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**Rochester Area Community Foundation Awarded \$384,000 Grant from Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to Support Small, Home-Based Child Care Providers in Genesee, Monroe and Orleans Counties**

Rochester Area Community Foundation has received a \$384,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to support small, home-based child care providers through its “Small Grants for Small Children” program.

The Community Foundation will work with the Child Care Council, Inc., and Community Action of Orleans & Genesee, Inc., to distribute grants of up to \$2,000 to nearly 200 home-based child care providers across Genesee, Monroe, and Orleans counties starting this month. The providers will have flexibility to use the funds as they see fit — to help them reopen or remain open to continue to provide high-quality care to children.

“In-home child care has always been in demand. But the pandemic has more families looking at home-based options as a way to minimize their children’s exposure to large numbers of other children and adults,” says Jennifer Leonard, the Community Foundation’s president and CEO. “This sudden need by families during an already difficult time has placed a great deal of strain on home care providers who want to help.”

Providers are struggling to accommodate families and balance this with their own needs for reliable income and fears of being exposed to COVID-19.

Most challenged are the in-home programs that serve between three and 12 children. Currently, they are ineligible for many of the federal and state supports available to small businesses. This is exacerbated by the fact that most programs supporting small business do not have child care on their radar.

This grant to the Community Foundation is part of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's \$1 million investment to support the small, home-based child care providers across Western New York. Grants also have been made to the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Chautauqua Community Foundation, and Cattaraugus Community Foundation. This program is modeled after the long-standing "Small Grants for Small Children" developed by the Adirondack Foundation.

"Child care is essential now more than ever," said Amber Slichta, vice president of programs at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. "Small, home-based child care providers rarely qualify for support and, in turn, do not view themselves as small businesses. It's important that we continue to fill these gaps and uplift these providers, as they are often the only option for working families in rural areas and urban neighborhoods."

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*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. The two areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his Buffalo Bills franchise. 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.*