

2021 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE WEBSTER COMMUNITY CHEST

With this report, we celebrate the generosity of all the people who live in our community and the dedication of all who volunteer their time to make the Webster area one that believes in "Neighbors Helping Neighbors". Our World War II "Webster War Chest" supported residents off serving their country and their families at home. Returning veterans were given needed assistance. Not wanting to lose this care, in 1948 it was incorporated as The Webster Community Chest. Services have changed along with the needs and size of the community but we together have always pursued the same goal of helping those in need and making this an even better community.

The Chest relies solely upon the donations of the citizens and businesses of the greater Webster community for its operations. We do not receive money from any branch of government. We are inspired by our supporters and do everything possible to ensure that they get the greatest possible value for their donations.

We provide our services on behalf of our donors to all residents in the 14580 ZIP Code area. This includes not only Webster but the northern third of Penfield as well. Any resident who is in need can contact us. Mary Ellen McDowell is our Benefits Counselor. She is very knowledgeable and experienced and will celebrate her 25th anniversary with us later this year.

I would like also to recognize the members of our Board of Directors and our officers who all volunteer their time and skills to oversee the operations of the Chest. These are Jessica Muratore, Sarah Reynolds, Diane Staub, Christina Sleve, Bonnie Reynolds, Paul Cordy, Andy LaManna, Dan Robinson, Mary Fran Grenier, and Michael Grenier. We welcome new board members Barry Deane and Paul Staub. Anyone who is looking to serve our community as a volunteer should consider joining this dedicated group.

Despite the eviction freezes and government pandemic aid, we saw an increase in demand for services this past year. In 2021, we took 1093 calls and emails, most seeking help or information, which was nearly a 4% increase over 2020. Everyone who reaches out to us gets a fast response. Well-connected, Mary Ellen is able usually to match a need to resources that can help right away.

When there is no immediate recourse in a crisis or emergency, we provide direct aid. Most of the twenty-one emergency relief payments made last year were rent subsidies for families facing evictions. We also provided food assistance to families, auto repairs, and a medical treatment. A family whose home was destroyed by fire in September also received financial help. Additional food assistance for the needy was made through Hope House in partnership with Hegedorns. In most months, we delivered groceries that were in short supply.

Our Campership program subsidized summer camp for children in low income families.

Our annual Shirley Miller Award is made to local graduating high school seniors to recognize exemplary efforts as young volunteers and to encourage community service in their schoolmates. The six awards made this year went to Amy Cawley, Jonathan Reeve, Brynn Smith, Maya Dickson, Jason Lisciandro, and Jonathan Sullo.

This year we identified an unmet need in providing assistance to low income families that have children with disabilities. In partnership with a local foundation, we have made it affordable for our clients to put their children in developmental programs with Heritage Christian Stables and we purchased equipment needed for Gliding Stars of Rochester. We also funded equipment for a recreational and care program for children at the Respitewood short-term care home. These programs were each crafted by Mary Ellen and were so successful that we allocated additional money to provide similar programs for adults with developmental disabilities. We also funded scholarships through the Webster Central School District's Special Education Parent Teachers Association (SEPTA).

The Chest also invests in special programs run by nonprofits in Webster that benefit the community. These included funding supplies for a Webster Library reading program at Phillips Village, participation by low income children in Girls on the Run, Thanksgiving dinner for the needy at the Assembly of God church, and veterans dinner at Spry Middle School. We partnered with school nurses in all of the elementary schools to provide a supply of emergency underwear for children.

The Board ran a successful Wine Tasting fundraising event with Casa Larga in March and a spaghetti dinner in partnership with the Webster Masons in December. Other fund-raising events run by local groups on our behalf included two United Church of Christ concerts during the summer, the Webster Village Business Improvement District's Beer Walk in November, the Nine Mile Point Club in December, the Lense-Johnson wedding, and even a lemonade stand by two youngsters in July. We look forward to a successful Peep Show fund raiser this coming April 2nd and 3rd. The major source of our funds remains our annual Fund Drive.

To learn about our services and programs, visit our website at webcommchest.org. If you know of someone who might need assistance, please have them reach out to us by phone at (585) 671-2060 or by e-mail at webcommchest@gmail.com

Our officers for 2022 elected at the annual meeting on January 18th, 2022 are Michael Grenier, President; Diane Staub, Vice President; Sarah Reynolds, Treasurer; and Andy LaManna, Corporate Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Grenier, President, Webster Community Chest