



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Community Foundation Honoring 4 Local Philanthropists; Announcing Record-High Assets for the Community

Rochester Area Community Foundation announced today that assets it holds and invests for the betterment of the region reached a record-high \$578 million.

This asset total is one-third larger than when the pandemic began in March 2020 — made possible by a rebounding economy and new gifts, explained Tom Richards, chair of the Foundation board of directors during a Wednesday night celebration of community and philanthropy at Frontier Field.

“When people in Rochester do well, they share their abundance with others, and last year was no exception,” he said.

That sentiment was evidenced by \$43 million in contributions received by the Foundation between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. That gift total was the third-best in the Foundation’s 49-year history and \$15 million more than the previous year.

The Foundation’s strong investment strategies, over time, helped level out the financial distress caused by the pandemic last year. The Foundation distributed \$34 million in grants and scholarships locally and beyond. The 600 families and individuals with donor-advised funds at the Community Foundation recommended nearly \$23 million of that grant total to counter the pandemic’s ill effects on people, nonprofit organizations, and their communities.

Building on the event’s theme, “Stepping Up to the Plate to Help Our Community,” President and CEO Jennifer Leonard thanked the 300-plus in attendance for partnering with and supporting the largest grantmaking foundation in our region. “You hit it out of the ballpark, again,” she said.

Leonard went on to highlight work of the Foundation and its grants in the past year. Those included:

- Offering a new \$100,000 Social Innovation Grant opportunity. After reviewing 25 applications, two nonprofit organizations each received \$50,000 grants to expand their programs — one in the Clinton Avenue neighborhood and the other to help ease the transition from jail to the community;
- Partnering with United Way of Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes to launch the Community Crisis Fund, which raised and distributed nearly \$7 million during the first year of the pandemic;



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- Creating a Racial Equity Growth Fund that brought free learning pods to city libraries to help students and their working parents as well as hiring laid-off paraprofessionals; and
- Establishing an Arts Prevail Fund, which helped to support documentation of the intersection between the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement in Rochester. The fund also supported nonprofits that needed financial assistance to buy technology for remote events and reopening, and for special social justice concerts by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Foundation also recognized three groups — two of its giving circles and its geographic affiliate in Yates County — that are marking 10-year anniversaries. These groups, all established in 2011, are the African American Giving Initiative (racf.org/AAGI), the LGBT+ Giving Circle (racf.org/LGBT+), and the Yates Community Endowment (racf.org/Yates).

Also recognized was Katie Nord Peterson of Penn Yan, who was the founding co-chair of the Yates Endowment's Advisory Board and whose family foundation helped to kick-start fundraising for the Endowment with a \$100,000 challenge grant. It was matched and surpassed within just a few months. The Nord Family Foundation also supported the Endowment's disaster relief fundraising efforts when floods ravaged Penn Yan in 2014, and emergency relief during the pandemic in 2020.

Four individuals were recognized with 2021 Philanthropy Awards at the event.

Receiving the **2021 Joe U. Posner Founders Award**, the Foundation's highest honor, were **Tom Riley** and **Barbara Kelley**, both former Community Foundation board members. These two have readily shared their professional expertise and enthusiasm for Rochester with local groups and use philanthropic funds at the Foundation to support causes that matter to them, such as healthcare and behavioral health.

Tom, a Rochester native, held leadership roles at Rochester Telephone and Blue Cross-Blue Shield and later consulted for local companies and organizations. Barbara grew up in Wellsville, Allegany County, and also worked at Rochester Tel, before being recruited to work for Bausch & Lomb's public relations department.

Tom's community involvement ranged from Pop Warner Youth Football League and Aquinas Institute to helping start the Maplewood Neighborhood Association and being active in the Park-Meigs Neighborhood Association, the Charlotte Community Association, and serving on the City of Rochester Planning Commission and board of Rochester Regional Health and Unity Hospital. Barbara was the second woman to chair the board at United Way and she served on boards and committees for many other organizations. For her community efforts, she was recognized with the Athena Award in 1994. Tom and Barbara live in downtown Rochester.

Other honorees were:

Hanif Abdul-Wahid: Hanif recently retired after spending 27 years working for Monroe County as a community liaison. His primary focus was strengthening city neighborhoods through the creation of block clubs, building of housing, and cleaning up drug houses.

This Rochester native also made time to give back through service to many local organizations. He was on the Community Foundation board for 10 years and currently serves on the advisory committees for ACT Rochester and the Foundation's NeighborGood Grant program. He's also



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been involved with Teen Empowerment, Rochesterians Against Illegal Narcotics, the Marketview Heights board, the Greater Rochester Black Agenda Group, and more recently, Starbridge. Hanif lives in Greece.

Mary Anne Palermo: Whether it was philanthropy or community activities, Mary Anne and her late husband, Dick, were a package deal. When one was involved, the other played a supporting role. Together they helped to launch Livingston County Catholic Charities, and she served on that board and the diocesan Catholic Charities board for many years. The Freedom Bridge and Gardens in Lakeville, which honors all five branches of military service, was supported by the Palermos. They also helped initiate creation of the Chip Holt Nature Center on Conesus Lake, named for a friend who worked with Dick at Xerox.

The Palermos created their first fund at the Community Foundation in 1993 to provide grants to a host of organizations to which they had a personal connection. A second fund was established a few years later to expand and extend their giving. A few years ago, Mary Anne established a fund to support the critical work of nonprofits that serve individuals and families who live in Livingston County, where she has lived for decades.

About Rochester Area Community Foundation: *The Community Foundation serves an eight-county region, which includes Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Yates, and Wayne counties. Last year, the Community Foundation distributed \$34 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and scholarships to help local students with college expenses. Money for these grants comes from more than 1,400 charitable funds created by individuals, families, businesses and organizations to support a wide variety of personal and community interests. Since it was established in 1972, the Community Foundation has distributed more than \$548 million in grants and scholarships.*