

## 2019 ANNUAL UPDATE

**Thank you for being a member, partner and supporter in improving quality of life** for all who live in Orange County. We wanted to take a moment to show you *your dollars at work*, all we've been working on in 2019, and a glimpse of what's to come in 2020. Thank you for your continued support of the Citizens Foundation. **Together, we can continue to make great things happen in our community.** Following is a quick summary of a few of our accomplishments, plans, and progress for our community.

### ***Transportation***

Expanding Route 17 is vital to quality of life and the economic well being of the Hudson Valley. This year, the **17-Forward-86** Coalition was launched representing the diverse interests of stakeholders in the Hudson Valley who understand that this expansion will strengthen our economy by improving access for tourists and businesses, while enhancing commuter safety and reducing environmental damage from idling vehicular emissions. This expansion will also improve quality of life for residents facing increased traffic on side roads from commuters avoiding Route 17's congestion. Throughout the year, we've been advocating at the federal, state, and local level to raise \$500 million over five years to improve safety conditions and add a third lane where necessary. We've gotten attention from elected officials and hope to have great news to report on this front in 2020!



### ***Workforce & the Economy***



We worked with **Orange County's Industrial Development Agency (IDA)** to determine ways our workforce can meet employers' demands. We conducted a study of affordable housing, transportation, training and childcare, as well as an in-depth look at our up and coming citizens, Generation Z. The study, **'Workplace Matters: Reimagining and Redeveloping Workforce Development in Orange County, NY'** sheds light on our workers' greatest impediments to securing good jobs close to home. This in-depth study and report was presented to the Citizens Foundation and IDA Boards of Directors, as well as key employers in our community, and remains accessible as a workforce development resource.

Together with the **Town of Warwick**, the **IDA**, the **Accelerator**, and other partners, the Citizens Foundation is part of a collaborative effort creating and establishing a CBD Business Accelerator and cluster in Orange County, working hard to bring a burgeoning industry to our community. The former state prison facility located in Warwick is being converted into a CBD refinery campus, which will aid our local farmers by offering support and assistance to those interested in growing hemp, creating new jobs and businesses, and providing locally grown, top-grade CBD extract at a discounted rate for local businesses using oil in their products. This venture includes onsite processing as well as a testing laboratory ensuring oil adheres to quality standards. Partnering with **Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine** in Orange County and the **Center for Discovery** in Sullivan County, the CBD Accelerator offers a regional clean room and extensive R&D on the efficacy of CBD in patient populations with complex conditions. This project will allow our region to be at the forefront of a brand new industry that will have a positive impact on our quality of life for years to come.

### ***Downtown Recreation & Placemaking***

Remember those bustling, vibrant downtowns from years ago? It's time to reinvent them to accommodate a new economy and changes in our communities. That's what placemaking does. It re-creates and renews downtown communities with designs and amenities that create community hubs. We're working with community groups and municipalities throughout our county to help them to integrate placemaking into their comprehensive plans and plans for downtown revitalization.

In March, the Citizens Foundation held a Citizens Symposium, *'Pop-Up Placemaking'*, where Mike Lydon from Street Plans Collaborative presented about successful placemaking practices and projects. At this symposium, the Citizens Foundation announced a small grant opportunity for communities interested in executing a placemaking project. In April, the Citizens Foundation held another Citizens Symposium, *'Is Your Main Street a NYS Highway'*, where Sandra Jobson, New York State Department of Transportation Regional Planning and Program Manager led a discussion on state highways that are also main streets, a common occurrence in the Hudson Valley and an important factor in placemaking initiatives.



Every year, the Citizens Foundation holds a day-long, thought-provoking conference, and give awards to community projects that embrace placemaking ideals. In November, we held our 11<sup>th</sup> annual Placemaking Conference and Awards, where we awarded eight mini-grants to community projects that embody the

elements and spirit of placemaking. These projects included; Parking Day 2019, Newburgh, High Visibility Cross Walk, Newburgh, Lake Street Traffic Calming, Newburgh, Donahue Memorial Park, Cornwall-on-Hudson, Pop-Up Market, Cornwall, Pedestrian Planters, Sugar Loaf, Sensory Play Area, Goshen and Goshen Historic Public Murals, Goshen. Out of these chosen applicants, we awarded both High Visibility Cross Walk and Goshen Historic Public Mural (because we couldn't pick only one) a shared \$2,500 grand prize. The public educational workshop was well attended and included representatives from Hudson Valley municipalities interested in integrating placemaking into their planning. We remain committed to reviving our downtowns to be places where people can shop, work, live, socialize, or just be.

## Community & Membership Events

Each year, the Citizens Foundation awards the Ottaway Medal to an extraordinary citizen who embodies outstanding community leadership exemplified by James and Ruth Ottaway, known for their philanthropy, business leadership, and commitment to community. In 2019, we honored Joan Cusack-McGuirk, CEO and President of Montefiore St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital, who personifies all that the Ottaway Medal represents. It was an evening of celebration and inspiration with hundreds in attendance.



Our Summer Jubilee this year was a very special event. We presented the inaugural Graham M. Skea Quality of Life Award to a life-long Orange County citizen, Dr. Frank Simpson, whose dedication to noteworthy initiatives, community organizations and municipal leadership to preserve and improve quality of life in our county. Those in attendance enjoyed wonderful summer fare from *Hudson Street Café*, live music from *So Close* band, plein air painting by local artists, along with local wine, beer, and ciders. It was a celebration of summer, and an update on the Citizens Foundation's initiatives, projects, and programs.



These highlights have only touched on our 2019 happenings, and we know you have a busy schedule and no time to read about all we're doing, so we'll wrap it up.

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention that we've created an arts and culture hub at the Seligmann Center, hosting **three legacy artist exhibitions and two pop-up art shows featuring works by local artists, offering poetry, dance and music events throughout the year, as well as an art/sculpture trail, or that we're hosting a community solar array on the grounds of our offices offering solar power to 60 homes and businesses.** We have a rolling schedule for our events, forums, workshops and happenings that are listed on our website as they become available. There are many more to come in 2019. Be sure to check in regularly.

**We're excited to engage even more Orange County citizens in 2019, and we hope you'll join us in our mission to make our county the best it can be.**