

NURTURING IDEAS. CHANGING LIVES.



... THE GIFFORD FOUNDATION ...  
2005 ANNUAL REPORT

## ● OUR MISSION.

The Rosamond Gifford Charitable Corporation (The Foundation) is a private foundation dedicated to the stewardship of the funds entrusted to its care. The Foundation is committed to using its financial and human resources to build the capacity of individuals and organizations to enhance the quality of life for the people of Central New York.

## HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION.

The Foundation supports individuals and organizations through Grants and Initiatives that build on community assets and promote positive change within the community. The Community Grantmaking program is focused on a variety of projects that serve Onondaga, Madison and Oswego counties. Foundation Initiatives are driven by community action and are designed to affect lasting change in the communities in which the Initiative is focused. Currently, The Foundation is engaged in a neighborhood Initiative on the Southside of Syracuse.

## OUR HISTORY.

In 1953, Rosamond Gifford willed her estate to create a foundation “for the benefit of humanity which I desire and intend.” The initial gift of \$5 million has grown to an endowment of over \$26 million.



## ● PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

More than a decade ago I was asked to join the board of the Rosamond Gifford Foundation as part of a contingent of civic mavericks charged with engineering much-needed changes. Let’s all tip our hats to any member of any community board, anywhere, who recognizes that the next step forward means being replaced by someone better suited to lead the charge. It takes insight, courage, and humility to captain your own dispensability.

Does our current board have that kind of insight, courage and humility? You bet we do. What has settled into our board ken this year is appreciation of new perspective. Some of us are looking forward to easing ourselves away from Gifford, consoled about our coming loss by knowing those who replace us will be able to see things we cannot.

What we have seen, in my time as a board member, is the value of listening to the people one is trying to help, rather

than the go-betweens and in-betweens. Not just listening – being a bullhorn to expand the sound of those voices.

What we have seen, in my time as a board member, are the rewards of being smart stewards of Rosamond’s treasure legacy. I imagine her, a lady who surely knew how to grow her own fortune, looking down with approval.

What we have seen, in my time as a board member, is the joining of our foundation with other foundations, learning from each other how to be more effective and reaping the multiplier effect of merging dreams.

If someone reminds you that giving away money to good causes is hard work, believe them. Believe also that it is among the greatest joys one can have in this world. Thank you, best board members anywhere. Thank you, best staff anywhere.

*Judith C. Mower*  
Board President

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It seems that the Gifford Foundation is in a constant state of flux. As I read Judy Mower's message this year, I was reminded that next year will bring her tenure as Board President to a close and we will once again look to the board for new leadership.

I was reminded as I reviewed the grants to be highlighted this year, that in 2005, the geographic focus of our grantmaking shifted as we began working toward the development of community relations in Oswego County akin to those we share with Onondaga and Madison counties.

When I joined the foundation in 1999, the changes to which Dr. Mower refers were well underway. The message I received when I became Executive Director in 2000 was that the Foundation was to become an agent of community change and community advocacy. Since making that mandate a part of our institutional consciousness, the only thing that we know for sure is that change brings with it great responsibility.

Through our community grantmaking, we have become aware that as we speak for change in programs and policy, we must be prepared to provide ongoing support to insure that those changes take hold. Through our neighborhood initiative we have learned that as we speak for those whose voices have been muffled, we have a responsibility to insure that they develop skills to speak for themselves.

Change, we have heard, is inevitable. Board members may change, staff members may change and the focus of our grantmaking may change. But what we all believe, and what guides us into the future is the determination that the relationship between this Foundation and its mission remains focused on providing opportunities for individuals in our community to reach their full potential. It is only in this way that our community will reach its full potential and we will be assured that our philanthropy is both far-reaching and effective.

*Kathy Goldfarb-Findling*  
Executive Director

## FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

In 2005, the Foundation continued its neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Southside community of Syracuse. The Southside Neighborhood Action Group (SNAG) successfully leveraged its mini-grant funding through partnerships with P.E.A.C.E., Inc. and Home Headquarters. P.E.A.C.E., Inc. currently provides weatherization support for eligible mini-grant recipients – 12 during the past year; and Home Headquarters now provides support to numerous program participants. During 2005, 21 SNAG projects were initiated. Partnership also occurred at the grassroots level as more block associations were formed, many receiving block captain training; 11 block associations received small mobilization grants to conduct minor projects.

Through the Southside Working Group, residents received further assistance from foundation consultant Henry Moore, who gave additional community building tools to work within the community, as well as tools to develop a strong voice with those affecting the community from the outside. One such example was the sharing of findings from the MetroEdge study of the South Salina Street Trade Area, which demonstrates a considerable amount of retail potential within the Southside community. Members of the working group not only saw change in their own neighborhood, but witnessed change in other communities across the country through trips to neighboring Rochester, where they met with city officials and community activists, and Philadelphia, PA, as participants of the Second National Summit on Equitable Development, Social Justice and Smart Growth.



After a Syracuse visit from nationally renowned artist and activist Lily Yeh, residents were so inspired by her story of utilizing the arts as a community revitalization tool that they invited local artists to a series of brainstorming sessions to lay the groundwork for a neighborhood arts council. As the residents became increasingly visible and vocal, they formed a Southside Toastmasters Club, inviting guest speakers and training themselves in the art of public speaking.

While the neighborhood initiative has received broad local support, its has also attracted national attention, as Gifford is one of 12 foundations in the U.S. whose efforts are being documented by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago as a follow-up to their original discussion paper, "Moving Forward while Staying in Place: Embedded Funders and Community Change."

2005 has definitely been a year of increased momentum among the residency of the Southside. Through their dedication and hard work, a community is literally being transformed from the inside out.



## ● OSWEGO OPERA



Council on the Arts brought this organization to a point where more growth was needed. With its grant of \$11,000, the Gifford Foundation was pleased to not only support the production of *The Merry Widow*, but also to underwrite a board development effort.

Over the past 27 years, a growing number of Oswego residents have attended the Oswego Opera. The company has responded to its increased popularity with mainstream productions such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Magic Flute*. A growing artistic reputation, a small but dedicated board and ongoing support from the New York State

*The Merry Widow* – which featured professional singers backed by local cast members – was attended by over 800 people, including many students. In addition, over the past year, the board worked with consultant Eileen Ensworth to evaluate its responsibilities, strategize for organizational growth and expand membership. This effort has resulted in an influx of new board members, new staff and an energized vision.

The grant to Oswego Opera was part of a total of \$74,877 awarded to Oswego County organizations in 2005, the largest amount ever awarded in that county. Additional Oswego County organizations that received funding included the Oswego Public Library, Artswego and the Friends of Camp Hollis.



## ● KITCHEN TABLE TALK

When Bylye Avery, founder of the Black Women’s Health Imperative Project, came to Syracuse last September, she spoke to over 275 people about the grave reality of sexual abuse/trauma for women of color. Ms. Avery was a



guest of Kitchen Table Talk, a remarkable consortium of organizations and individuals dedicated to lending support to sexual trauma survivors in the African-American community. Prior to her visit, Kitchen Table Talk undertook a campaign to raise awareness and interest in the issue at hand. This included the recruitment and training of facilitators, as well as unique outreach efforts, which included performance art.

In the days following Ms. Avery’s visit, three support groups, led by the trained facilitators, were

formed and a performance project called “Healing Grace” was presented to much acclaim.

Kitchen Table Talk is a perfect example of a grant that extends far beyond the initial purpose to be funded. While Gifford provided \$10,000 to cover Ms. Avery’s fee and a portion of the marketing and advertising expenses, the Foundation is proud to have been involved in such an important program. Kitchen Table Talk is representative of the best of collaborative efforts – real change, strengths in partnership, communication – resulting in a true understanding of the concept of shared creation.



## ● JOWONIO SCHOOL

For over 35 years, the Jowonio School has been recognized as a pioneer in inclusive education for preschoolers – a program where typical students and those with special needs learn and grow together in a safe and stimulating environment. With a grant of \$15,000, the school was able to expand its playground, making it a place that is accessible, challenging and rich with sensory elements, including gardens and musical instruments. A new, state-of-the-art ground surface now enables children with mobility issues to enjoy the playground, which features an adaptive seesaw, as well



as “cozy spots” where children can retreat when the noise and activity become overwhelming.

Jowonio experienced a number of unexpected benefits over the course of the project, including a large volunteer pool charged with preparing the site. The school also qualified as a test site for the playground’s new surfacing technology. In this setting, the playground is an important part of the learning environment. In effect, it serves as an outdoor classroom where children can develop awareness and interactive skills in an environment outside their homes and classrooms. The activities that the children engage in while in this natural classroom are integrated into their classroom goals.



## ● SMALL GRANTS, LARGE IMPACT

In 2005, The Gifford Foundation awarded an average of \$17,210 in grants through its annual competitive grantmaking process. What we have found, however, is that smaller grants, in the range of \$1,000 to \$10,000, have just as much power to affect change or help initiatives grow, as do larger grants. In reviewing all organizations and projects supported by the Foundation over the past year, a pattern of assistance emerges in both large ways and small.

Small grants have enabled organizations to expand services, develop new programs and create impact far beyond the initial goals. For example, a \$3,500 grant to Partners in Arts Education to bring artist Lily Yeh to speak on neighborhood empowerment through the arts led to the birth of a community arts organization on the Southside. CONTACT received \$5,400 for a presentation by the author of *Bridges Out of Poverty*, and within months over 20 organizations sent trainers to learn this new technique which addresses issues of poverty and social service delivery systems. A grant of \$5,488 enabled SU Library Associates and the CNY Reads Coalition to offer 1,000 copies of *North Star Conspiracy* to be read in a communitywide book loan program, with author Miriam Grace Monfredo visiting area schools.



Through the Supporting Organizations Program, the Gifford Foundation provided small grants to many organizations. With the assistance of the Foundation, Tibetan Monks visited Syracuse and created a mandala at St. Marie Among the Iroquois; Precious Hands, a grassroots organization that provides opportunities for youth to develop their talents in fashion design, was able to expand their programming; 100 people attended the Special Olympics; a youth from Liverpool discovered that he could join his friends on the playground with a motorized scooter; walkie talkies were provided to Levy Middle School; activist Dick Gregory spoke at the P.E.A.C.E. Southside Family Resource Center; the Soap Box Derby returned to Syracuse; the Nottingham Lady Bulldogs were able to purchase new uniforms; and The Institute for Now Culture (ThINC) presented an art show.

These examples represent only a portion of the grants the Foundation makes to smaller organizations, and this is often the first time such groups have received any type of formal funding. The Foundation staff works closely with such groups to help them develop projects and skills that can be helpful not only in preparing requests to Gifford, but also to other funders.





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