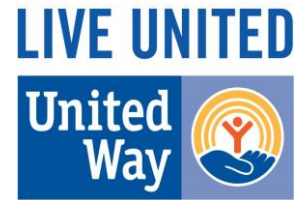


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Summer Youth Employment Program Restored to Previous Funding Levels Through Collaboration of Three Local Funders**

**Ithaca, NY** – Ithaca, NY – During a year when so much has been changed, and as we emerge from the limitations brought on by a worldwide pandemic, there have been many moments of victory when we, as a community, come together and are able to successfully keep some key traditions going. One such victory recently happened for the Summer Youth Employment Program, due to collaboration between Park Foundation, Community Foundation of Tompkins County, and United Way of Tompkins County.

Each summer, Tompkins County students participate in the Summer Youth Employment Program. The program gives some of our most vulnerable teens the opportunity to work for six weeks during the summer for 20 hours a week. However, the program is about much more than just earning money. There are required trainings and support for students placed in jobs—including money management, workplace safety, and sexual harassment prevention. The students also receive performance reviews and guidance throughout the experience. Most students also work on an application or resume and do a mock interview for the practice. Sue Kittel, Program Officer with Park Foundation, shares, “The program helps students gain job and job-maturity skills, which we know are critical and positive for them. First work experiences matter, and we know that responsibility and independence are good for teens. It also helps them build new workplace relationships that can serve them well beyond the six weeks.”

In early June, Tompkins County Workforce Development Board, who administers the New York State grant for the program each year, learned that the formula for funding the program had changed. As a result, about 30 less positions would be available this year. Natalie Branosky, Executive Director, and her team acted quickly to seek funding by reaching out to Kittel at Park Foundation. Through a local funders group that meets bi-weekly to address emerging challenges to the community brought on by COVID-19 impacts, Kittel quickly alerted other funders as well as her Board.

“Community Foundation feels it is important to restore these positions, both for the youth involved as well as for their families and the local nonprofits that also benefit from the program. Thankfully, our Lane Family Fund is able to support this initiative alongside other funders,” shares Community Foundation’s CEO George Ferrari. Joining the effort is United Way of Tompkins County. “United Way of Tompkins County is humbled and appreciates this opportunity to join with Park Foundation and Community Foundation’s Lane Family Fund in this effort to ensure that important summer employment opportunities are available for local youth. Thanks to a generous \$500,000 personal gift from Governor Cuomo to the United Way of New York State, UWTC can utilize a portion of these funds to make a difference in the lives of young people and their families.”

Through this collaboration, the Summer Youth Employment Program has been restored to the previously expected number of positions, and is running as scheduled at this time.

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