



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10-06-03 Guest Column – Ithaca Journal**

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***Making A Difference Close to Home***

**“Thanks goodness you’re here!”** What heart-warming words to hear, confirming that the Community Foundation of Tompkins County is making a difference.

**We hear these words from agencies whose work is threatened by budget cuts. They hope the Community Foundation’s network of donors and funds will help the agencies to continue their work.**

**We hear these words from grieving families who create special memorial funds to honor their loved ones. In one family’s words: “ Now, our family can participate in the lasting legacy of support to causes Dad cared about. We can teach our children and grandchildren what family philanthropy really means.”**

**We hear these words from individuals and families who make their gifts to local organizations through their own permanent funds at the Foundation. Just the other day a couple stopped by to give us their year-end giving list – to twelve local organizations. We felt like holiday elves as we wrote the checks. We heard their pleasure in having their own named fund that will go on giving forever to the Ithaca community they love.**

**The stories continue – but the fact is: the Community Foundation of Tompkins County is touching lives and our community in meaningful ways.**

**Communities thrive when people come together.**

**Just three years ago, the Community Foundation was created by a group of farsighted citizens coming together to promote “giving where we live.” They believed all communities need a “savings account” for rainy days and challenging economic times – or, better yet, for new ideas and opportunities. People pooling their resources over time create a community “savings account.” Imagine today if Tompkins County had this savings account of \$10,000,000 or \$20,000,000, as do our neighboring communities in Elmira/Corning, Syracuse, and Rochester. For Tompkins County that would mean \$500,000 or more in annual gifts and grants to help our cultural organizations, human services, schools, environmental efforts, housing needs, and more.**

**--Continued--**

**Times are tough. People are uncertain. The investment markets are struggling to recover from dramatic declines. County services are threatened, taxes are rising, non-profits are curtailing their activities, and little extra money is available to offer quick solutions – many of these needed to help the critical daily needs of individuals, families, and our community itself.**

**Over 250 registered non-profits exist within a twenty-five mile radius surrounding Ithaca. They represent many worthy causes – surely more than most communities of similar size. Financial security – even to the most established and recognized services here – can be vulnerable. With budget issues always a concern at the federal, state, and local levels, communities are vulnerable as well. Individual donors and corporate funders are besieged with donation requests. They find it difficult to know where their resources will make the most impact.**

**Already more than one hundred organizations have received grants totaling \$479,000 through the Community Foundation, over \$327,000 of which have come through donor-advised funds alone. For the non-profit community, the Community Foundation serves as a special resource, encouraging organizations to have their own advised funds as a means of planning for increased self-sufficiency in tough times. As part of the Foundation’s tapestry of funds, these groups gain heightened visibility and increased support services as well.**

**As a hub for enlightened giving and participation, the Community Foundation attracts broad financial support and encourages capacity-building partnerships. We link donors to each other and to community awareness of needs through educational programs, financial expertise, and community forums. We serve as catalysts for non-competitive community caring and action. As the community’s foundation, we serve as the community’s saving account, representing over time a deepening reserve of resources benefiting all who live and work here.**

**Donors to the Foundation represent individuals and families, agencies, organizations, private foundations, businesses, school systems, and municipalities.**

**This message is not intended to extol the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. What it confirms is that people and groups in our community are seeking the Foundation as a partner in serving their needs -- to share and give where they live and work.**

**The Community Foundation belongs to us – the people of Tompkins County.**

**“Thank goodness, you’re here” are words that make our work together through the Community Foundation worth doing.**

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