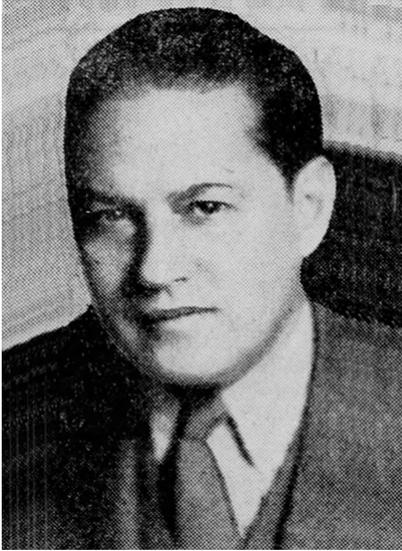


# Grantmaking Outside the Box

The **John F. Wegman Fund** at the Community Foundation, which has distributed nearly \$3.5 million in grants since 1997, has a grant round every quarter that focuses on aging, labor/management relations, and youth. Those awards are capped at \$15,000.



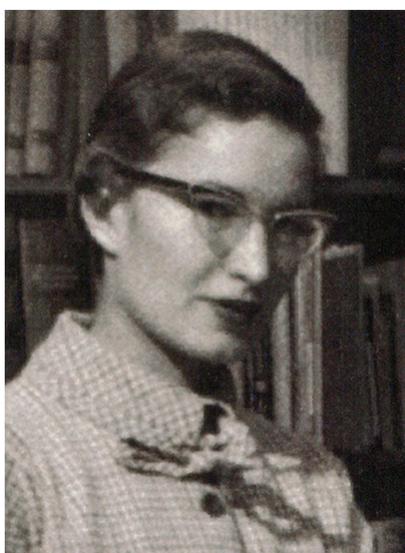
John F. Wegman

But in April, the fund's advisory committee took two bold steps. It unanimously agreed to consider larger grants and, in response to community needs arising out of the pandemic, made three significant grants outside its usual priority areas. The fund awarded:

- \$64,000 to the Community Crisis Fund and designated it to support programs helping older adults and youth in Monroe County;
- \$16,000 to Jewish Family Services of Rochester to purchase and provide kosher meals to their partner food cupboards; and
- \$10,000 to the organization RESOLVE to support domestic violence victims as cases were increasing due to stay-at-home orders combined with the high anxiety people were experiencing.

“These grants were given in the spirit of genuine concern for the community,” says Philip H. Yawman, the advisory committee’s immediate past chair and member since 2015. The Community Crisis Fund grant was substantial “because we wanted to support a much broader base,” Yawman adds.

For more than two decades, older adults in Genesee County have directly benefited from the Foundation’s **Muriel H. Marshall Fund for the Aging**. Created by an estate bequest from Roxanne Marshall in honor of her mother Muriel, the fund has supported a variety of key services that make it easier to live independently in a mostly rural area.



Roxanne Marshall

The fund’s investment of \$8.3 million in transportation, handyman services, financial expert financial help, one-on-one visits, and library access has transformed the lives of older individuals living there.

But the pandemic revealed additional challenges right away – persistent inability to access food and meet basic needs as well as serious long-term concerns about continued social isolation.

“We have done well by waiting for three months,” said Bonnie Wallace, chair of the Planning Team. “We didn’t rush into doing anything right away. We waited to hear back from the

partners to see what was going on.”

The Planning Team set aside \$75,000 to support strategies that address issues older adults are experiencing now and those that could arise as the pandemic continues.

Partner agencies were invited to respond to a “Request for Ideas” and share unique ways to make life easier during this tough time. In addition to food access and isolation, a common issue identified in these proposals was health care. Not surprisingly, technology was presented as a key piece of the solution to addressing all of these concerns.