

The Mary McClellan Foundation
Press Release
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The landscape of rural health and wellness has been re-drawn by the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges of living in “small town America” have been amplified, including access to quality medical care, attracting and retaining physicians, and providing transportation for routine and emergency matters.

In 2021, the Mary McClellan Foundation awarded grants to 10 non-profit groups in the towns of Cambridge, Easton, Greenwich, Jackson, Salem, White Creek, and the Town of Hoosick, totaling \$223,682.87. This money is improving and sustaining the health of our residents and neighbors as we begin to climb out of a global pandemic.

Take a look at some of the amazing work going on in the Southern Washington County region!

The Historic Salem Courthouse Preservation Association, Inc. was awarded \$7,560 to help enable the Hudson Headwaters Health Network (HHHN) Mobile Unit in Salem, NY. The Mobile Unit serves to fill the gap in access to primary medical care. One of our new grantees, The Historic Salem Courthouse Preservation Association, and Town Supervisor Sue Clary, have been working tirelessly to bring this idea to fruition. Following the downsizing of the GFH Salem Family Health Center in 2017, access to primary care became even more difficult, rendering well visits and preventative care a significant challenge for many residents. The HHHN Mobile Unit is one big piece in the puzzle of bringing affordable and accessible comprehensive medical care back into this rural community. This retro-model of care is being explored in many areas (remember the dental vans of our youth?). The MMF was very pleased to help cover start-up costs for this endeavor.

The Southern Adirondack Health Initiative was awarded \$5,000 to help fund the first annual 2021 Rural Area Medical (RAM) free Southern Adirondack Health Clinic at the Washington County Fair Grounds. Nestled among the picturesque rolling hills of Southern Washington County are a troubling number of families living at or below the national poverty line. For a number of reasons, access to medical, dental, and vision care remains difficult and expensive for many. RAM clinics work to mitigate this need by assembling armies of volunteer doctors, nurses, and support staff to provide care to WHOMEVER needs it AT NO COST, in remote and rural areas. In October 2021, the Southern Adirondack Health Initiative, under the leadership of Karen Weinberg, brought this energetic team to our corner of New York, hosting 178 walk-in patients FREE OF CHARGE. They hope to increase that number in September 2022, and offer extended services such as Spanish translators.

One of our new partners, Parent to Parent of NYS, was awarded \$13,653.65 to fund family care and support for children with developmental challenges in Warren & Washington Counties. Parent to Parent works to connect both families and medical providers with the peer-support they need to navigate and consult on various issues from “how to prepare for an evaluation” to how to best utilize telehealth visits. These connections are vital to building community and enabling resources to be used more efficiently.

Battenkill Community Services, Inc. was awarded \$20,000 to purchase Nu-step machines, treadmills, and elliptical machines for their physical fitness room in Greenwich, NY. When an MMF director recently toured the facility, the take away was so encouraging, “the folks at Battenkill Community Services are providing such creative and exciting opportunities!” The staff truly cares for their patients, and they are really thinking outside the box when it comes to healthy and stimulating opportunities.

Parsons Child and Family Center was awarded \$20,000 to continue the vital Behavioral Health Center at Cambridge Central School. Providing access to mental health care is difficult and extremely important in our rural communities. MMF funds will help offset the cost of providing mental health services to the Cambridge school district. An in-school social worker bridges the gaps between families, the school nurse, mental health providers and primary care. This includes encouraging family involvement and arranging transportation (and telehealth) for kids in order to break down barriers to access. This service seeks to directly improve mental health, school attendance, and graduation rates.

The Cambridge Valley Rescue Squad was awarded grants to reimburse for COVID-19 vaccine and testing delivery, funding to create a Training Officer Position and a Medic Flex Position, continued Paramedic Tuition assistance, and funding to purchase an onboard ventilator, IV pump, and several controlled substance boxes. Grants totaled \$103,386. The CVRS has worked tirelessly to stand on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. CVRS continues to provide innovative ideas and resources for our community, and it is with confidence that we have awarded them extended support this year.

The Tri-County United Way was awarded \$11,000 toward driver reimbursement for their RSVP Medical Transportation Program, which continues to provide a much-needed service in our rural communities. RSVP is a really great resource in our community. The Tri-County United Way organizes a network of retired folks who provide door-to-door transportation for doctors’ visits, medical procedures, and more. (If you haven’t noticed, there aren’t many taxis in our area.) Lining up a ride can be difficult, and many of our elderly neighbors have several medical appointments each month (or week). RSVP is a great option for those who are unable or reluctant to provide their own transportation.

The Mary McClellan Foundation has agreed to help repay medical loans for 2 local Glens Falls Hospital doctors as part of a retention package totaling \$200,000 over five years. We believe that maintaining primary care in our rural communities is of utmost importance. This financial incentive helps to retain doctors in Greenwich and Cambridge, thereby building long-term relationships with patients.

The Salem Rescue Squad received \$3,083.22 to purchase an onboard McGrath MAC EMS Video Laryngoscope. This equipment will allow the squad to intubate patients with better accuracy, resulting in better care and increased comfort for patients in distress.

The Town of Hoosick Rescue Squad received a fourth installment of \$20,000 toward their LifePak Monitor Enhancement Program. This state-of-the-art equipment enables the squad to collect vital medical information from a patient and upload it directly to the receiving doctors, expediting care upon arrival at the Emergency Room.

*MMF has been funding health initiatives in the area formerly served by the Mary McClellan Hospital since 2007, after the hospital closed in 2003. We are committed to filling gaps in medical care, emergency services, and community education, having invested more than **\$2 Million** into local health centers and care facilities since 2007.*

2021 marked a change in leadership for the MMF, with the retirement of longtime Board Chairperson William Figlozzi, MD. Kathleen Lacasse RN, BSN, MHA stepped into the role of Chairperson, and she continues to lead the Board with hands-on commitment to knowing and understanding the specific needs of our community.

It is with utmost respect and condolence that we remember Dr. Figlozzi's exemplary integrity and compassion for his neighbors in his roles as a founding member of the Mary McClellan Board, our Chairperson, a caring Pediatrician, and our friend.

The MMF Board is comprised of residents from a variety of backgrounds, including health care and business. Board members work to make informed decisions regarding the many grant applications submitted each year. Drawing on focused research, professional knowledge and community input, we consider how to best steward our funds to serve the interest of the communities in Cambridge, Easton, Greenwich, Jackson, Salem, White Creek and the Town of Hoosick. All of the MMF Board Members live in the communities we serve.