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### **Community Foundation Announces Grants to Benefit Projects at Thompson Park**

The Northern New York Community Foundation's Board of Directors recently approved grants totaling \$175,000 to support projects for the betterment of Thompson Park in Watertown.

The board agreed to a \$100,000 grant to help assist with the organizational planning efforts at the Thompson Park Zoo. The Community Foundation will provide a \$50,000 grant in 2017 to assist with the zoo's organizational restructuring. Following an evaluation and approval of the zoo's progress in the first year of its plan, the Foundation will grant another \$50,000 to be utilized in 2018.

"The citizens of this area, and the Community Foundation have made significant investments in Thompson Park over the years. It is a regional asset that is worthy of protecting and enhancing," said Rande S. Richardson, Community Foundation executive director.

For more than 20 years, the Community Foundation has supported a variety of projects dedicated to enhancing the mission of Thompson Park Conservancy, Inc., and also includes the administration of an endowment fund which provides the Conservancy with ongoing support. The zoo offers a unique collection of animal and wildlife exhibits. Approximately 60,000 visitors enter the zoo each year, and more than 5,000 individuals, youth and families participate in the organization's educational programs.

"The Zoo has been an integral and beloved part of our community for nearly a century and this investment from the Community Foundation provides tremendous support as we work hard to bring value to our community in an exciting and sustainable way," said Mark Irwin, board chair for Thompson Park Zoo.

The Community Foundation also approved two matching grants totaling \$75,000 in support of the Friends of Thompson Park. The board awarded a \$50,000 matching grant to

leverage community support for the committee's splash pad project. Charitable gifts for the splash pad project will be administered by the Foundation.

A collaborative vision for the future of Thompson Park was also supported by the Foundation's board, which agreed to add a \$25,000 matching grant to establish the Friends of Thompson Park Fund at the Foundation. The purpose of the charitable fund would be to assist with future charitable projects and the overall enhancement of Thompson Park in perpetuity.

"We are honored to be a part of providing donors with an option to enhance a cherished community asset and also provide ways to thoughtfully steward gifts in an enduring and permanent way to protect the Park for generations to come," Mr. Richardson said.

"The Friends of Thompson Park are very excited to receive the \$50,000 for the splash park," said Rev. Fred G. Garry, Friends of Thompson Park committee chairperson. "The Northern New York Community Foundation's support will not only help realize this project, but also encourage the City of Watertown and Jefferson County to see the great community asset we have in the park. The \$25,000 grant to begin an endowment embodies the clarity of vision of the Foundation. The future of Thompson Park will be insured and vibrant with the development of an endowment worthy of the Olmstead treasure."

Donors interested in making a charitable contribution to support either the splash pad project fund, or the Friends of Thompson Park Fund, may consider a gift to the Northern New York Community Foundation, 120 Washington Street, Suite 400, Watertown, NY 13601. The Community Foundation will match each contribution, dollar-for-dollar, up to the grant award for each fund.

The Northern New York Community Foundation makes grants to support the work of non-profit organizations and provides scholarships to individuals in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The Foundation has been built and added to from gifts (both while living and through their legacy plans) by individuals and organizations committed to meeting the changing needs of Northern New York, as well as supporting specific charitable interests and passions.

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