

Community

CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2020



Pivoting to Respond

We're Holding the Garden Party in Our Hearts

For the first time in 26 years, we will not hold our annual Garden Party. Given the uncertainty and risks associated with Covid-19, the event committee and Trustees made this difficult decision with the community in mind.

But in those conversations, our volunteers also came down to the heart of the matter: **the Garden Party was never confined to a tent.** Rather, our signature event has always held the purpose to support and strengthen local nonprofits. While we won't come together

to celebrate this year, we are renewing our commitment to the essential mission of this work.

We've already begun. Together with donors like you, we have distributed more than \$1 million to

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Responding Together

Dear Friends,

It's my honor and pleasure to write to you as the new President & CEO of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. I began on June 1, after six years as the Vice President of Philanthropy at the Foundations. My work with people like you, to help achieve your charitable goals, has been a highlight of my time at the Foundations.



As we move from responding to urgent needs to focusing on long-term recovery, our work will continue. We know that there are groups who have been disproportionately harmed by Covid-19.

With regional funders, we will support nonprofit

sustainability and equitable access to resources. Read more in our cover story, "Pivoting to Respond: How We're Holding the Garden Party in Our Hearts."

As I begin my tenure, Covid-19 means that nothing is business as usual. We have stepped up to meet the needs of our community in midst of a global pandemic. Our staff and board have navigated the challenges by canceling in-person events and learning to love (or accept) Zoom.

Looking back over the past year reminds us of our many positive developments. These included our 50th anniversary, robust asset growth, strategic visioning, and staffing transitions. You can read more about staff changes in "Here to Serve You."

Our emergency response to date has given out more than \$1 million to feed the hungry and provide essential supplies.

Thank you if you have given to our relief funds: Dutchess Responds and Putnam Covid-19 Response, and Ulster County's Project Resilience Fund.

And on behalf of our board and staff, please join me in saluting Nevill Smythe, who stepped in as Interim President & CEO last year. He led us through a time of great adaptation and opportunity, and we are grateful.

Thank you again for doing your part in this place we call home. Together, we can and will rebuild our beloved Hudson Valley, not to what was, but what we need our community to be.

No doubt many of you are responding, and for that we are grateful. If you are a first responder or one of the many other essential workers – thank you! For everyone who wears a mask, makes them for others, delivers food and supplies, checks on others, and supports local nonprofits – thank you! Thank you for all that you are doing to respond. We are in this together and together we will get through this.

I welcome your thoughts on how we can do this: (845) 452-3077 or scross@communityfoundationshv.org.

With appreciation,

**Sally J. Cross, CFRE
President & CEO**

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Responding Today | Investing in Tomorrow

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North East Community Center

Since late March, we have distributed more than \$1 million in Covid-19 response grantmaking

PRIMARILY THROUGH:

- Dutchess Responds Fund
- Putnam Covid-19 Response Fund
- Project Resilience in Ulster County

Of which, we've committed a preliminary \$50,000 in funding from our Community Grants

THANK YOU TO THE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THIS TIMELY WORK, INCLUDING:

Hundreds of generous friends, businesses, and Community Foundation funds



Exodus Transitional Community

Here to Serve You

So far, 2020 has brought many changes to the Foundations. As we've ramped up to respond to Covid-19, we've also had two staffing transitions that will shape our future.

The first of these was the appointment of our new President & CEO. Following the departure of March Gallagher who successfully ran for Ulster County Comptroller, Nevill Smythe was tapped to serve as Interim President & CEO. Given his previous tenure as Vice President of Programs, his experience helped keep our work moving forward. Smythe led the celebration of our 50th anniversary and guided our rapid response to Covid-19.

After a nation-wide search, Sally J. Cross was appointed President & CEO of the Community Foundations. Cross had served the Community Foundations as the Vice President of Philanthropy since 2014. She holds an MPA from Portland State University, and a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University. Her volunteering includes serving on the boards of the Hudson Valley Estate Planning Council and the Walkkill Valley Land Trust. Cross is also an adjunct instructor in Bay Path University's graduate Nonprofit Fundraising program. She previously worked as the Executive Director of the SUNY New Paltz Foundation. Cross is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), and was a founder of the Mid Hudson Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). You can find her welcoming remarks on our YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/SallySpecialMessage>

The second transition was that of our Chief Financial Officer (CFO). After five years as CFO, Roksolana 'Roxie' Geramita announced her retirement. Geramita previously worked for 20 years as the Vice President and Auditor at Riverside Bank in Poughkeepsie. A longtime resident of Wingdale, she also served in various municipal finance departments, and as an adjunct instructor at SUNY Dutchess. Her work ethic and acumen served the Foundations and earned the esteem of all who met her. While we could only celebrate virtually, we wish her a happy retirement.



Darcy Kelly, Chief Financial Officer

To succeed her, the Foundations selected Darcy Kelly, who served in similar roles at Poughkeepsie Day School for 25 years, most recently as Business Manager. Kelly brings her experience in business and finance, human resources, and development. A lifelong resident of Dutchess County, Kelly holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Marist College. We look forward to how these leaders will shape our future at the Foundations. Serving your philanthropy is our mission.

To help that shared work, our staff is always available to you to discuss your ideas, interests, and questions. If you'd like to be in touch, please email us at info@communityfoundationshv.org.



Children of essential workers enjoying a safe learning environment at Camp Herrlich.



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purchase medical supplies and equipment, provide healthy food to families, offer mental health services, and shore up the invaluable work of our nonprofit colleagues. And while certain restrictions are loosening, we know the consequences of the pandemic are far from over. Economic impacts will persist for nonprofits and communities for months to come.

We need your support more than ever. From more than 50 years of experience, we know the power of collaboration. With a global challenge at hand, we're asking you to hold our community with care, connection, and generosity. How will you reach out to others?



Hudson River Housing

As one friend and supporter told us: **“Although it’s difficult to make a donation as a non-essential small business with no idea when we can re-open, it’s more difficult to think of our community without the arts, education, passion, and lifelines that our nonprofits provide. We must support them. Now.”**

Though we usually look forward to a future, fall date – this friend reminds us to focus on the potential available to each of us, each day, to make a difference. However you can, we invite you to join us in contributing to a better tomorrow for all.

If you would like to support this work, or learn more visit us online at CommunityFoundationsHV.org.