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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dirk E. Sonneborn, (315) 474-2489, [dirk@giffordfoundation.org](mailto:dirk@giffordfoundation.org)

## **GIFFORD FOUNDATION NAMES SHEENA SOLOMON AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

(Syracuse, NY) The Board of Trustees of the Gifford Foundation is pleased to announce that Sheena Solomon will become the sixth Executive Director of the Foundation effective January 1, 2019. She succeeds Dirk Sonneborn who is retiring from that position after successfully leading the Foundation for the past 8 years. Solomon is currently the Director of Neighborhood Initiatives at the Foundation.

“The board is enthusiastic about the future of the Foundation and feels confident that Ms. Solomon is the right person to continue our mission,” states Jaime Alicea, Board Chair, “and we are fortunate to have someone with so much community experience to be our next Executive Director.”

“I am incredibly excited to begin this new leadership role at the Foundation and see what further impact we can have for all people in Central New York,” states Solomon. “I am honored and grateful to the Board for this opportunity. I look forward to the work and collaborations ahead.”

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Solomon has been with the Foundation since 2007 and has served as the Director of Neighborhood Initiatives since 2011. Solomon has also been a leader in the creation of Gifford's city-wide: "What If..." Mini Grant program; Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders; and the POWER capacity building program. She is active locally and nationally on a variety of boards and advisory groups, including the PLACES Fellowship (a program of The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities), You Can't Fail Inc., Syracuse Economic Development Corporation and the Near Westside Initiative. Solomon is a recognized leader in the not for-profit sector with a deep commitment to the true value that diversity, equity and inclusion bring to communities and organizations. A long-time resident of Syracuse, she enjoys travel and spending time with her three children.

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The Gifford Foundation is a private foundation supporting community needs in Central New York since 1954. Through its grantmaking, they fund organizations in an intentionally transformative and flexible manner. This is based on a fundamental belief that change at the individual and/or organizational level holds the potential to institute change at broader community levels. For more information about the Foundation visit [www.giffordfoundation.org](http://www.giffordfoundation.org).

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