The evolution of a lasting partnership

Thousand Islands Land Trust builds enduring relationship

The Northern New York Community Foundation recently announced a strategic partnership with the United Way of NNY in the North Country Center of Nonprofit Excellence.

The Center of Nonprofit Excellence began operations in January and serves the region’s nonprofit community through education, promotion of best practices, collaboration and specialized training.

For many years, the United Way of NNY and the Community Foundation have shared common goals for the region: economic prosperity, a quality of life for every resident, and essential services for those individuals and families facing challenges. The Center of Nonprofit Excellence is the first major shared step in attaining mutual goals. The initiative aims to create a nonprofit business environment that promotes effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation to meet today’s challenges and endure future success in the region.

A comprehensive schedule of training and workshops for nonprofit staff, leadership and board members kicked off Jan. 16 with a senior leadership and management symposium. The Center will hold a series of workshops throughout this year, focusing on a wide range of topics that include: strategic planning, grant preparation and writing, financial management, media, leadership and more. Contact Natasha Gamble, North Country Center of Nonprofit Excellence program director at natasha.gamble@unitedway-nny.org or 315-755-1399, ext. 106, to learn more about this initiative.

Connecting nonprofits with opportunities

The needs in our North Country communities change rapidly. We are fortunate to have many nonprofit organizations that are nimble responding to critical and evolving challenges each year. The Northern New York Community Foundation remains devoted to helping donors align their charitable interests to the needs that equally committed nonprofits so effectively address.

The Community Foundation’s commitment to the region’s nonprofits extends beyond meaningful grants to support their missions and services. You will note in this first edition of the Nonprofit Link the many opportunities to forge a stronger relationship with the Community Foundation that impact nonprofit capacity and permanence. The connection leads to resource sharing and thoughtful guidance, which makes the communities we serve flourish. It is important to us to help position nonprofits in a strategic manner, as they explore charitable avenues to strengthen their work.

Let the Nonprofit Link be a local guide to help lift your efforts as a vital nonprofit organization that serves the community.

The Community Foundation is grateful and excited for the partnerships we have, and the opportunity to create more support for the region’s nonprofits in the future.
CALENDAR OF 2020 GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Kenneth V. and Jeannette Remp Sawyer Community Fund
Region served: Boonville, Constableville and Westerwillie
Description: Support for programs, projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages who live in the region noted above
Funding available: Up to $40,000
Deadline to apply: April 24, 2020
Grants determined: June 2020

Carolyn Whitney Fund
Region served: City of Watertown
Description: Support tree-planting projects or initiatives in the city of Watertown
Funding available: Up to $3,000
Deadline to apply: April 24, 2020
Grants determined: June 2020

Clifton-Fine Community Fund
Region served: Communities of Clifton, Cranberry Lake, Fine, Newton Falls, Oswegatchie, Star Lake, Wanakena
Description: Support to nonprofit organizations and eligible public organizations for programs, projects and initiatives augmenting the quality of life in the region noted above
Funding available: Up to $5,000
Deadline to apply: August 2020
Grants determined: September 2020

John and Dorothy VanNess Family Fund
Region served: Greater Potsdam area
Description: Support to nonprofit organizations and eligible public organizations impacting the quality of life for residents of the greater Potsdam area, with a priority focus given to the village and town of Potsdam. Areas of focus include, but are not limited to: health and wellness, arts and culture, economic development, community revitalization, and more
Funding available: Up to $10,000
Deadline to apply: October 23, 2020
Grants determined: December 2020

Six Town Community Fund
Region served: Towns of Adams, Ellsiburg, Henderson, Lorraine, Rodman and Worth
Description: Support to nonprofit organizations and all eligible public organizations impacting the quality of life for residents of the Six Town region, as noted above
Funding available: Up to $5,000
Deadline to apply: October 23, 2020
Grants determined: December 2020

The Lighthouse Fund
Region served: Clayton, Cape Vincent and surrounding St. Lawrence River-area communities
Description: Support for nonprofit organizations that provide services to vulnerable populations residing in the region noted above
Funding available: Up to $2,000
Deadline to apply: April 24, 2020
Grants determined: June 2020

Rock Charitable Fund
Region served: St. Lawrence County
Description: Support for maintenance and preservation of churches and cemeteries, and places of legitimate historical significance in St. Lawrence County; also to help benefit and/or assist Veterans of the United States Military residing in St. Lawrence County for their medical and/or recreational needs
Funding available: Up to $100,000
Deadline to apply: Fall 2020
Grants determined: December 2020

QUESTIONS?
If you have questions about any one of these grant opportunities or would like to learn more about the Community Foundation’s grant process, please contact Max DelSignore, assistant director, max@nnycf.org, 315-782-7110. Grant guidelines and additional information can be found online at www.nnycf.org/grant-information.

Jefferson Economic Development Fund
Region served: Jefferson County
Description: Support for nonprofit organizations with programs, projects and initiatives that enhance and promote economic development in Jefferson County. Nonprofits are encouraged to think creatively and broadly when examining their programs and services and identify a correlation between their work and economic development in the community
Funding Available: Up to $10,000
Deadline to apply: October 23, 2020
Grants determined: December 2020

Daniel J. Briggs Fund for Integrity
Region served: Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties
Description: Support for bullying prevention and character education programs, as well as professional development opportunities to administrators, teachers, staff, and employees of school districts in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties
Funding available: Up to $1,000
Deadline to apply: October 23, 2020
Grants determined: December 2020

Safe Schools Endeavor
Region served: Jefferson and Lewis County school districts (public and private)
Description: Support for programs and projects that empower students, parents and faculty in creating the safest environment and campus for children and adults in Jefferson and Lewis County schools
Funding available: Fall 2020
Deadline to apply: October 26, 2020

Youth Philanthropy Council
Region served: Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties
Description: Support to nonprofit organizations serving all residents, through programs and projects that enhance the quality of life in the tri-county area
Funding Available: Up to $20,000
Grants determined: June 2020
2020-2021 Application available: Fall 2020
Consider these grant-seeking best practices

We often refer to the best practices in grant seeking as the 3 Rs. 1. Research, 2. Relationships, and THEN 3. Writing. The reality is that there are actually 5 Rs to the grant cycle. 1. Readiness, 2. Research, 3. Relationships, THEN 4. Writing, and once you successfully secure funding, 5. Reporting.

I have seen well-intentioned organizations that shortchange or completely bypass the early elements of the best practices framework for seeking grants and jump right into the fourth “R” of Writing. When organizations skip best practices or focus on them out of order, their grant-seeking success is nearly certain to be less than they were hoping. I have seen incredibly well-written proposals fall flat as they were sent to grantmakers that allowed communication, but they hadn’t taken time to consider it and submitted without any outreach beforehand.

Here are some tips to help get you started with the first three best practices BEFORE you ever start writing.

■ BEST PRACTICE 1 — GET GRANT READY BEFORE YOU START APPLYING

Grant readiness is another phrase for competitiveness in the grant-seeking process. It is true that the basic element of grant readiness is looking at the formal framework such as your IRS, grants.gov and Grants Gateway registrations. It is also important to look at your internal capacity. Do you have the right grant-seeking policies and procedures in place? Do you have an engaged grant team? (Don’t worry, it isn’t one more committee to have on your organization chart, rather it is having a group of engaged colleagues who have a stake in seeing grants be successful and actively support grant-seeking activities.)

■ BEST PRACTICE 2 — DO YOUR HOMEWORK ABOUT EACH GRANTMAKER

Your initial research about a grantmaker likely centers around the keywords for their funding priorities, their application process, and their application deadline.

Digging deeper into the due diligence you should be conducting in your grantmaker research, you need to understand more about their recent grant-making history as part of your homework and learning. You need to look geographically at where the grants are being awarded and how those locations relate to their overall stated geographic priority. You need to look at what their average and median grant award size is and see how those amounts compare to what you were planning to request through your application.

Dig deep. Learn all of the details possible so that you are asking the right questions when you reach out to a grant-maker to start building a relationship.

■ BEST PRACTICE 3 — REMEMBER THAT ALL GRANTS ARE RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN

Relationship building is as important in grant seeking as it is in all other elements of fundraising.

Yes, the process is different for the way in which funding is requested and approved, but there are people making the decisions about the grants awarded to you and the impact you seek to create.

When reaching out to grantmakers, you should always be prepared with these three talking points:

- Short introduction of who you are, what organization you are with (not getting into your whole mission and all your programs), and if the grantmaker is not geographically in the same place, let them know where you are based and implementing your work.
- A 30-second elevator pitch of why, based on your research of their funding and recent grant history, you think that your organization is a strong potential funding partner. Pause afterward to seek their input.
- Up to three thoughtful questions that were not answered through your research of their materials, but could help you customize your proposal to be more competitive in their process.

While following the first three best practices of grant seeking do not guarantee your grant seeking success, they ensure that the proposals you DO sit down to write will stand a much better likelihood of being successful.

Diane H. Leonard, GPC, CSPO, CSM, is a Grant Professional Certified and Approved Trainer of the Grant Professionals Association. She is also a Certified Scrum Master and Certified Scrum Product Owner through Scrum Alliance Inc. Since 2006, Diane and her team have secured more than $61.8 million in competitive grant awards for clients of DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services. She is an active member of the Grant Professionals Association. Diane is a graduate of Cornell University, Ithaca, with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial and Labor Relations. When not working with her team on grant applications for clients, Diane can be found in the 1000 Islands, out for a run, or drinking a strong cup of coffee. She lives in Clayton with her husband, Erich, and two young daughters.
Work that strengthens the efforts of tri-county nonprofits

Through endowments and other agency funds, we are proud to partner with nearly 150 nonprofit organizations in our region to support their work now and in perpetuity.

Jefferson County

- All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
- Alexandria Township Historical Society
- Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired of Northern New York
- Carthage Central School District
- Carthage YMCA
- Child Evangelism Fellowship
- City of Watertown
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County (Camp Wabasso)
- Crescent Yacht Club Junior Division
- Densmore Church
- Dexter Historical Society
- Disabled Persons Action Organization (DPAO)
- Faith Fellowship Christian School
- Foundation for Community Betterment (Alexandria Bay Chapter)
- Friends of Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library
- Friends of Thompson Park
- General Brown Central School District
- Hay Memorial Library
- Henderson Historical Society
- Herring College Memorial Educational Trust
- Historical Association of South Jefferson
- Honor the Mountain Monument
- Hospice of Jefferson County
- Immaculate Heart Central School
- Indian River Lakes Conservancy
- Jefferson County Historical Society
- Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida BOCES

North Country

- Northpole Fire Company
- NYS Zoo at Thompson Park and Conservancy
- Ontario Bays Initiative (OBI)
- Point Vivian Preservation Corp.
- River Hospital
- Sackets Harbor Central School District
- Sackets Harbor Historical Society
- Samaritan Medical Center
- St. John’s Episcopal Church, Cape Vincent
- Save The River
- Six Town Community Fund
- South Jefferson Central School District
- SPCA of Jefferson County
- Stage Notes
- Thousand Islands Area Habitat for Humanity
- Thousand Islands Arts Center
- Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service (TIERS)
- Thousand Islands Foundation
- Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT)
- Thousand Islands Performing Arts Fund (TIPAF)
- at Clayton Opera House
- Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
- United Way of Northern New York Village of Dexter
- Volunteer Transportation Center
- Watertown Area Habitat for Humanity
- Watertown City School District
- Watertown Evening Rotary Club
- Watertown Lyric Theater
- Watertown Musicales
- Watertown Noon Rotary Club
- Watertown Sunrise Rotary Club
- Watertown Urban Mission
- WPBS-TV

St. Lawrence County

- ARC Jefferson-St. Lawrence & Rotary Dodge Pond
- Brasher Falls Central School District
- Canton Community Fund
- Canton Fountain Fund
- Canton Free Library
- Cerebral Palsy Association of the North Country
- Church & Community Program of Canton
- Clifton-Fine Community Fund
- Clifton-Fine Hospital
- Colton-Pierrepont Central School
- Community Health Center of the North Country
- Edwards-Knox Central School District
- Fort La Présentation Association
- Frederic Remington Art Museum
- Friends of the Potsdam Museum
- Gouverneur Hospital
- Grass River Heritage
- Hammond Presbyterian Church
- Hermon-DeKalb Central School District
- Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley
- Indian Creek Nature Center
- Little River Community School
- Madrid-Waddington Central School
- Massena Central School District
- Massena Music Friends
- Massena Public Library
- Morristown Central School District
- New Beginnings Clothing and Food Outreach
- North Country Children’s Museum
- North Country Public Radio
- Norwood-Norfolk Central School District
- Norwood Village Green Concert Series
- Ogdensburg Boys & Girls Club
- Ogdensburg Command Performances
- Ogdensburg Free Academy
- Orchestra of Northern New York
- Police Activities League of Massena
- Potsdam Central School District
- Potsdam Holiday Fund
- Potsdam Humane Society
- St. Lawrence Central School District
- St. Lawrence County Historical Association
- St. Lawrence Land Trust
- St. Lawrence Power & Equipment Museum
- Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY)
- United Church of Madrid
- United Helpers
- Wanakena Historical Association
- Wilderness Health Care Foundation

Advantages for nonprofits to establish a fund at the Community Foundation include:

- Investment returns provide additional source of income to support operations
- Unique legacy naming opportunities
- Greater diversification of pooled investments
- Ability for donors to endow annual giving by establishing parameters for annual distributions to the charity or charities
- If you or an organization you represent are interested in learning more about options for supporting your favorite school, church or charity in perpetuity, contact the Community Foundation, 315-782-7110 or info@nnycf.org.
The Community Foundation’s affiliation with the Orchestra of Northern New York has been one of its most long-standing and widespread. The Orchestra is undoubtedly one of the most critical partners to advance the arts and culture in the region.

For several years, the Orchestra has capably filled the void left in the Watertown area by the dissolution of the Syracuse Symphony. The organization has been rejuvenated by its Watertown Advisory Council’s recent work to boost attendance and overall community engagement.

Thanks to Community Foundation donors, substantial annual investments have been made to continue to build the Orchestra’s presence in the region. The Foundation also partners with the Orchestra for the annual summer Concert in Thompson Park as well as at the Clayton Opera House. In 2013, the Orchestra, proactively established an endowment at the Community Foundation, guaranteeing future growth of those funds to help ensure its longevity. In the past two years, an additional $15,000 was added.

Timothy Savage has served as Orchestra board president since 2011 and became involved when his wife Jill joined the violin section in 1992. He is also the director of bands at Canton Central School and serves as an adjunct instructor at SUNY Potsdam’s Crane School of Music and in the St. Lawrence University music department.

“All we could have hoped for from this partnership has transpired over the past six years. My wife Jill and I will be pursuing estate planning with the Community Foundation that benefits the orchestra. We hope others will consider doing the same.”

—Timothy Savage, board president, Orchestra of Northern New York

The Community Foundation recently awarded the Orchestra a $10,000 matching grant to help build support for its endowment. “Financial stability depends on covering not only our operational budget but also in growing our endowment held by our partners at the Community Foundation. This year my wife and I have given to both, and will be pursuing estate planning with the Foundation that benefits the orchestra. We hope others will consider doing the same,” Mr. Savage said.

Is my organization eligible for a Community Foundation grant?

The Northern New York Community Foundation community grant program allows tax-exempt, nonprofit organizations in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties to apply for grants to fund impactful programs, projects and initiatives that positively affect the quality of life in the region.

To be eligible for grant funding, your organization must be a recognized 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization, according to the Internal Revenue Code and benefit residents of Northern New York — Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.

The Community Foundation awards grants to programs and projects that are responsive to changing community needs in areas that include: human services, health and wellness, arts and culture, education, families, youth and/or elders, conservation and environment, community development, recreation and more.

We encourage grant requests designed for meaningful and valuable impact in Northern New York. It is important to the Community Foundation that each proposal conveys a passion and vision that aligns with the Community Foundation’s mission. Proposals will also be evaluated based on its potential value to Northern New York, the quality of planning, leadership, support and available funding.

Grant applications are reviewed four times each year. Funding requests of $5,000 or less may be approved at the committee level. Larger grant requests are referred to the Board of Directors with a committee recommendation. Applicants are notified of the status of their grant proposal after each quarterly Board of Directors meeting.

Before completing a proposal, we encourage you to contact Community Foundation staff to discuss your idea and identified need.

Email Max DelSignore, assistant director, max@nnycf.org, or call 315-782-7110, to learn more today.
TILT from the cover

Fund is a permanent resource that broadly supports land conservation and education programs, including general operations. The TILT Zenda Farm Preserve Conservation Fund is restricted for the conservation and maintenance of the preserve, in perpetuity. The named funds at the Community Foundation support TILT’s conservation work in the 1000 Islands region and are another way to contribute to regional land conservation and environmental education.

“We felt confident that the agency funds were not just a transaction; they were created as a true partnership, a friendship. We knew that while we were going to establish the funds at the Foundation and build those over time, we were not only gaining resources, but the knowledge base, expertise, and guidance of the Foundation and its staff,” Mr. Tibbles said. “For us, it was really a natural step. It was a great next step for TILT toward sustainability.”

The Community Foundation partnership gives donors a natural pathway to provide them with options to endow their annual giving beyond their lifetimes, either specifically or broadly in support of TILT’s work and mission. Just as important, TILT stands stronger with charitable resources that span the generations in perpetuity.

“The great thing about the partnership that we’ve built over the years, especially with the establishment of the agency funds, is that we now have three different agency funds that provide diverse opportunities for donors to make an impact through the Community Foundation,” Mr. Tibbles said.

Helping local nonprofits to think beyond the short-term implementation of a project and consider the longevity and sustainability of a project or organization has also helped TILT as its partnership with the Community Foundation has matured.

“When it comes to working together to enhance the quality of life for our region, any nonprofit can find common ground with the Community Foundation to strengthen their work,” Mr. Tibbles said. “The Foundation exists to support the best for our communities, and I believe every nonprofit could gain additional value from a partnership with the Community Foundation.”

— Jake Tibbles, executive director, Thousand Islands Land Trust, Clayton

“The Community Foundation exists to support the best for our communities, and I believe every nonprofit could gain additional value from a partnership with the Community Foundation.”

Contact Max DelSignore, assistant director, at 315-782-7110, or max@nnycf.org, to learn more about the many ways a nonprofit partnership with the Northern New York Community Foundation can benefit your organization now and in perpetuity.