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COMMUNITY HEART & SOUL® ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH THREE REGIONAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN RESIDENT-DRIVEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Shelburne, VT (April 24, 2025) - Community Heart & Soul is proud to announce new partnerships with the [Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo](#), [Rochester Area Community Foundation](#), and the [Community Foundation of St. Clair County](#). This collaboration, made possible through funding from the [Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation](#), will support resident-driven community engagement in communities across Western New York and Southeast Michigan.

Through these new partnerships, Community Heart & Soul will bring its proven model to small cities and towns in the region, equipping them with the tools and resources to engage residents, identify shared priorities, and create action plans that focus on what matters most and reflect the unique character and goals of each community.

"Connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York is core to the mission of our Community Foundation," said Betsy Constantine, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. "Lifting up community voice is essential to creating transformational change in small cities and towns and by partnering with Community Heart & Soul, we're increasing our capacity to ensure residents are playing a key role in shaping the future of their communities."

"Rochester Area Community Foundation's strength lies in bringing people together across suburban, urban, and rural communities," said Simeon Banister, President and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation. "We're excited to use the Community Heart & Soul process to build deep relationships with our rural communities, understand their needs, and ensure resources align with their priorities."

"The community-centered, involve-everyone, play-the-long-game approach that Community Heart & Soul uses resonates well with our Community Foundation. We're looking forward to what we will learn alongside our rural towns and what we can do together in the future," said Patti Manley, Board Chair of the Community Foundation of St. Clair County.

"As we seek to have greater impact in the rural communities of Southeast Michigan and Western New York and build the strength of local leadership, we are pleased to see that several community foundations

are utilizing our capacity support funds to implement the Community Heart & Soul model,” said Maura Dewan, Vice President of Programs and Corporate Affairs at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

“We are eager to get to work with these outstanding partners to expand Heart & Soul’s impact,” said Mark Sherman, President of Community Heart & Soul. “Together, we’ll support more communities in embracing this powerful approach to resident engagement.”

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About Community Heart & Soul

Community Heart & Soul, a nonprofit organization, builds stronger, healthier, and more economically vibrant small cities and towns across the United States. In addition to promoting the Community Heart & Soul model, the organization trains and supports a nationwide network of certified coaches who provide training and guidance to over 120 communities. The organization is currently offering \$10,000 Seed Grants to qualifying small cities and towns to start the Community Heart & Soul process.

<https://www.communityheartandsoul.org>

About the Rochester Area Community Foundation

In partnership with generous philanthropists and community partners, Rochester Area Community Foundation works to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the eight-county region through its leadership and strategic grantmaking. Since it was founded in 1972, the Foundation has distributed more than \$730 million dollars in grants and scholarships. <https://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. The two areas reflect the devotion of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his beloved Buffalo Bills NFL team. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson provided 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. Based in Detroit, the Foundation began with 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 <https://www.rcwjrf.org>.