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## **20 Regional Youth Sports Projects Awarded \$324,650 in Grants to Improve, Expand Programs**

Rochester Area Community Foundation is awarding \$324,650 in grants to 20 local youth sports and recreation programs in the second grant round from the **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund for Youth Sports**.

The grants range from \$5,970 to \$25,000 and support projects that will have a direct impact on more than 5,000 youth and several dozen adult coaches in **Monroe, Ontario, Wayne and Yates counties**. Thirty-four proposals were received — eight from outside Monroe County — and requested a combined total of more than \$675,280.

Of the 20 successful grantees, five had received funding in the first youth sports grant round in 2018. This second year of support will be used to expand their efforts and build on their program's successes.

Grants are made possible by a \$5 million endowed fund established at the Community Foundation in 2016 by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. The Legacy Fund for Youth Sports will provide annual and ongoing grants to support and strengthen the quality, quantity and accessibility of local youth sports and recreation programs. The basis for these grants is findings from the "State of Play: Greater Rochester & The Finger Lakes" report released in 2017. Recommendations for focus included the need to make time for less-structured free play, exposing youth to a variety of sports, supporting community-based options, and the importance of better training coaches.

"This round of grants creatively addresses many issues found in the "State of Play" report — from converting existing space for new purposes and new youth audiences to organizing and energizing communities and neighborhoods, and encouraging coaches to incorporate social-emotional learning in their practices and workouts," says Simeon Banister, vice president for Community Programs at the Community Foundation.

The 20 nonprofits receiving funding for youth sports- and recreation-related projects are:

**Boys & Girls Club of Geneva:** To create a play space in a building not used during the morning hours and fill it with toys, games and activities that promote healthy child development for all children from infant to age 5 and their families. Working in partnership with Family Counseling of the Finger Lakes and its Teen Mom Program, the club will help parents build unstructured play periods and exercise into the lives of their young children. \$25,000

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Rochester, Inc.:** A second year of support to continue the Weekend Free Play Zone on Saturdays to allow youth to participate in sports and activities that are usually inaccessible due to fee-based restrictions. More than 100 youth participated the first year. The club also will allow non-members to access this programming to engage them and encourage them to join. \$20,000

**Canandaigua Community Sailing:** Supports five scholarships for youth ages 7 to 18 in the Canandaigua and Rochester areas to participate in a weeklong camp to learn the fundamentals of sailing and exposure to a sport they might not otherwise get to experience. The grant also supports a single-day sailing event for one area school and purchase of a sailboat. \$5,970

**The Center for Youth:** To provide greater access and exposure to parks, land preserves, and camps by training 120 at-risk urban youth in kindergarten to eighth grade to play outside in a way that benefits their social, emotional, and academic development. The center's Earth Works Institute will expand its offerings to include seasonal activities (kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing, and foraging for edible plants) and helping students to learn how to work together to achieve goals. \$25,000

**Children's Institute, Inc.:** For development of a positive coaching curriculum for middle and high school coaches designed to increase their effectiveness in helping young people develop social and emotional skills that can be used throughout their lives. Will include 25 five-minute "social-emotional learning plays" that coaches can use at the beginning or end of practice sessions. \$9,800

**City of Rochester:** Expands on the success of the HealthiKids Coalition's Play Streets ROC Initiative by engaging neighborhood groups and residents to host at least 10 events where families will be invited to participate in structured and unstructured recreational activities. Activities will include group games, team-building challenges, organized sports, obstacle courses, dance parties and scavenger hunts. In collaboration with the City of Rochester's Rec on the Move, this effort will empower residents to foster a vivacious, supportive and welcoming atmosphere in their own neighborhoods. \$22,380

**Conkey Cruisers:** Supports a free, four-week summer wellness initiative throughout August run by adults and teens in Northwest Rochester that will provide supervised group activities three nights per week for 100 youth ages 2 to 18. This effort also will also address food insecurity and safety by pairing healthy eating with physical activity and an introduction to tennis as a warm-up for bike riding. \$15,000

**EquiCenter, Inc.:** Supports a second year of a non-traditional recreation program for 146 youth ages 5 to 14 that teaches life lessons and skills using interactive play and learning with horses that combine equine-assisted learning with the exploration of nature on the farm with the opportunity for both structured activity and free play. \$20,000

**Geneva Family YMCA:** To resurface the family pool, which has been patched off and on since the mid-1990s. The goal is to extend the life of the pool and increase access and swim lessons. \$15,000

**Girl Scouts of Western NY Inc.:** A second year of funding to provide 800 girls the chance to experience and participate in archery and ropes course at Camp Piperwood, with certified instructors in ropes and archery. Includes training of Girl Scout leaders so they can supervise in archery and ropes activities to address a shortage of trained instructors. Will also introduce the fitness and trailblazing sport of orienteering for all ages and skill levels. \$23,500

**Girls on the Run of Greater Rochester:** Providing scholarships for 167 girls to participate in this physical activity-based positive youth development program designed to enhance girls' social, psychological and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences. \$25,000

**Lyons Community Center:** To increase a sense of community and neighborhood attachment, this Wayne County town is launching a revitalization of its sports program. This will include training all coaches, providing scholarships to families that are struggling, organizing used equipment swaps, and increasing the capacity for winter baseball programming and overall promotion of baseball by the Newark Pilots. \$25,000

**North Greece Road Church of Christ:** Providing up to 280 youth between the ages of 6 and 19 and their families who live in three subsidized housing complexes or attend the Greece Charter School access to recreational sports, character building and life skills development activities through softball and soccer. Also supports improvements to the church-owned field, coach recruitment and training, transportation, and the hiring of students to support field and game set up. \$25,000

**Phelps Community Center:** The Community Center in this Ontario County town will provide free play and free sports sampling for youth ages 2 to 12 for a full year. Samplings for school-age children will include soccer, spikeball, volleyball, badminton, kickball, lacrosse, dodgeball, and wiffle ball. Younger children will be provided a time to play in a bounce house, dance, run obstacle courses and some sports modified for their age. \$10,000

**Playworks New York:** To conduct two "Play Leadership Essentials" trainings (total of 12 hours) for up to 40 adults involved in out-of-school time or summer camp or enrichment programs, in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Rochester and the City of Rochester Department of Recreation and Youth Services. This training will include the importance of play, creating a safe, healthy and respectful environment for youth, group management strategies, and how to build cooperation among youth sports participants. \$10,000

**The Research Foundation for State University of New York:** Supports Camp Abilities Brockport to empower 55 children and teens with sensory impairments to be physically active and productive members of their schools and communities, as well as to improve their health and well-being. The importance of sports and recreation often can be overlooked in this population's educational and home environments. \$15,000

**Rochester Childfirst Network:** To support the introduction of Parkour, a sport of approaching obstacles using running, climbing, swinging and jumping, and figuring out how to get from Point A to Point B in a challenging environment. As many as 60 children attending RCN's school-age program will participate in six, 90-minute sessions in a nine-month period. \$10,000

**Seneca Sailing Academy:** To offer 20 scholarships for youth sailing lessons on Seneca Lake, including support for transportation and lunch, and add three additional training craft for older students. The goal is to build mastery, expand on skills and learning from last year, and increase access to this nontraditional sport. Scholarships will be available for participants from the Boys & Girls Club of Geneva to strengthen partnership with that organization. \$13,000

**Western NY Pop Warner Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.:** For phase two of a Safety 1<sup>st</sup> program by continuing to refurbish, recertify, and update sports equipment to increase safety for 1,000 youth participants ages 5 to 16. Grant also will support football certification costs for coaches and transportation to games. \$20,000

**Yates Cultural Recreational Resources Inc.:** Supports four youth sports and coaching initiatives. These efforts include: Providing a multi-sport sampler series at the Yates Community Center with 14 different offerings for ages 4 to 12; forming a youth athlete committee to survey peers to inform future youth sports programming; having one lead organization to serve as a hub for online sports management of multi-league registrations, communications, field scheduling, and fundraising; and training volunteer coaches twice a year. \$25,000

**About Rochester Area Community Foundation:**

*Rochester Area Community Foundation, in partnership with generous philanthropists and community partners, works to improve the quality of life for people who live in the eight-county region through its leadership and strategic grantmaking. Known as the steward of charitable funds and endowments, the Community Foundation connects donors with the region's current and evolving needs. As a leading grantmaker, the Foundation focuses on two broad goals — creating an equitable community and strengthening our region's vitality. The Community Foundation has distributed more than \$478 million in grants and scholarships since its founding in 1972. For more, visit [www.racf.org](http://www.racf.org).*

**About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation:**

*The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson requested that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. The Foundation has a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit [www.rcwjrf.org](http://www.rcwjrf.org)*