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**Rochester Area Community Foundation Invests \$210,000 in  
Genesee and Neighboring Counties**

In an effort to expand its support for the Greater Rochester region and tackle what is called the “Rural Blindspot,” Rochester Area Community Foundation distributed more than \$210,000 to 17 nonprofits serving Genesee, Livingston, and Orleans counties. These recent grants are in addition to long-standing annual support for older adults in Genesee County through the Muriel H. Marshall Fund for the Aging.

“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 the resources needed to thrive. Genesee County, for example, has kind neighbors, a strong tourism industry, and a low cost of living, but faces a childhood poverty level of 11 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 these counties, but suspected this underrepresented the communities’ 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.

Thirty-nine letters of intent seeking more than \$864,000 were received from nonprofits across the three counties, which clearly outlined the need for investment. The uptick in applications and diverse sources of funding identified to satisfy 17 of these requests bolstered the Foundation’s new regional approach.



Community Foundation funding 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, Fox-Knoeferl Family Fund, VJ Stanley Sr. Fund, Edward R. Lane Fund, and Robert C. and Jane K. Stevens Legacy Fund.

Grants supporting Genesee, Livingston, and Orleans counties marked with an asterisk. The list of 17 grantees receiving awards are:

**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**

**Arc GLOW:** Provides transportation for an estimated 40 children from Genesee and Orleans counties, with and without disabilities, to Camp Rainbow in Lyndonville, for a five-week summer camp where kids can grow emotionally and physically through inclusive outdoor experiences. **\$19,700**

**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 in Livingston, Genesee, and Orleans counties. **\$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 and who are currently struggling with the ongoing economic difficulties. **\$5,000**

**First Presbyterian Church Albion:** Free English as a Second Language classes and high school equivalency exam preparation to serve the Spanish-speaking migrant agricultural worker community in Orleans County. **\$3,500**

**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**

**Hands 4 Hope Street Ministry:** This Albion-based program helps maintain personal hygiene and dignity by providing laundry products to all clients, many of whom are burdened by the costs associated with public laundromats. **\$2,560**

**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**

**Livwell Community, Wellness & Fitness Center:** Collaborates with partners to launch a golf program in three school districts in Livingston County, providing equitable access to the sport for youth from lower-income backgrounds. **\$15,000**

**Orleans County Adult Learning Services:** Advertising and outreach materials to increase community awareness of their free adult and childhood literacy tutoring services. **\$3,000**

**P.Raising Kids Child Care Center:** To purchase outdoor storage in order to free up space for play and learning inside this center in Medina, Orleans County, where kids of any economic situation can flourish and grow. **\$4,600**

**PathStone Foundation:** Addresses critical building improvements to the domestic violence shelter, built around 1900, that serves this area. Work will include painting, plumbing, and security measures, in order to continue providing a safe and supportive environment for survivors of domestic violence. **\$20,500**

**United Way of Orleans County:** To commission a Housing Action Strategy, in coordination with key stakeholders, with the goal of increasing the availability of affordable housing over three years and focusing on low-to-moderate income residents. **\$10,000**

**Visually Impaired Advancement:** Supports a part-time outreach staff position to provide 2-1-1 navigational services and outreach in Orleans and Genesee counties. **\$20,000**