



# gifts & grants

## Initiative to expand dental care Foundation backs new state-of-the-art facility

**R**enovations to a vacant pharmacy in the middle of the city of Schenectady this summer offers hope for a full-range dental clinic including general dentistry, pediatric dentistry and oral surgery by the end of this year.

When Ellis shuttered its clinic last year, Hometown Health Centers became Schenectady County's sole Medicaid dental provider. Hometown stepped up to take on the increased influx of patients from Ellis and expanded access to hundreds more underserved residents. The agency employs the only oral surgeon in the County who accepts Medicaid patients. "It's our mission to care for the underserved," said Joe Gambino, Hometown's CEO.

Robert Carreau, executive director of The Schenectady Foundation, praised Hometown Health's willingness to meet the need for dental care in the community by building an expanded clinic that will be accessible and convenient for all.

"It was an easy decision for us to support this project," said Carreau of the \$200,000 grant toward the \$7 million project.

**The new clinic will include an oral surgery suite – something Hometown Health currently lacks – with three oral surgeons, enabling Hometown Health to see more patients.**

"Even before the Ellis dental clinic closed, Hometown Health was already outgrowing its dental space," said Rory Schmit, chief dental officer. "Every day we have patients calling and they get put on such a long waiting list to get in. The new clinic is going to alleviate a lot of the stress on the patients, the dentists and the staff answering calls."

This lack of dental providers is perhaps the biggest barrier to getting good dental care for many of Schenectady's neediest residents. Limited access to transportation and education about oral care, also can be difficult to overcome.

Above: The importance of dental care for underserved residents is seen in better health and happy smiles, like those above.



## What's inside

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*Cool fun for kids coming to Mont Pleasant*

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*Schenectady Gets Centered on Healthy Food*





## Our Focus on Healthy Food

Community needs assessments have identified access to healthy food as a top issue. While retail is the number one food source, under-resourced families rely on food pantries, meal sites and other programs to make ends meet.

At The Schenectady Foundation we are determined that all families have access to healthy food toward maintaining their wellness and sustainability. By engaging stakeholders from across the food system and investing in programs that serve families with equity and dignity, we are making progress!

Thank you to all those who make this work possible. We are all contributors to our amazing, collaborative and compassionate community!



Robert A. Carreau,  
Executive Director



## 21% of Schenectady County Children are Food Insecure

A food insecure household means there is not enough food to meet the needs of everyone in the family. In another way, the meals of one of five children are getting food from pantries, or federal assistance stamps, or someone in the household going without a meal, lunch or dinner.

~ According to the 2020 Census Bureau's American



Volunteers stock the shelves in the new food pantry.

## From Vision to Reality

### Renovation brings food pantry to center of Rotterdam community

Rev. Dustin Wright's vision of a place that nourishes people in "body, mind and soul," is now being realized.

Thanks to a \$75,000 Healthy Food Access for All grant from The Schenectady Foundation, the church was able to transform a newly acquired building at 705 Curry Road into a community center that offers an array of programming and services, such as free meditation sessions, crafts and music, and a place to get family portraits taken.

Since May people now also come for food.

Called Bread of Life Food Pantry, the pantry used to operate out of Rotterdam-based Messiah Lutheran Church.

## An Affordable Farm to Table Program benefits farmers and low-income



Ariel White and Joleigh Van Genderen work the Food Box Program at the Schenectady Greenmarket each Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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*Hassleer Jacinto-Whitcher teaches a client from the ARC how to plant seeds in the Central Park greenhouse in March. Some of those plants, above, on sale to the public in May.*

## Community's are

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## able Solution

### re residents

For a low, below-market price, the Schenectady Greenmarket's Food Box Program provides a win-win this summer. Low-income residents receive a delicious assortment of fresh, high-quality produce and the farmers growing veggies for the Food Box Program get a fair-market price for their produce.

The difference between what Food Box Program participants pay and what it actually costs the growers is made possible by a \$100,000 Healthy Food Access for All grant from The Schenectady Foundation.

The Food Box Program is open to low-income residents, with priority given to those with the greatest need. Accepted payment methods include SNAP EBT, cash, credit and debit.

Residents sign up monthly and can either pick up their box at the Greenmarket on Sundays or have it delivered.

Weekly food boxes come in two sizes: a small, \$10 box of 7 to 10 items or a large, \$14 box of 10 to 12 items. The boxes would retail for about \$30 without the support from The Schenectady Foundation.

## Sowing what we reap

### Program teaches gardening strategies

**W**hen it was cold and grey in March, Hassleer Jacinto-Whitcher was teaching students from the ARC how to plant seeds in the warmth of Schenectady's Central Park greenhouse.

Those seeds are now strong sturdy plants featured in a new youth gardening program at five Schenectady schools. A \$100,600 grant from The Schenectady Foundation to a collaborative project called Healthy Living 360 enabled Cornell Cooperative Extension to make Jacinto-Whitcher and another part-time staffer full-time employees, a change that has allowed the organization to expand its educational programming.

The project aims to remove barriers and empower families by bringing together Schenectady Community Ministries, Schenectady Urban Farms, CCE, the ARC and the city school district. The groups are helping foster connections between different food programs and raising awareness of what's available with a goal of making it easier for people to fill their households with good, healthy food are key objectives.

## Feeling the Pinch

With your help we've improved access to healthy food. But growing inflation and fiscal constraints on our non-profit partners have made the work more challenging this year.

And families are feeling the pinch. With food, housing and transportation costs soaring, household budgets are stretched thin. That's when community-based food access becomes more important than ever.

Yours might even be one of those families in need.

*That's why we're here.*

If you can help, your donation puts healthy food on the table for Schenectady families, while supporting lasting change in your community food system.

**To make your online gift to our Food Security Fund now, go to:**

**[www.schenectadyfoundation.org/giving.php](http://www.schenectadyfoundation.org/giving.php)**

**or, mail your donation to:**

The Schenectady Foundation

Food Security Fund

376 Broadway, Schenectady NY 12305

# Thank you!





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## Making a splash!

**T**his summer kids will get a third splash pad to play in when one at Wallingford Park joins similar cooling-off stations in Tribute Park and Woodlawn Park that have been built with support from The Schenectady Foundation.

"Kids need this," said Pat Smith, president of the Mont Pleasant Neighborhood Association, who spearheaded the effort which also received support from the Capital Region Land Bank, and the city of Schenectady. "When the neighborhood works together, this is the kind of thing we can have." Wallingford Park is an ideal location for a splash pad as it has a playground and basketball court but few trees to provide shade, it can become uncomfortably hot.

The splash pad is a perfect example of how residents' ideas to transform their neighborhoods can be brought to life through the Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge.



*Kids have enjoyed the the Woodlawn Park splash pad since 2019.*



**ROUND 3!**

## Coming to a neighborhood near you Schenectady's Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge

Round 3 of the Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge is just around the corner. Now's the time to begin thinking about what would make life better where you live, that might make your neighborhood stronger, healthier, safer or just more enjoyable.

**Details to be announced soon at [www.schenectadyfoundation.org](http://www.schenectadyfoundation.org)**