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Community Foundation to implement LEAD Council program in 2014

The Northern New York Community Foundation will introduce a new leadership program for young professionals in 2014 that will give participants a direct hand in community engagement and philanthropy in the North Country. The LEAD Council has been created to provide selected members with an opportunity to participate in strategic grantmaking, learn more about the work of local non-profit organizations and develop individual skills to become impactful leaders in our communities. The acronym LEAD stands for: Leadership, Engagement, Access and Direction.

“This is a natural and important next step in the Foundation’s commitment to helping ensure a solid leadership base for our community’s future. Keeping that pipeline of both talent and intellectual capital engaged is critical to ensure that all the good that has been done in our region for decades will continue in a vibrant way,” said Rande S. Richardson, Foundation executive director.

The Community Foundation’s Board of Directors agreed Tuesday to allot \$5,000 from the organization’s Friends of the Foundation Community Betterment Fund to support grantmaking for the LEAD Council in its first year. The Community Foundation will seek other local businesses and organizations to partner in this initiative to increase grant funding for the program. Other components of the program may include regular council meetings, site visits,

social gatherings, invitations to Community Foundation events and discussions with community leaders. The creation of this program builds off the success of the organization's Youth Philanthropy Council, which has focused on leadership development at the high school level and awarded \$22,500 in grants through three years.

“It's important for young professionals in our communities to be included in the discussion about how we can improve our region,” said Max DelSignore, Foundation coordinator of donor services. “It is the Community Foundation's responsibility to cultivate and develop community leaders, as well as provide them with an opportunity to participate in our meaningful work.”

The Community Foundation plans to have active LEAD Council participants from Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The council will play an active role in serving as a vital community voice in helping the Community Foundation address local needs and enhance the quality of life in the region.

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