

November 2021



gifts & grants

A Thought About Schenectady

We have a remarkable community

Simply put, Schenectady's strong social sector — our non-profits, service organizations, County offices, volunteers and donors — has only become more resilient since the pandemic emerged. We came together like never before, driven by passion for our respective missions, and compassion for the families who need us to be there for them.

Our outcomes in housing and shelter, food security, child care and employment delivered on the most basic needs of residents during this time of crisis.

What we achieved together was due to an essential element: **Trust**. Without it, the highly collaborative work among dozens of leaders and organizations would not be nearly as cohesive or impactful. It's one reason the Foundation holds dearly to trust as a core value.

The Schenectady Foundation's role is to catalyze community transformation. Our first imperative, and the foundational key to our success, is building and maintaining trust among all stakeholders in the community.

Having risen to meet the pressing needs of our residents, it's clearer than ever that we must do more. We must go beyond helping people beat the odds that seems stacked against them. We are here to change the odds.

Tackling the root causes of inequity and disparities in health, income, housing and education remains elusive. We can and will focus on changing systems, and build equity for every resident. We can do this as One Schenectady.

This newsletter spotlights ways your donations help meet urgent needs and build a more equitable community. Thank you for your support, and we wish you a safe and healthy holiday season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Carreau'.

Robert A. Carreau
Executive Director

Above: Kimberli Gaillard paints a mural on the repaved basketball court at Jaylen's Park.



Resident-driven artwork now adorns the Craig Street bridge over I-890 thanks to donations to the Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge.

You are the change

When you make a contribution of your money, time or expertise you become part of the solution — making lasting change in your community.

Over the past difficult months so many of you stepped up to help make that huge difference in Schenectady County for those most in need of your help.

But the work continues.

Your tax-deductible contribution to The Schenectady Foundation will be invested back into your community for impact on issues you care about: healthy food access, neighborhood revitalization, citizen engagement and youth success. Please consider making your secure online donation today at:

[schenectadyfoundation.org](https://www.schenectadyfoundation.org)

Thanks for helping.



Food Access Grants are first stage of multi-year food security commitment

A healthier, more sustainable food system.

That's what The Schenectady Foundation wants to build, and it's why we've awarded \$450,000 to six organizations with creative ideas for making sure every Schenectady County resident has access to healthy food.

The projects take a collaborative, grassroots approach to the problem of hunger, enlisting those who live in underserved neighborhoods to improve food security and fill gaps in the local food system.



For **Messiah Lutheran Church**, which was awarded \$75,000 to move its food pantry into a renovated space in the former Trinity Church on Curry Road, located on the bus line, the hope is to nourish people both physically and emotionally.

"This will be more like the community feeding itself in body, mind and soul than members of the church just handing out food," said Rev. Dustin Wright, pastor at Messiah Lutheran.

That sentiment embodies the spirit of the Foundation's Healthy Food Access for All grants, which aim to create a community where every household is food secure.

The other grant recipients are:



The **Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York**, which will receive \$184,000 to improve food access in Princetown/Rotterdam Junction, Scotia/Glenville, and Schenectady's Stockade, Northside and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods;

Schenectady Community Ministries will receive \$100,600 for "Healthy Living 360," a multi-sector collaboration engaging Schenectady residents in a process to holistically combat the root causes of food insecurity in their neighborhoods through programming and resource access.



The **Food Pantries for the Capital District**, which will receive \$50,000 to operate its food access referral line and make more than 150 grocery deliveries each month to vulnerable Schenectady County residents;

Capital Roots, which will receive \$20,000 to establish a Capital Region food policy council to foster greater collaborations between farmers, processors, distributors and consumers; and



The **Schenectady Greenmarket**, which will receive \$20,000 to establish a food box program to purchase community supported agriculture shares from local farmers at full price and then sell these shares to low-income customers at reduced rates.

Did You Know?

Over the past 2 years the Foundation invested \$1.25 million to make the community more food-secure, including \$330,000 during pandemic response to ensure our most vulnerable citizens were safe, healthy and fed. Access to healthy food is now our top priority. While emergency feeding programs are important, our vision is to understand the root causes of food insecurity in order to reduce the gaps in family food budgets.



Melissa MacKinnon ladles potato and leek soup at a Fall Harvest member's get-together at the Schenectady Urban Farms.



Volunteers at Messiah Lutheran gather cartons of fresh lettuce.

Bethesda House turns to Schenectady Foundation to literally open doors

Tracy Keane arrived at Bethesda House six years ago, after a stroke made it physically impossible for her to continue living at her old place.

The Schenectady non-profit placed Keane in one of their 16 apartments for chronically homeless adults, and she's happily lived there ever since.

"I love it here," said Keane, who uses a wheelchair. "I love the people and the staff. I love the activities for residents."

Bethesda House is a vital safety net for people with nowhere else to go, providing permanent supportive housing to people like Keane and operating an overnight shelter all year round.

The organization will soon be able to do even more.

Thanks in part to a \$100,000 grant from The Schenectady Foundation, Bethesda House will build a new three-story facility, called Cara House, on a vacant lot near its headquarters at 834 State Street.

Cara House will include 16 emergency shelter beds and 26 permanent supportive housing units.

Six of the emergency shelter beds will be for medical



Kimarie Sheppard, Bethesda House's executive director, shows the rendering of Cara House, expected to open in September 2022.

respite care — for people experiencing homelessness who are too frail or sick to recover from illness or injury on the streets.

The bulk of Cara House's funding comes from a \$6.2 million state grant awarded last winter.

After that funding was awarded, surging construction material costs created a \$365,000 shortfall. The grant from The Schenectady Foundation will help fill that gap and move this crucial project forward.

Much more than a bakery

Program offers real-world skills

Twelve-year-old Ife McLaughlin wants to be a chef when she grows up, and an innovative new program is teaching her the basics.

Ife is enrolled in a baking course run by Community Fathers, Inc.

In this hands-on class, she and other local youth spend their Saturdays baking an assortment of mouthwatering goods under the tutelage of longtime baker/caterer Belinda Palombo.



Ife McLaughlin and Renalee Flora prepare batter for the Schenectady Greenmarket, the farmers' market outside City Hall.

On Sundays, the group heads to the Schenectady Greenmarket where they sell their wares under the name Cornerstone Bakery.

The baking class is part of a bigger initiative, called Occupations Instead of Incarceration (OIOI), launched earlier this year by Community Fathers, Inc. with the help of a Schenectady Foundation grant.

OIOI also teaches landscaping and silk-screening and will soon offer instruction in how to clean houses and commercial buildings.

The goal is to give local youth skills that translate into meaningful work, as well as an understanding of entrepreneurship.

"We want people to have more control of their livelihoods," said Walter Simpkins, executive director of Community Fathers.

For Ife, the idea is very appealing. "This is going to be my career," she said.

**To Support Programs Like These
Give online at
www.schenectadyfoundation.org**

Contact Us

518.393.9500

www.schenectadyfoundation.org



Participants in the Mom Up program at Girls Inc. brainstorm solutions in 2020, Donor Barbara Vivier, observes the program.

Donor Achieving Her Philanthropic Intent to Help Under-resourced Women

About a decade ago, Barbara Vivier arrived at the Schenectady YWCA to donate three garbage bags of clothing for the female residents there.

“The bags were so large and heavy that one of the residents came out to help me and asked me if I was donating or moving in,” said Vivier. The resident’s simple question “made me realize that sometimes people decide to leave home quickly for their safety and that of their children. They throw clothes and a few other items into a garbage bag and leave.”

That insight grew as Vivier learned more about women who have experienced inequity and seek to improve the quality of life for themselves and their family.

Vivier approached The Schenectady Foundation to create the **Barbara J. Vivier Fund for Women**. Its purpose is to support the social and educational advancement of women in Schenectady County.

“I established the Fund at The Schenectady Foundation because they identify strong grant opportunities and perform due diligence,” Vivier said. “They collaborate with me on grants to fund, and monitor that monies are spent as intended. Most of all, I like that they fund local programs, and ensure donations get to effective programs.”

A recent grant made by the Fund was to Albany Can Code’s “Mom Up” program — an “intro” to the coding world for women. This appealed to Vivier, who during her professional career did research in information technology/computer science at GE.

“We love Barbara’s intent to help women advance their lives,” said Robert Carreau, executive director of The Schenectady Foundation. The Foundation was a co-investor in “Mom Up”, providing funds to reach a higher level of impact. “This is a wonderful partnership with a caring and generous donor,” added Carreau.

What Will Be Your Legacy?

Is there a cause close to your heart that you want to impact? You can start a Fund for a special cause that will grow over time, making a difference in your community now, and forever. The Schenectady Foundation helped Barbara Vivier bring to life her desire to assist under-resourced women. Another donor established a growing memorial scholarship fund to help students obtain vocational education.

If you want to do something special with your philanthropy, we’d love to hear about it.

Whether it is an issue-specific Fund, Scholarship Fund or a Donor Advised Fund, we are happy to discuss ways to help create your legacy.

To start that conversation, contact us at 518-393-9500.