Community Foundation**

Connect with us on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter) for news that will inform and inspire you. You’ll learn about our region’s pressing issues and the power of community-driven philanthropy to tackle them.

You can also sign up for our e-news and invitations. We host a range of virtual and in-person events, from webinars on a variety of community issues to our annual celebration of philanthropy.

We’d love to start a conversation about turning your vision into real-world change. Email us at giving@racf.org.