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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Community Foundation Addresses “Rural Blindspot” with Targeted Investment in Livingston County

In an effort to expand its support for the Greater Rochester-Finger Lakes region and tackle what is called the “Rural Blindspot,” Rochester Area Community Foundation awarded \$127,500 to eight nonprofits serving Livingston County.

“The Rural Blindspot” is an insight coined in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* indicating that communities where people live farther apart are often overlooked in grantmaking when compared to their more populated neighbors, even when the need for resources is great. According to the data, these rural communities are some of the least likely to both apply for and receive funding to address inequities.

For the Community Foundation, equitable grantmaking means unlocking the potential for those who have had less access to resources needed to thrive. It means strengthening relationships with community partners who have their finger on the pulse of resident needs. Livingston County has dedicated nonprofits, kind neighbors, and resilient youth, but faces a childhood poverty level of 14 percent.

“The Community Foundation covers eight counties in our region, not just Monroe,” says Senior Program Officer Sara Bukowiec. “This dedicated funding was part of an intentional shift in our approach to make our grantmaking opportunities more inclusive of rural counties.”

The Foundation historically received few applications from counties like Livingston, but suspected this underrepresented the community's need for resources and support. In response, the Foundation set aside money and spread the word to nonprofits, community leaders, and chambers of commerce across Genesee, Livingston, and Orleans counties that at least \$50,000 in grants would be available for each county. A two-part application process made it easier for nonprofits to apply and for the Foundation to spot opportunities for collaboration and to combine funding from multiple sources.

Twenty-three letters of intent seeking more than \$563,000 were received from nonprofits serving Livingston County, which clearly outlined the need for investment. The uptick in applications and diverse sources of funding identified to satisfy eight of these requests bolstered the Foundation's new regional approach.

In total, over \$210,000 was awarded to nonprofits serving Genesee, Livingston, and Orleans counties. The next phase of funding will focus on Seneca and Ontario counties and will open in late March.

Community Foundation funding for this grantmaking initiative came from its Community Impact Fund, which pools contributions from more than 100 permanent funds established specifically to support changing community needs, along with dollars from Greater Rochester Women's Fund, The Sarah Collins Fund, L. Ruth Kohler Fund, Joe Moran Endowment Fund, VJ Stanley Sr. Fund, Edward R. Lane Fund, Richard C. & Mary Anne Palermo Fund for Livingston County, Robert C. and Jane K. Stevens Legacy Fund, Joan and Harold Feinbloom Fund, Thomas P. Ryan Jr. Youth in Action Fund, and Tin Mountain Fund.

Grants supporting Livingston County:

Alianza Agrícola Inc*: Provides transportation for immigrant farmworker families to various events and activities to increase participation and engagement across a five-county service area. **\$50,000**

Cal-Mum Youth Basketball Association: Offers free registration to the children of volunteer coaches who dedicate hundreds of hours to the kids in the Caledonia-Mumford community. **\$500**

Camp Stella Maris: Supports expanded leadership programming that will be offered to Livingston County young adults free of charge. Participants will have opportunities to develop skills, connect with business owners and community leaders, and prepare to enter the workforce. **\$7,002**

Cancer Support Community Rochester*: The "Mapping My Journey in Rural Communities" outreach program will provide cancer screening and support services to underserved groups. **\$5,000**

Catholic Charities Steuben/Livingston: To provide nutritious, varied, and culturally sensitive food items alongside wrap-around services to individuals aspiring to provide for themselves and their families who are struggling with the ongoing economic difficulties in our region. **\$5,000**

Genesee Country Village & Museum*: The Rural School Admission Support program provides subsidized, reduced-rate, and/or fully-funded in-person educational opportunities to schools with financial need. **\$7,500**

Hillside Children's Foundation: The Community Service program offers meaningful service and skill-building opportunities for Livingston County youth ages 7-18 to prevent out-of-home placement or further involvement with the juvenile justice system. The program uses a collaborative, strengths-based approach to reduce adverse pathways while providing treatment in a cost-efficient manner. **\$50,000**

Livingston County Cares, Inc.: Expands on existing efforts to reduce transportation barriers by supplying gas and/or phone cards to clients and paying for trips that are not funded through any other resource. **\$2,500**

**Grants that also support Orleans County and/or Genesee County.*