Craig School reading specialist, Kim Prettyman and librarian, Suzy Sogoian were awarded a $2,200 grant from NCF to create the Craig School Alpha-Bags to support Craig’s early literacy needs in kindergarten. Mastery of early literacy skills is essential for success in reading and at school. These “grab and go” bags help meet the needs of students who require additional work with vocabulary and language structure through storybook reading, rhyming, and letter/sound knowledge. Parents have a clear set of directions that guide them through various activities utilizing different learning modalities. Each bag contains a variety of culturally diverse and language-rich books that focus on each letter of the alphabet. Evidence suggests that the number of books at home is related to a child’s reading ability.

According to parent Sarah Atodolka, “The Alpha-bags are invaluable in helping our kindergartner, Matthias and his first-grade brother get more exposure and practice with the letters and their sounds. The Alpha-bags are multisensory and utilize a variety of mediums to help the boys actively engage and enjoy their learning experience.” She continued, “Alpha-bags bring our boys fun and interactive ways to review letters and their sounds. I’ve seen great improvement in knowledge and confidence in Matthias since using the Alpha-bags. He seems to really like them and even asks for them when he gets home from school”.

Six year-old kindergartener Lina Maynard is enjoying the bags as much as Matthias, “They’re awesome. They’re cool. I love them!”

Erin Perry and daughter Hannah with an Alpha-Bag

Celebrating 20 Years of Caring for Our Community

Grant Supports Early Literacy

Erin Perry and daughter Hannah with an Alpha-Bag

NISKAYUNA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

A newsletter of the Niskayuna Community Foundation

Spring 2020

Niskayuna Community Foundation

C O N N E C T I O N S

Niskayuna Newsletter 2020 alt2.indd 1
4/26/20 10:21 AM
President’s Message

As I write this President’s message, we are all dealing with an unprecedented series of events affecting our everyday lives. In times of extraordinary adversity, it is truly important to remember what matters most in our lives – family and community.

The Niskayuna Community Foundation was founded twenty years ago and has served our community in many positive ways over time. Now as never before, we need to come together as a community for the benefit of our neighbors and families. With all of us looking out for each other, and supporting each other, we will come through this pandemic better and stronger than ever. The Niskayuna Community Foundation stands ready to support in every way and endeavor. We remain steadfast in our commitment to help meet the needs of our community as we have since 2000.

Reflecting on our twenty years of service, we are grateful to all of our donors who have supported our efforts to assist worthy organizations and programs. As even greater needs arise, both immediate and unforeseen, the continued generosity of our community is even more crucial. Please consider a gift to NiskyCares this year, our dedicated anniversary year campaign. Together we will face these challenges and emerge a stronger Niskayuna community. Stay safe and my best to all of you and your families.

Michael R. Breault
President, Niskayuna Community Foundation

Two young sisters race off the school bus and into the house. They’re excited to discover the treats inside the large brown bag that’s waiting for them every Friday.

Their mother, Cassandra, is grateful that the free food delivery from Nisky NOW (Nutrition on Weekends) helps stretch the food budget for her family of six.

“The extra bag of food is a lifesaver. It gives me peace of mind. I don’t feel like such a bad parent that I can’t feed my kids enough.”

Cassandra’s family is among the 44 families of Niskayuna students and 24 St. Kateri school families struggling with food insecurity who receive a bag of food for the weekend. Data shows that 15% of Niskayuna students qualify for free or reduced school breakfast and lunch. As the impact of the COVID-19 crisis unfolded in early spring, Nisky NOW added eight more families to the program and expects the need will continue to grow.

“I get the bag for the kids,” explained Cassandra. They just weren’t getting enough, especially my high-schooler, it’s like he’s got a hollow leg.” A typical Nisky NOW bag includes a pasta meal, soup, cereal, PB&J, bread, fruit, and snacks – plus, a gift card for milk and eggs. One family is especially excited about the bag because it means that, “Mommy will make us French toast this weekend!”

Nisky NOW was launched in 2014 by school social worker Jessica Brennan who witnessed the need when she served the district’s five elementary schools. The Niskayuna Community Foundation helped kick off the nonprofit with a $1,000 grant. Six families were the first recipients.

Today, Nisky NOW coordinates a network of volunteers who pickup food from the Regional Food Bank, stock the pantry, and pack and deliver bags for 68 families every weekend. Nisky NOW’s support not only nourishes the body, it can also empower the spirit. “A woman told me that she found the courage to go back to work and school because knowing her neighbors supported her made her stronger,” said Jessica. The nonprofit also responds to emergencies.

“Don’t feel ashamed to ask for food, especially now”, said Cassandra. “Everyone needs help every once in a while. Nisky NOW has been amazing!”
IN MEMORIAM

The Niskayuna Community Foundation is honored to pay tribute to the memories of two NCF Honorary Board members lost to our community over the past year.

Jane Golub
Our lovely Jane Golub passed away on April 16, 2019. This iconic business and philanthropic leader supported NCF since its inception and served on the Honorary Board for 19 years. In her typical gracious style, Jane helped NCF celebrate our 15th anniversary on our day of service by visiting community volunteers at most of the 15 not for profit sites. Tireless in her support, Jane spent the entire day encouraging the volunteers and learning more about the organizations in need. She was charming, as always, showing a sincere interest in everyone. She used humor and praise to make everyone feel valued for their work. That was Jane, always caring about others.

Jane was a beloved teacher at Hillside for 23 years until with her husband Neil, she brought the Anti-Defamation League’s prejudice awareness and reduction program, “A World of Difference,” to schools in the Capital Region. As a second career, she managed Price Chopper’s in-house sampling program and in-store marketing programs. Despite her busy schedule, Jane served on innumerable boards, committees and capital campaigns for scores of organizations and helped to move them forward. She made an especially huge impact on the Schenectady Day Nursery, the Jewish National Fund, Ellis Medicine, and MiSci.

NCF is grateful to Jane for her countless contributions to our community. We miss her greatly, and to us, she is irreplaceable.

Walter Robb
Walt Robb was one of NCF’s first dedicated advocates. Right after the foundation was established in 2000, Walt was quick to offer his help. He made a generous financial contribution, and co-hosted a dinner for 100 Niskayuna residents to introduce them to NCF and personally encourage friends and neighbors to help their hometown. Walt served on the Honorary Board for 20 years. When NCF leadership reached out to him for sage advice, Walt always made time.

Walt was a highly-respected leader in business and philanthropy. He worked at GE for 42 years, leading their Medical Systems Division and then Global Research. He was known for his improvements to advanced imaging equipment, in particular his work on the computed tomography (CT) scanner and the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine. He was the owner of the Albany River Rats for 12 years and unless he was traveling, he attended every game. After retirement he started a consulting firm and helped new businesses get started. He was vibrant, sharp, and went to work every day until he died. A highlight of his life was climbing Kilimanjaro with his sons when he was 70.

Walt will be missed by the business community and the many organizations that he supported including Proctor’s, Ellis Medicine and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Schenectady. And of course, NCF. He was a mentor to many!

Community Service Scholarship
The Niskayuna Community Foundation awarded the 2019 Community Service Scholarship to Joanna Guo.

Joanna is a freshman at Northwestern University, majoring in Biology on the pre-med track. She achieved a 4.0 GPA for the first quarter. Her goal is to attend medical school at Northwestern.

In high school, Joanna volunteered for Ingersoll Place as well as local hospitals. She continues to volunteer and currently serves as the Community Service & Global Health Chair of the Northwestern Chapter of a health-oriented volunteer organization in the Chicago area.

NiskyCares Campaign
Show your community how much you care. Especially now, when the need is great.

Give to NCF’s 20th anniversary campaign, NiskyCares.

In honor of NCF’s 20th anniversary, consider a gift of $20, $200, $2,000 or other multiple of 20.

Is “20” a magic number for you, your family, or friends this year? Give to celebrate a 20th birthday, wedding or work anniversary, reunion or 20 years living in Niskayuna. Or to honor a retirement, family milestone, or the passing of a beloved friend or relative.

We’re grateful for the support we’ve received over the past 20 years and understand that things are difficult for all of us this year. If you have supported NCF in the past, please consider giving more. If you are a new donor, welcome to our family of generous NCF supporters. We appreciate gifts of all sizes.

Please help us to plan for a healthy and secure future for our community. Together, let’s show our community that NiskyCares.

NCF evolved from a community brainstorming session to improve life for youth to making the town better for everyone.
The concept of a Foundation was researched and supported, a board of community leaders was created... the real work began!

ANNUAL FUND – “The Power of Many”

Thank you to the donors who contributed to funds of the Niskayuna Community Foundation between October 1, 2018 and March 11, 2020. Funds included in this listing: NCF General Fund, NCF Scholarship Endowment Fund, NCF General Endowment Fund, NCF Alumni Fund, the Ball Family Fund, the Neil and Jane Golub Donor Advised Fund, Neil and Jane Golub Unrestricted Fund, the McAndrews Family Fund, the Sally S. and Edwards B. Murray Designated Fund, the Phillippe Family Fund.

Please accept our apologies if we have erred by misspelling or omitting your name in reproducing our donor list. Please contact us at 518-446-9638.

Pillars of the Community – (Gifts of $10,000+)
Cindy and Duane Ball
Nancy Hershey, Hershey Family Fund of CFGCR
Dr. and Mrs. J. Briggs McAndrews

Philanthropists – ($5,000 to $9,999)
Dr. and Mrs. John Crowe
Wally Graham

Lamplighters – ($2,500 to $4,999)
Ellen Titus Hoover and J. Jeffrey Hoover

Bridge Builders – ($1,000 to $2,499)
Douglas and Susan Lohnas
Betty L. and John A. McKinney
Debbi and Michael Mullaney
Nan and Hugh Murphy
Cindy and Dick Phillippe
Michelle Ostrelitch and Howard Schlossberg
Marti and Austin Spang

Gatekeepers – ($500 to $999)
Dr. Michael and Linda Breault
Kathy and Ed Carangelo
Carol Hyde and Sanjay Correa
DeLue Orthodontics, PC
Dr. Nancy Fitzroy
GE Foundation
Neil Golub
Kathy and John Greenthal
Robert B. Hamilton, III
Karen Huggins
Janette and Edward King
Sharon and Charles Maneri
Molino and Vaccaro Dentistry
Niskayuna Central School District
Mr. James S. Pennington
Anne and Walt Robb
Donna and Richard Tanfield
Emile Walraven
Dr. Frederick and Shannon Wetzel

Stepping Stones – ($250 to $499)
Ronnie and Jim Blendell
Marlene and Dick Breault
Susan and Michael Burke
Margaret Bean and Glenn Busby
David and Deborah Deeb
Dell Family
Don and Chris DeLue
Bob and Debbie DeLue
Robert and Susanne Gerstenbluth
Barbara and Mark Graber
Edwin and Laura Graham
Nancy and Alan Hickenbottom
Josephine and Dominick Izzo
Martin, Harding and Mazzotti, LLP
Mr. Dennis C. McAndrews Esq.
Mr. Brian McAndrews
Jennifer Regan and Sean Moran
Mr. and Mrs. John Pastore
James Pennington III
Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. Philbrick
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent J. Pisolini
Lynn D. Schnell
Sheila Spraragen
Dr. Jayne Steubing and David Wagner
Sarah Witbeck

Friends – ($100 to $249)
Jan Olin Altschuller
Linda and David Anker
Anonymous
Mr. Kamran Baig
Audrey Bain
Joyce M. Beckley
Michael DePetrillo and Lillian Bertalan
Mr. and Mrs. Elmer F. Bertsch
Bethlehem Central Teachers Association
Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Bordick
Erika and Mike Bowman
Sandra C. Buhrmaster
Dr. Andrew Burns
Carol M. Cascio
Cristine Cioffo
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Connolly
Bill and Bonnie Daggett
William Danko
Mr. Dominick J. DeCecco
Colleen and Christopher Dibble
Louisa Lombardo and James Dillon
Celine Larry Edwards
Kate and Kelly Evanoff
Donna and Bob Evans
Ms. Marcia Fenn
Michael and Deborah Foley
David and Phyllis Fusco
Jeoffrey and Betsy Galgianiatis
Millie and Clark Gittinger
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey T. Gieba
Jack Hagerty and Jeanne Murray Hagerty
Ms. Jane Haley
Ms. Ann Hammett
H. Douglas and Margaret Hinkle
Mr. Richard A. Holt
John B. Hudson
Paul A. Hurteau
Mr. and Mrs. Rohinton Irani
Mr. and Mrs. Dougald C. Jackson IV
Grant and Rosemarie Jaquith
Ms. Diana M. Jones
Vaila and Ed Joy
Fred and Sandy Kaplan
Mr. and Mrs. Roy M. Keats
Tim and Denise Kensky
Susanne and Gene Kimura
Kerry and Paul Koch
Ms. Lilly Lampe
Mr. and Mrs. Mark H. LaPlante
Tina Lee and Jon Lemelin
Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Lench Jr.
Deborah Leupold
Hon Howard A. Levine
Jianbo Li
Dr. Oscar and Kathryn Lirio
Kay and Mike MacLaury
Mr. Jonathan Marr and
Mrs. Rachel Sterne-Marr
Bryan and Kelly Mattice
Ms. Catherine McAndrews
Mr. and Mrs. John McAndrews Jr.
Ms. Katherine K. McAndrews
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas N. McFadden
Peggy and Rick Mele
Ms. Sandra C. Morley
Wendy and Dennis O’Connor
Janet D. O’Farrell
Mary Lynn Olbrzych
Dr. Carl A. and Joann E. Paulsen
Ms. Julia V. Peek
Sue Penny
David and Mignonne Philips
Mr. Richard Piedmont
Karen and Dennis Quinn
Ms. Jennifer Regan
Mr. and Mrs. Don Robbins
Allison Schultz and Cliff Rohde
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Ryan Jr.
Amy and Anthony Salamone
Helen Salamone

The concept of a Foundation was researched and supported, a board of community leaders was created... the real work began!
Our community answered the call to action when more than 1000 residents donated to NCF as Founding Members.

Please Send a Tax-Deductible Gift to NCF!

It’s easy! We appreciate gifts of all sizes.
- Write a check to the Niskayuna Community Foundation, c/o Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region, 2 Tower Place, Albany, NY 12203.
- Give online at our website, www.niskayunacf.org
- Give a gift of appreciated stock.
- Establish a fund in your name with an initial gift of $10,000.
- Set up a bequest in your will or arrange another type of planned gift.

Call 518-446-9638 for further details.
Gifts in Memory

The donations below represent gifts made to the Niskayuna Community Foundation in memory of special people by those who were touched by their lives.

» In Memory of Benjamin F. Bennett, former President of the Niskayuna Community Association, circa 1960
  Mr. Douglas M. Bennett

» In Memory of Tina Bianchi
  Vincent Bianchi

» In Memory of Anne Brown
  Dr. and Mrs. J. Briggs McAndrews

» In Memory of Michael Cascio
  Carol M. Cascio

» In Memory of Glen Davis U.S.M.A 1947, Felix Blanchard U.S.M.A. 1947
  Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Tamoschat

» In Memory of Richard C. “Mike” Fritz
  Bob and Debbie DeLuke

» In Memory of Lisa Holt
  Mr. Richard A. Holt

» In Memory of Alexander and Jean Huggins
  Ms. Karen Huggins

» In Memory of Dorothy and Gilbert King
  Edward and Janette King

» In Memory of Scott McAndrews
  Mr. and Mrs. James F. Blendell
  Ms. Louisa Lombardo and Mr. James Dillon
  Dr. and Mrs. J. Briggs McAndrews
  Ms. Katherine K. McAndrews
  Mr. and Mrs. Richard Phillippe
  Dr. Jayne Steubing and Mr. David Wagner
  Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth C. Webb

» In Memory of Elaine Ognibene
  Dr. and Mrs. J. Briggs McAndrews

» In Memory of Robert Salamone
  Mr. Zachary Assael
  Mr. and Ms. Anthony J. Bango
  Ms. Joyce M. Beckley
  Ms. Sarah Bedford
  Mrs. Lisa Bedian
  Mr. and Mrs. Rick A. Bernardo
  Bethlehem Central Teachers Association
  Mr. and Mrs. James F. Blendell
  Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Bordick
  Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cappabianca
  Ms. Patricia Clement
  Ms. Angela M. Conn
  Mr. and Mrs. Peter Costello
  Mr. and Mrs. James E. Davis
  Ms. Francine E. Demartino
  Ms. Yvonne Doberman
  Mr. and Mrs. Jan S. Dorma
  Mr. and Mrs. George Dowse
  Mr. and Mrs. David Fallon
  Ms. Marcia Fenn
  Mr. and Mrs. Peter Fish
  Mr. and Ms. Patrick Foy
  Mr. and Mrs. Gus Franz
  Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth W. Gall
  Mr. Gary R. Gnarrep and Ms. Sandra M. Clark
  Mr. and Mrs. Walt Gumkowski
  Ms. Jane Haley
  Mrs. Bernadine A. Hannon
  Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Harrington
  Mr. Robert E. Holl
  Ms. Janice Y. Jayne
  Mr. and Ms. Frank Jennings
  Ms. Diana M. Jones
  Vaila & Ed Joy
  Mr. Jared King
  Mr. Michael A. Kornstein
  Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Lench Jr.
  Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Levin
  Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mann
  Ms. Carol Mann
  Jesse Mann
  Mr. Brian McAndrews
  Ms. Catherine McAndrews
  Mr. Dennis C. McAndrews Esq.
  Dr. and Mrs. J. Briggs McAndrews
  Mr. and Mrs. John McAndrews Jr.
  Ms. Katherine K. McAndrews
  Ms. Rosemarie Mosmen
  Ms. Julia V. Peeke
  Mr. and Mrs. John Pellettier
  David Philips
  Ms. Annie Pulsifer
  Ms. Kathryn V. Raffe
  Mr. and Mrs. Don Robbins
  Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Ryan Jr.
  Mr. John R. Salamone
  Schwab Charitable
  Ms. Jeanne D. Shremmpf
  Mr. and Mrs. Theodore J. Smith
  Ms. Deborah Sokoler
  Ms. Dorann Stagnitta
  Mr. and Mrs. Bruce B. Sware
  Mr. and Mrs. Richard Tanfield
  Ms. Phyllis D. Vandemark
  Ms. Merri Walkenstein
  Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth C. Webb
  Mr. George Webb and Mrs. Patricia McGowan-Webb
  Ms. Catherine V. Wollner
  Mr. Lawrence A. Zinn

» In Memory of Lorraine Schultz
  Ms. Allison J. Schultz and Mr. Clifford Rohde

» In Memory of Tina Shea
  Mr. Brian E. Shea

» In Memory of Eugene W. Zeltmann
  Susan Craig Zeltmann

Gifts in Honor

The donations below represent gifts made to funds of the Niskayuna Community Foundation in honor of special occasions in the lives of these people:

» In Honor of Joseph Baciewicz
  Thomas and Laura Favata

» In Honor of Niskayuna Scholars:
  Michael Dean, Evan Schnell, Luca Polsinelli and Leo Polsinelli
  Ms. Lynn Schnell
  Mr. and Mrs. Vincent J. Polsinelli

» In Honor of the teachers, administrators and staff of the Niskayuna Central School District on behalf of Michael Dean and Evan Schnell, NHS Class of 2019
  Ms. Lynn Schnell
  Mr. and Mrs. Vincent J. Polsinelli

Apply for a Grant!

Would your 501c3 organization like to apply for a grant from NCF? We offer two grant programs – a rolling mini-grant program for requests up to $10,000. Applications for the annual program are due April 14, 2021. Applications for mini-grants are accepted anytime. For more information or to apply, please contact NCF at grants@niskayunacf.org.

Congratulations!

2019 NCF Scholarship Recipients

• Veronica U. Forth
  School District 60th Anniversary Scholarship

• Gina A. Voris
  School District 60th Anniversary Scholarship

• Nafesah Ali
  Niskayuna High School Class of 1965 Scholarship

• Brendan P. Codd
  College Promise Scholarship

• Alexander G. Cherry
  Huether/Gillan Scholarship

• Victor A. Schingo III
  Harriet Wall Memorial Scholarship

• Joanna T. Guo
  Community Service Scholarship

• James Potter
  Scott McAndrews Outward Bound

Through NCF you can help meet a wide range of needs and enhance the quality of life in our community.
2019 Annual Grant Program Awards

NCF awards grants to non-profits and entities that serve town residents and/or the school district.

Courtney Chadwick live by 15 words that he “takes to heart” – in or out of the pool.

The words comprise the Special Olympics athlete oath, “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

The Niskayuna resident has been participating in Special Olympics New York for 18 years and is now a three-sport athlete year ‘round. Simply put, Special Olympics changed his life. “A lot of things I have in my life, I have because of Special Olympics NY,” Courtney explained. Like an associate’s degree as a Phi Theta Kappa from SCCC and a job he loves at the Niskayuna Town Library, “Special Olympics boosted my confidence tremendously. I never could have done it without them.”

Courtney Chadwick races the breaststroke belt, Courtney took his breaststroke to the national Special Olympics games in Seattle in 2018. First time on a plane, it was “a dream trip” – one of many growth experiences that affirmed how trying new things can be rewarding.

Courtney is grateful to NCF for supporting his training and competitions through several grants to Special Olympics NY since 2008. And, NCF couldn’t be prouder of this outstanding Niskayuna resident.

Niskayuna Newsletter_2020 alt2.indd   7
4/26/20  10:21 AM
Murray Award for Excellence in Education

In June 2019 Bryan Mattice, a Social Studies teacher and librarian Donna McAndrews, were awarded the 16th annual Murray Award. They were surprised in classrooms by a crowd of students, parents, teachers, NCF board members, and administrators with plaques and balloons. The educators will each receive $2,500 toward their professional development.

Bryan Mattice welcomes 9th graders to the high school by making his Global History class a memorable experience. Mr. Mattice fosters interest in world history with his enthusiasm and sense of humor. He encourages creativity with video projects and challenges students to respect varying perspectives. Beyond the classroom, Mr. Mattice inspires confidence in leaders of Student Congress, and NED Talks (Niskayuna Education Discovery) to take on projects beyond their comfort zones.

Donna McAndrews is an invaluable resource to all students and staff. Besides making the library a welcoming place for students, Ms. McAndrews leads a reading club, actively supports students in NED Talks, and launched the Academic Resource Center (ARC). ARC provides peer-to-peer tutoring to benefit both students seeking help and the tutors who grow as instructors and mentors. Ms. McAndrews also teaches students how to conduct effective research and brainstorms with teachers on developing ideas for class projects.

A committee of students, parents and peers chose the recipients and NCF facilitated the selection process and award presentation. Criteria included outstanding classroom practices, growth potential, and a school presence that positively impacts students, colleagues and the community.

This annual award began in 2004 by Kathy Murray Crowe and Jeanne Murray Veasey, the daughters of Edwards and Sally Murray, to honor their parents’ involvement in the formation of Niskayuna High School and their belief that high school educators would be the foundation of “uncompromising excellence” in education throughout the district. The award is also given in memory of Ms. Veasey, who has since passed away.

❖

NCF IMPACT: Senior iPads

Connected and confident. That’s how senior citizens feel about using iPads at the Town of Niskayuna Senior Center.

“iPads are a great tool to access family and broaden their world. But seniors can feel excluded from the technology and afraid to try it because it’s complicated and pricey,” explained town Recreation Leader Lisa Stevens. To address those barriers, the Senior Center purchased 7 iPads and accessories with a 2018 $2500 NCF grant. Lisa offers seniors free iPad classes each month.

Seniors also enjoy the Wii bowling video game at the Senior Center, supported by an NCF grant. “When we have an idea for our seniors, we think of Niskayuna Community Foundation,” said Lisa.