In 2022, we’re marking the Community Foundation’s 95th year of service to the community. In 1927, men and women with vision and a commitment to civic engagement created what was then the Syracuse Foundation. We were founded as a vehicle for growing permanent charitable resources and sustaining local impact that makes this community a better place.

This June we mark the conclusion of our current, five-year strategic plan. During that time, much has changed in the community, for our partners, neighbors and the Community Foundation. When we set off to implement our new plan back in 2017, we envisioned growth in both resources and impact. I find it inspiring to look back now at the planning documents, at the feedback and encouragement we received at the time, and the work of our staff and board to execute on our plans in the years since. I am grateful for our institutional progress over these last five years but know that there is so much more to do.

For us, this next year will be about strategic sharpening and discernment. Our staff and board will embark on a series of conversations and engagements to create our next strategic plan – which will take us through our 100th anniversary. We will engage the Center for Effective Philanthropy, a national nonprofit consultant, to survey our donors, grantees and grant applicants to get their feedback on our work and how we can improve. We will also commission a series of targeted interviews and focus groups to complement this survey data.

Taking note of the work of our foundation peers around the country, I believe that we have an opportunity to leverage our growing resources in new ways that can create positive community outcomes. Towards that end, we’ve engaged LOCUS Impact Investing, a national nonprofit advisor for foundations, to help us deploy our financial resources using other tools beyond grantmaking to support local impact.

Data and measurement will continue to be core to our work. We’ve certainly had plenty of opportunities in recent years for data to motivate us to take action collectively. From the finding that Syracuse has the highest level of concentrated poverty among Black and Latino populations in the country, to the recent publication of census data demonstrating that Syracuse has the highest percentage of children in poverty in the nation – the data speaks loudly. I am heartened, though, from our experience that people with goodwill, resilience and a commitment to measurable outcomes can move needles in this community. We intend to continue to be a key part of that local movement going forward.

PETER A. DUNN
President & CEO
ALIGNING CHARITABLE INVESTMENTS WITH VALUES

When making personal investment decisions, many people choose funds that provide a social impact while helping them reach their financial goals. In the same way, the philanthropic sector is finding that investment choices are becoming another way for foundations to make a positive impact beyond their grantmaking programs. As we make intentional decisions related to the issues affecting our community, our board of directors decided to offer a Sustainable Responsible Impact (SRI) investment pool for our fundholders who want to generate a competitive market return while considering social and environmental benefits. New and existing fundholders can now choose either our main investment pool or the SRI pool for their fund.

“The addition of the SRI investment pool is a meaningful next step in the evolution of our impact investing,” said Caragh Fahy, Finance Committee chair. “Donors can now choose the dual impact of supporting local charities with their grants while also investing in a portfolio that supports important values.” This strategy, which has grown significantly in the U.S. over the past few years, incorporates environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into the investment process. Many of our peer community foundations across the country have experienced strong growth in their SRI investments.

Our Finance Committee works with Crewcial Partners, our long-term investment consultant, to choose investments for the SRI pool that have positive social impacts in the areas identified by our board members. These areas are community, leadership, diversity, excellence, service, empathy, compassion, justice and respect. Crewcial Partners will identify funds to remove or include based on specific ESG factors, such as emphasis on environmental integrity, and diversity, equity and inclusion. The ESG factors are guided by the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which all United Nations member states adopted in 2015. The SDGs provide a collective roadmap to achieve a sustainable future for all the world.

We capitalized our SRI investment pool with an existing field-of-interest fund that aligns with identified values: supporting the environment, outdoor parks and recreation areas; providing access for hunting and fishing; and other programs involving youth. We hope to grow our SRI investment pool over the next few years with support from existing and prospective fundholders. We also hope to deploy more of our permanent funds to align with the chosen values of this new investment pool.
Everyone deserves a chance to meet their fullest potential, but on paper, it seemed as if Al-amin Muhammad wouldn’t get one. Born in South Side Chicago into a hardworking, low-income family, he was surrounded by gang culture from the very beginning. Now, with a newfound love of tending to flowers and people, Muhammad barely recognizes his previous self.

“Looking back at my earlier years makes me feel like I was wearing a mask,” Muhammad said. “I have since discovered interests I never knew I had — like gardening. I feel relief when I look at flowers, particularly roses.”

While incarcerated, Muhammad was in charge of the prison’s community garden. His new passion and skills fostered feelings of hope, happiness and growth and inspired the creation of his Syracuse-based nonprofit, We Rise Above the Streets (Rise Above). The organization provides basic needs and helps low-income individuals build sustainable lives by breaking the cycles of homelessness and poverty that they, including Muhammad, face every day.

Every day at Rise Above looks different. On a Saturday Muhammad hands out lunch and care packages at his Sandwich Saturdays program. The next day he might teach people who were formerly incarcerated how to garden or mentor people with drug or alcohol addictions. He’s also provided more than 9,000 lunches and 1,500 hats and gloves to local children.
Over his first 30 years, Muhammad was in and out of prison, joined a number of gangs, experienced homelessness, was shot twice and pronounced dead once. He once faced a 20-year prison sentence for a drug charge. But finding a job and a place to live after prison would be the hardest hurdle he’d have to overcome.

“It was really difficult transitioning back into life after I was released from prison and I was living on the street,” Muhammad said. “I wanted to go to school and get a job but I didn’t have time because my sole focus was on surviving.”

Even in the face of adversity, Muhammad didn’t let his past decisions hold him back. A conversation with a fellow inmate and guidance from two mentors helped him turn his life around. Muhammad was encouraged to “take his mask off” to find his true identity. He earned his GED while incarcerated and began a path to Islam while later obtaining his associate degree. Those achievements helped open the door to a world where he could fulfill his hopes and dreams while helping others through Rise Above.

“I had people who believed in me and empowered me to see the gifts that I had,” Muhammad said. “Without that support, I may not be where I am today. That’s the kind of support I want to provide for others facing disproportionate obstacles.”

In 2020, he joined The Leadership Classroom (TLC), a Community Foundation initiative, to advance his organization and increase its impact. The free, eight-month intensive training program helps create synergies between nonprofits to enhance program delivery and promote efficient use of limited financial and human resources. Upon completion, each team receives up to $3,500 to implement a community project. Rise Above used its grant to purchase equipment and supplies to help maximize its short- and long-term awareness outreach through its social channels and in-person interactions.

Muhammad attributes efficiently running his organization and becoming a credible leader to TLC’s lessons.

“You don’t often get an opportunity where you can build your own skills and relationships with others at the same time,” he said. “To become a leader that people want to follow, you have to have compassion, accept feedback and continue to push yourself to grow.”

With his boots on the ground in local neighborhoods, Muhammad wants others to know that when you’re out in the field, you can save lives. He said that the people physically engaged in community issues can make the greatest change for people experiencing pain and suffering.

“I see a bright light at the end of the tunnel. I am looking forward to continuing my partnerships with other organizations and saving lives.”

– AL-AMIN MUHAMMAD

Muhammad continues to challenge himself every day and think of new ways to grow his impact — and his beautiful roses.
The Corinthians, along with the Corinthian Foundation, was formed in 1949 by a group of determined women who purchased the famous Barnes-Hiscock Mansion on James Street. They offered regular ballroom dancing, fashion shows, bridge clubs and lectures. They also hosted social events and fundraisers. Barbara Watkins, a member since 1995 and president along the way, remembered holidays at the mansion: “The club just sparkled at Christmas. It was extraordinary, just extraordinary.”

Early on, members trained in first aid and managed Operation Bookshelf, which donated thousands of books and magazines to Syracuse residents. They started the Wagon Wheel Senior Center, which offered nutrition programs, activities and case management. The women also enjoyed hosting fundraisers, including a carnival with tents, pony rides and game booths.

Membership started with 631 women and peaked at just over 1,500 women in the 1950s. But as the times changed, so did the club’s membership numbers. Due to low funding and dwindling membership, the club decided last year to dissolve after having donated the mansion to the George and Rebecca Barnes Foundation in 2009.

The Corinthians moved their remaining assets into the Corinthian Club Fund at the Community Foundation to continue the club’s legacy, which began with an “army of womanpower.” The fund will provide annual support for a Le Moyne College scholarship and The Women’s Fund of CNY.

Upon hearing the news, Kate Michaels, current Women’s Fund chair, commented, “We are grateful to be a recipient of the Corinthian Club endowment. Through our grantmaking, we’ll make sure to carry on its legacy of giving and supporting women.”

Even without their traditional club, the Corinthians will continue both their friendships and their legacy for many years to come.
Image 1: Barnes Residence- Italian Villa Photo, Pre-1890s

Images 2-3: The Barnes Hiscock Mansion, built in 1853 by George and Rebecca Barnes, became a center of civic-minded activity in our community. The pair’s youngest and only living child, Mary Elizabeth (Bossie), married Judge Frank Hiscock, founder of Hiscock Legal Aid Society.

Photo credit: Photos courtesy of the Onondaga Historical Association
COMMUNITY IMPACT

In December and March, our board of directors approved $1,044,397 in grants to 27 nonprofit organizations through our Community Grantmaking program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTS, CULTURE &amp; HUMANITIES</th>
<th>$25,000</th>
<th>CNY ARTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>REDHOUSE ARTS CENTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>SYRACUSE FILM CENTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support expenses for its 2021-22 ManiStage Season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Launch a filmmaking training program for local youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>$40,000</th>
<th>CNY LYME &amp; TICK-BORNE DISEASE ALLIANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF CENTRAL UPSTATE NEW YORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>THE MILTON J. RUBENSTEIN MUSEUM OF SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$39,896</td>
<td>ONONDAGA ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$35,900</td>
<td>ON POINT FOR COLLEGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide paid internships for college students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENT &amp; ANIMALS</th>
<th>$20,000</th>
<th>TOWN OF NELSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remediates erosion that threatens Blueberry Island, a small island in Tuscarora Lake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTHCARE</th>
<th>$56,000</th>
<th>CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$77,000</td>
<td>LORETTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>THE UPSTATE FOUNDATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$24,500</td>
<td>THE UPSTATE RESEARCH FOUNDATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$11,300</td>
<td>FIGHT FOR HEARTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Launch a new fitness program, Spinning Orange, to continue providing free virtual fitness classes for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUMAN SERVICES</th>
<th>$50,000</th>
<th>ACCESSCNY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$23,000</td>
<td>CLEAR PATH FOR VETERANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$23,000</td>
<td>COMMUNITY OPTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>CONSORTIUM FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$49,425</td>
<td>THE FIRST TEE — SYRACUSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>INTERFAITH WORKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>MADISON COUNTY CHILDREN’S CAMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$11,300</td>
<td>FIGHT FOR HEARTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Launch a new fitness program, Spinning Orange, to continue providing free virtual fitness classes for children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC &amp; SOCIETAL BENEFIT</th>
<th>$30,000</th>
<th>LITERACYNY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$24,376</td>
<td>NORTHWEST HAWLEY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>PURPOSE FARM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>YMCA OF GREATER SYRACUSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rebuild its main barn after fire destroyed the previous structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Replace windows and reno- vate its senior housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GIVING VOICE - SPRING 2022

These grants were made possible through the support of the following funds.

To learn more about these funds and many others that make our grantmaking possible, visit:

CNYCF.ORG/FUNDS
 IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR GROWTH

Famed football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.”

The Community Foundation knows that better community service comes not only from building on our strengths, but also from identifying where we need to improve. Through our grants, programs and initiatives, we are always striving to be an excellent resource for our nonprofit partners and the neighbors that they serve. Eight years ago, we engaged with The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), a national nonprofit supporting the work of foundations across the country, to conduct a grantee and applicant perception survey. We hoped to receive candid feedback to help us identify areas for growth. The results did just that, reaffirming some themes and encouraging us to do better with others. Since then, many momentous changes have taken place in our community, with our nonprofit partners and within the Community Foundation. With this in mind, we decided to conduct another survey, and we need your help for it to have the most meaningful impact.

If your organization has applied for a grant (awarded or not) from the Community Foundation in the past two years, you will receive a CEP survey this spring. The confidential and anonymous online questionnaire will touch on several themes, including our impact in the community; our interactions and communications with you; the application and reporting processes; assistance beyond the grant; and diversity, equity and inclusion. CEP provides data, feedback, programs and insights to help individual donors and foundations improve their effectiveness at contributing to a better and more just world. CEP also puts the feedback in a comparative context, providing benchmarks from similar foundations.

We encourage you to participate in this survey. Honest feedback from our partners helps us improve our processes and programs; it also contributes to building trust. A positive, trust-based relationship with our nonprofit partners is paramount to our mission and our work. If we are falling short of that, we want to know about it and how we can improve. While we welcome feedback at any time, we recognize that many of our partners have limited time or are not comfortable doing so. This survey is designed to be easy, convenient and confidential so you can share your thoughts freely and efficiently.

We hope you will continue this journey of improvement with us.

Above: The Joe Family Foundation for Disability Advocacy, a Black Equity & Excellence Fund grant recipient

Photo credit: Ciara Studios

DANIELLE JOHNSON
Senior Director, Grants and Programs

to learn more about the CEP Survey, please contact:
djohnson@cnycf.org
315-883-5554
WHO'S HAPPENING

01

LEAD POISONING IN CNY: POST-PANDEMIC PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES EVENT

Central New York residents have been the victims of lead poisoning for decades. On Jan. 26, 2022, we hosted a community discussion on the rate of childhood lead poisoning in the region. Chris Bolt, general manager of WAER, moderated the discussion, and has been covering issues around Syracuse lead poisoning since the 1990s. Panelists included community leaders, health professionals and activists who engaged in constructive dialogue on solutions to an issue that has affected many lives over the past 30 years.

02

FUNDING RECEIVED TO CONNECT RESIDENTS TO EXPANDED TAX CREDITS

We recently received funding to help ensure that as many Syracuse families as possible sign up for expanded federal tax credit benefits. The EITC Funders Network provided us with $50,000 from its Community Outreach and Opportunity Fund to conduct hyperlocal, strategic outreach to residents. We also contributed a $50,000 local match towards this effort. The earned income tax credit and child tax credit help families with necessary expenses like household bills and food.

03

$150,000 GRANT RECEIVED TO EXPAND LEAD POISONING PREVENTION EFFORTS

Our LeadSafeCNY initiative received a second grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to put towards the cost of replacing exterior doors and windows in rental units for low-income people in Syracuse. The $150,000 grant will allow the initiative to expand its reach citywide. The renovations are paid for by nonprofit housing and community development organization Home HeadQuarters at no cost to property owners through a deferred loan. The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation initially funded this effort in 2021 with a $300,000 grant that resulted in the replacement of 299 windows and 48 doors in 43 affordable rental units. Home HeadQuarters estimates that the new funding will support removal of significant lead hazards from an additional 78 affordable rental units.
Joelene Orlando shares a simple concept to illustrate life as a deaf person. “Imagine watching a movie with the sound off,” the executive director of WHOLE ME said. “The deaf and hard-of-hearing community needs the right tools to understand what’s going on, participate in conversation and advocate for themselves.”

Since 2003, WHOLE ME has provided tools, advocacy and education to the estimated 1,500 people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and their families in Central New York. Starting as an afterschool program for children, the agency headquartered on James Street provides American Sign Language instruction, workforce development, college support, care coordination services, assistive technology training and community awareness events. It also offers a fee-for-service interpreting referral program.

“We try to encourage deaf people to see how successful they can be,” Orlando said. “If I have the right tools, I can be successful at my job and in my life.”

Orlando joined WHOLE ME in 2017 as associate director and shifted to executive director in May 2021, succeeding founding director Christine Kovar. A Community Foundation grant supported the agency’s leadership transition, during which Kovar mentored Orlando for six months.

“There often isn’t resources for nonprofits to use for onboarding new staff,” said Orlando. “The funding allowed for a mentoring period that helped ease my transition, which limited disruption.”
The staff of 12 - of whom 10 are deaf, including Orlando - advocate for reasonable accommodations for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Orlando points to the ASL interpreters at local and national news conferences about COVID-19 as an example of how organizations should include the deaf community. “That was so important,” she said. “Deaf people need to know what’s happening in emergencies.”

WHOLE ME’s advocates help coordinate Individualized Education Programs for students, connect families with specialists like speech pathologists and audiologists, and educate people about how to get assistive equipment. They also encourage families to learn ASL as quickly as possible.

“Language acquisition is key,” Orlando said. “Once you have access to language, you have access to everything else. Without it you can’t thrive.”

An interpreter accompanies Orlando to community and networking events, highlighting awareness of communication access needs in the deaf community.

WHOLE ME also collaborates with agencies, including a Families First program for children with autism. In addition, a program with the Onondaga County Sheriff’s Office teaches deputies how to approach and talk to people who are deaf. The sheriffs work directly with the deaf community to ensure they are using methods that will help keep everyone safe.

Orlando has witnessed increasing support for people with disabilities and more efforts to provide accommodations over the years. “It’s about time,” she said. “We still need to see more accessibility in Central New York.”
STAFF & BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

STAFF PROMOTIONS

JAN LANE
Lane was promoted to Senior Philanthropic Advisor

DANA LYONS-CANTY
Lyons-Canty was promoted to Scholarship and Student Support Officer, Say Yes Syracuse

PRAGYA MURPHY
Murphy was promoted to Senior Philanthropic Advisor

AHMEED TURNER
Turner was promoted to Vice President, Scholarships and Student Support and Executive Director, Say Yes Syracuse

NEW STAFF HIRE

COLBY CYRUS
The Central New York Community Foundation has hired Colby Cyrus as Program Manager. His role is to assist with the development, implementation and monitoring of grantmaking and programs. He works with the Community Foundation’s Community Grant program and affiliate funds. Colby, who speaks both French and Arabic, was previously employed at InterFaith Works and has experience in international development, advocacy and survey research. He received his master’s degree in international relations from Syracuse University in 2019.

LISA DUNN ALFORD
Lisa is the executive director of ACR Health and formerly served as commissioner of the Department of Adult and Long-Term Care Services for Onondaga County where she held multiple leadership roles during her tenure. She has served on several nonprofit councils and boards including our Grants and Community Initiatives Committee, the Health Foundation for Western & Central New York, the American Heart Association, Elmcrest Children’s Center, The Women’s Fund of CNY and more. Lisa is a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

MARTIN A. SCHWAB
Martin is a trusts and estates and tax attorney at Bond, Schoeneck & King. A graduate of Syracuse and Clarkson Universities, he has served on several nonprofit boards and committees, including the Estate Planning Council of Central New York, Hospice of CNY (both operating and Foundation boards), Child Care Solutions, and The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County. He has also served in advisory capacities to CNYCF, the Upstate Foundation, Enable, and Francis House.
UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

Join us for our exciting events and workshops this year! To register, visit:

→ CNYCF.ORG/EVENTS

GRANT DEADLINES

JUNE 15, 2022
Women’s Fund of Central New York

JULY 8, 2022
Black Equity & Excellence Fund

JULY 8, 2022
The Leadership Classroom (TLC)

JULY 8, 2022
LeadUp CNY

JULY 15, 2022
Oswego County Community Foundation

OCTOBER 7, 2022
Community Grants

EVENTS

JUNE 16, 2022
Storytime: Legacy Workshop

SEPTEMBER 8, 2022 | 9-11:30 A.M.
N.E.W.S. | Planned Giving And Endowments

OCTOBER 6, 2022 | 8-10 A.M.
Annual Professional Advisor Continuing Education Seminar | Featuring Christopher R. Hoyt, JD