

Western New York philanthropic community announces fund to support immediate needs in response to COVID-19

Nearly 20 local philanthropic organizations have come together to announce the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund in partnership with the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County. The fund will be used to address the community's most immediate needs in the eight counties of Western New York, with an initial focus on the areas of health, human services, food and child care, and to address the needs of front-line responders.

To date, the fund has more than \$4 million from the following organizations who contributed funding:

- Bank of America Charitable Foundation
- BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund
- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
- East Hill Foundation
- Grigg Lewis Foundation
- Health Foundation for Western & Central New York
- James H. Cummings Foundation
- Key Bank and First Niagara Foundation
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- Margaret L. Wendt Founda-

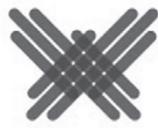
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- Patrick P. Lee Foundation
- Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation
- Pinto Family Foundation
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

- The Baird Foundation
- The John R. Oishei Foundation
- The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation
- Western New York Foundation

Immediate funding will complement public sector efforts, and granting decisions to 501(c)(3) organizations will be focused on basic needs. Local foundations have been assessing immediate community needs and will invite a selection of organizations who are addressing these needs to apply for funding.

Grants will be reviewed by foundation representatives with the assistance of an advisory committee including Tara Ellis, FeedMore WNY; Brenda McDuffie, Buffalo Urban League; Michael Martin, Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties Inc.; Lucy Candelario, The Belle Center; and Dr. LaVonne Ansari, Community



**WNY COVID-19
COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND**

Health Center of Buffalo Inc.

A press release stated, "At this time of unprecedented need and uncertainty, the WNY philanthropic community, convened by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Health Foundation for Western & Central New York and The John R. Oishei Foundation, welcomes individuals and organizations who would like to contribute to this communitywide effort to visit www.uwbec.org/covidfund to give through the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County."

"This unparalleled coordinated community effort to mobilize immediate help to organizations responding on the frontlines of the COVID-19 community crisis has proven our resolve to create solutions together. Please join our collective effort, as you are able during this time of great need, all contributions are welcomed," said Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, president/CEO of Community

Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

"Throughout our region, community-based organizations are working tirelessly to meet the needs of Western New Yorkers affected by the ongoing impact of COVID-19," said Nora O'Brien-Suric, Ph.D., president, the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York. "The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund is an opportunity for each of us to 'help the helpers' by supporting the frontline teams who are doing this important work and addressing the most critical community needs."

Robert D. Gioia, president of The John R. Oishei Foundation, said, "There is no greater time for our community to support the organizations that are addressing the most critical needs in Western New York as a result of COVID-19, including those of frontline responders and those disproportionately impacted from a health or economic perspective.

By working together, the philanthropic community can move quickly and efficiently to get funding where it is most needed, and we encourage the private sector and individuals to contribute what they can to support these efforts."

Michael Weiner, president and CEO United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, said, "The time is now for the Western New York community to come together as we navigate the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage everyone to join us and support the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund to ensure local organizations can continue serving our neighbors who may find themselves in crisis during these unprecedented times."

Should anyone need information about services available in our community, call 211 or 888-696-9211. 211 WNY is an information referral hotline that services all eight counties in Western New York. Agencies and programs are encouraged to call or email with updates on how COVID-19 is affecting their ability to provide services to the community.

Pegula Sports & Entertainment provides \$1.2 million in aid to WNY

Pegula Sports & Entertainment, in partnership with the Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres foundations, will provide at least \$1.2 million in direct community aid to Western New York residents in need during the COVID-19 pan-

demic, owners Terry and Kim Pegula announced Wednesday.

The money will go to three direct and immediate purposes:

- The two team foundations will contribute to the newly formed Western New York COVID-19

Community Response Fund, formed by 18 local foundations on Tuesday, including Wilson, Oishei, Wendt, M&T, Lee and others. The fund has committed more than \$4 million to helping the region's nonprofit agencies in key areas of the battle against the virus. The project of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County and these foundations invited the Bills and Sabres foundations earlier this week, and the boards of both team foundations approved the allocations Wednesday.

•A broad and ongoing commitment to FeedMore WNY (formerly the Food Bank of WNY and Meals on Wheels for WNY), and the Rural Outreach Center in East Aurora. This targeted aid will provide thousands of bags of groceries to underserved and unemployed urban and rural families in the Western New York region.

•The remainder of the aid will be directed to areas of most pressing need, including support for first responders, hospital workers, nurses, and protective and medical-equipment supplies. The goal of the aid will be to bolster the Buffalo Niagara community's response and effectiveness in fighting the pandemic.

"We realize we are in uncertain times as a nation and as a community," said PSE President and CEO Kim Pegula. "Like many Western New Yorkers, we are faced with making difficult decisions, but we realize that focusing on the health and welfare of our community is what will get us through these difficult times. While we don't yet know the scope of the pandemic, we wanted to ensure that we were able to give some immediate assistance to those in need and those fighting on the front lines.

We applaud the community relief fund and are proud that our foundations will join these community leaders in their efforts."

"Terry and I have always believed that something positive can come out of something negative, and we pray this situation is no exception," she added.

About PSE

Pegula Sports & Entertainment streamlines key business areas across all Pegula family-owned sports and entertainment properties, including the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Sabres, Buffalo Bandits, Rochester Americans, Rochester Knighthawks, LECOM Harborcenter, Black River Entertainment, ADPRO Sports, PicSix Creative agency and numerous hospitality properties. PSE aims to be a leader in the sports and entertainment industry by bringing together the individual resources, capabilities and talents of each of its entities to create a cohesive and sustainable brand that together represents the Pegula family's interest. PSE's mission is exemplified by its One Buffalo initiative, which aims to unite Western New York and serve as a representation of teamwork through a deeper connection between Buffalo sports teams, fans and the community.

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