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greater rochester Health foundation

February 2026

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Honoring Black History Month
Mental Health in the Black Community -- Healing Together, Lifting Up Individuals & Communities

Greater Rochester Health Foundation is proud to sponsor BIPOC Parent Leadership's Black history Month Series, happening both virtually and in-person this month.

The free series will provide education, information, and resources on topics including: cultural perspectives on mental health, racial trauma, suicide, substance use, stigma, mental health awareness, healing-centered care, wellness and self-care, peer supports, access to care, nontraditional services, centering youth and family voice, and more.

BIPOC Parent Voice is a parent-led movement to elevate BIPOC voice and eliminate the disparities in services related to emotional health of BIPOC children, offering peer support, education and training related to mental health for BIPOC families and providers serving families. Learn more and register **here**.

Additional Black History Month Events:

- The City of Rochester's Black Heritage Committee is hosting a series of events to celebrate our nation's Black heritage. 2026 is a particularly special year, marking 100 years since Carter G. Woodson, the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, pioneered a Black History Week in 1926. Click **here** for details.

- Join the Black History Month Celebration at Strong Museum of Play on **Saturday, Feb. 7** to reflect, educate, and celebrate the profound impact of Black culture on the world via hands-on activities, performances, museum displays, and more. Details are posted here.

- Join the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester from **noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 8** for A Salute to Black Excellence: 100 Years of Celebrating Black History. Experience jazz, the blues, hip hop and more in the Pythodd Tribute Music Lounge. Click here to learn more.

HEALTH FOUNDATION NEWS

Our 2026 Call for Ideas Funding Opportunity is Opening Soon!

Our Call for Ideas funding opportunity is set to open in early March!

As funding and nonprofit landscapes continue to shift, we're focused on supporting the stabilization of programs and organizations deeply rooted in community, engaged in collaborative work, and advancing health equity -- particularly for populations facing heightened risk.

This multi-year grant opportunity is part of our Responsive Grantmaking, a community-driven approach to improving health equity in our region. This year's grant opportunity is designed to reflect the current realities facing many organizations and communities. While we know we cannot be all things to all people, our commitment is to be clear, responsive, and grounded while directing resources where they are most needed at this moment.

Stay connected with us -- more information will be coming soon.

LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

Why the Census Matters: INTERRUPT RACISM™ Speaker Series With the Urban League of Rochester

The Urban League of Rochester invites the community to its upcoming INTERRUPT RACISM™ Speaker Series at **noon on Friday, Feb. 6**, on Zoom, featuring Jeffrey M. Wice from New York Law School's Institute of NY Elections, Census, & Redistricting.

During this conversation, Wice will discuss the role of the Census in shaping political representation and the critical importance of participation to ensure fair and equitable representation in Congress. The session will explore how Census data impacts communities over time—from access to resources to representation in decision-making—and why full participation is essential to advancing equity. Register here.

Register Now for ROC The Future's 2026 State of Our Children Address

The community is invited to attend ROC the Future's annual State of Our Children Address, showcasing how data, policy, and people can improve outcomes for children and families, fuel progress and drive meaningful change.

The event takes place at **2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26**, bringing together more than 500 people who believe in BIG goals, BOLD collaboration, and a BRIGHT future for Rochester's young people.

ROC the Future Alliance is a league of dozens of leading institutions and community partnerships in the Rochester area that promotes the alignment of community resources to improve the academic achievement of Rochester's children. The Health Foundation is proud to sponsor this event and be a partner in these efforts. Click here for tickets and more information.

Our Local History Hosts Fifth Annual Antiracist Education Conference Focused on Action for Equality

Our Local History, a Rochester-based nonprofit program dedicated to supporting and empowering students, teachers, and community members to engage with the local history of civil rights through inquiry, equity, and civic action, will host its fifth annual Antiracist Education Conference on **Saturday, Feb. 28**, in partnership with local schools of education.

The 2026 conference theme, Action for Equality, will bring together educators and community members for meaningful dialogue and practical strategies to advance equity in education. The event will feature a keynote address by Dr. Gholdy Muhammad and offer a

full day of learning, reflection, and commitment to antiracist practice. Click here to learn more.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES

NEW: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation invites U.S.-based nonprofit organizations to apply for its Local Data for Equitable Communities grant opportunity. This funding supports projects that collect, analyze, and use local data to address inequities in the physical, economic, and social conditions of communities.

Applicants must focus on one primary area, including the built environment, climate and environment, community safety, healthy food access, housing, or transportation. **Proposals are due March 3, 2026**. Click here to learn more and apply.

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Did you know? Greater Rochester Health Foundation curates a database of local, statewide, and national health/health equity-related grant opportunities that we share on our website. This searchable, curated list of grants is accessible here.

In addition, our Rapid Response Fund provides short-term relief grants -- up to $75,000 -- to help nonprofits continue their work in the face of immediate state or federal funding disruptions and is designed to swiftly address the critical needs of our community by supporting the organizations that serve our most vulnerable neighbors. **Applications accepted on a rolling basis**.

CAUSEWAVE community partners

Causewave Community Partners is available to help small and mid-sized nonprofit organizations secure the funding to increase community impact. Learn more about the Grants Capacity Building Initiative offering free grant-writing support here. The Health Foundation is proud to support this important initiative along with our friends at Rochester Area Community Foundation.

Tribal Health Program Support Technical assistance and training for tribes that provides public health information, advocacy tools, policy analysis, and health promotion and disease prevention programming with the goal of elevating the health status of tribal citizens. Geographic coverage: Nationwide; **Applications accepted on an ongoing basis**. Sponsor: United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

HEALTH FOUNDATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Thank You for Inviting Us!

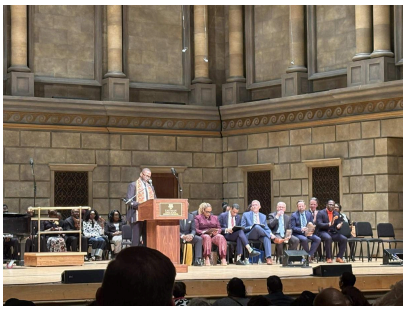
As the new year gets underway, we're excited and grateful to be invited back into community spaces across the region -- listening, learning, and standing alongside partners working to advance equity in health. From legislative breakfasts and community celebrations to leadership convenings and panels, January was a reminder of the power of collaboration and the shared commitment that continues to guide our work:

Health Foundation CEO & President **Matt Kuhlenbeck** attended **Jordan Health's** 2026 Legislative Breakfast, bringing lawmakers and community leaders together to hear directly from President & CEO **Dr. Linda Clark** about the vital health needs facing our neighbors and to discuss how, together, we can strengthen access to high-quality, equitable healthcare for all. We are grateful for Dr. Clark's leadership in our region and also for her service on the Health Foundation Board of Directors!

We're thankful to have joined Rochester Area Community Foundation and Health Foundation Board Vice Chair **Dr. Michael Scharf** for the celebration of Hillside Family of Agencies' launch of its **Next Steps Critical Time Transition Program**, providing services to support youth who are in need of additional services in order to discharge from local hospitals.

Dr. Scharf, Chief of the Golisano Children's Hospital Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at URMC, praised the program and partnership with Hillside as an example of "connection and collaboration over time" that aims to relieve those issues by helping youth transition back to their families and communities.

Program Officer **Rachel Betts** was part of two community events. The first event was **Leadership Rochester's** Kickstart Symposium, where she shared with attendees how trust, collaboration, and honest partnership are key to building financial resilience during uncertain times. She also was part of the "Meet the Funders" panel for the **Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley's** Immersive Grant Writing Program, an initiative designed to advance equity in philanthropy for women of color leading local nonprofits.



Several staff attended the **Greater Rochester Martin Luther King Jr. Commission's** Annual MLK Day Celebration on MLK Day. The event theme "From Me to We: Changing Our Souls, Creating Beloved Community," featured a message from from Reverend Courtney Clayton Jenkins.

Staff also attended the **Division of Access, Engagement, and Success'** 4th annual Expressions of King's Legacy at Rochester Institute of Technology with Keynote Speaker Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr. -- scholar, political commentator and author.

More than a dozen **Parent Leader Facilitators** joined the Health Foundation and the **National Parent Leadership Institute** for a day long retreat focused on strategic planning for the year ahead. Together, we advanced the work of our **Healthy and Equitable Futures** Initiative by identifying priorities and next steps across communications, special projects, technical assistance, system change, and evaluation and applied learning for 2026 to 2027.

We closed out the month at **Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative's** Annual Legislative Breakfast, “No Turning Back.” RMAPI convened local, state, and federal representatives together to advance its 2026 Policy Agenda: living wages, universal child care, affordable housing, and an end to policies that criminalize poverty.

RMAPI is a multi-sector community collaborative with a goal to improve quality of life by reducing poverty and increasing self-sufficiency. The Health Foundation is proud to be part of the RMAPI Community Collaborative.

What's Ahead:

Program Officer Hannah Castelli will participate in **Rochester Education Foundation's** upcoming career exploration event for Rochester City School District seventh grade students at Monroe Community College to inspire excitement and confidence about their future career possibilities.

Health Foundation leadership will join Common Ground Health and local elected officials for a presentation and discussion of the **Behavioral Health Needs Assessment**. The event will give attendees an in-depth sense of our community and the various mental health resources, needs, and challenges with the goal of working together to chart out next steps to allow Monroe County to lead the state in mental health resources and response.

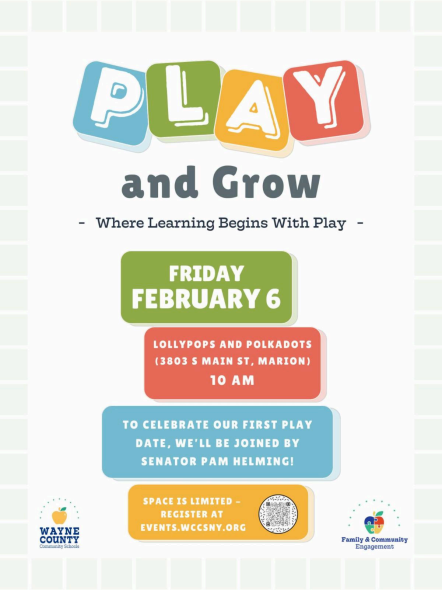
Reminder: We're Here to Help

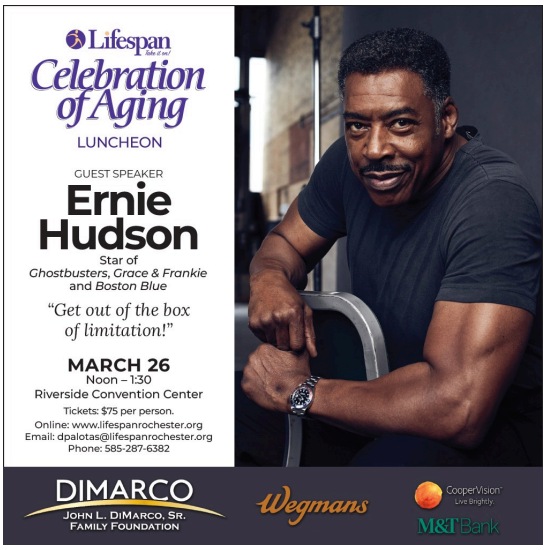
We believe that strong partnerships and shared knowledge are the most powerful tools we have as we continue to navigate changes in the funding and nonprofit landscapes.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have concerns or need support. Click here for our staff directory.

Reminder: Visit our Resource Page to explore tools and guidance for nonprofits.

COMMUNITY BOARD





Centered in equity, the mission of Greater Rochester Health Foundation is to pursue and invest in solutions that build a healthier region where all people can thrive.

Greater Rochester Health Foundation | 255 East Ave Suite 402 | Rochester, NY 14604 US

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