



For Immediate Release

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Oishei Foundation Wraps Up 75th Year, Expands Role in Community

Buffalo, NY, November 28, 2016 – The John R. Oishei Foundation is wrapping up its 75th anniversary year in 2016 and has expanded its scope of work and staff.

Oishei established the Foundation, formerly known as the Julia R. and Estelle L. Foundation at the end of 1940 and it was officially incorporated in 1941. Thereafter, Oishei funded the Foundation with annual contributions and charitable remainder trusts. The principal assets of the Foundation also include the assets of the estates of Mr. Oishei's son, R. John Oishei and his wife Jean, and his daughter, Patricia Oishei Colby.

Oishei served as President of the Foundation from its founding until his death in 1968. Under his leadership, the Foundation concentrated its support to hospitals and schools in the Buffalo area with the balance being directed to cultural and social service needs. Until 1997, all Foundation contributions were made on an anonymous basis. This was consistent with the procedures Mr. Oishei followed with regard to the substantial charitable gifts he personally made during his lifetime. His penchant for total anonymity was driven by his strong sense of modesty and of equally strong belief that anonymity allowed him to make his philanthropic decisions with greater objectivity.

The Foundation recently expanded its role in Western New York “Beyond Grantmaking.” The Foundation, now with a staff of ten, also:

- Helps local nonprofits with capacity building, analyses, strategic and business planning and leadership training
- Convenes community members, foster collaborations and promote network building
- Invests to benefit our society through Mission Related Investments (MRIs)

Its enlarged staff includes Karen Spaulding as VP of Philanthropic Support. Karen, who had been Deputy Director at the Albright-Knox for many years, rolls up her sleeves in the community and guides nonprofits to help them succeed. She provides an array of services including leadership training, capacity building, short- and long-term planning, crisis management advice, networking opportunities, etc.

In addition, Foundation program staff convenes and guides current and potential grantees to maximize impact and build collaboration. The Foundation's Knowledge Management Officer, Curtis Robbins, helps grantees with evaluation, reporting, research and data systems. Its Chief Communications Officer, Sally Crowley, lends guidance to nonprofits and other Foundations in the areas of strategic communications planning, development/membership communications, effective branding and website creation and promotes nonprofits through digital media.

Key historical facts about the Foundation include:

- Over the past 75 years, \$335 million dollars have been awarded to the local nonprofit community.
- In the last two decades, the Foundation awarded approximately 1,900 grants totaling nearly \$300 million.
- More than 60% of the population in Western New York is directly affected by its grantmaking.

The Foundation's mission is to be a catalyst for change to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life for the Buffalo Niagara region through grantmaking, leadership and network building.

For more information, visit www.oishei.org

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