

CORNING

2023 Employee Vibrant Community Grant Winners

The Employee Vibrant Community Grants program empowers employees to nominate deserving nonprofit organizations that mean the most to them. Active part-time and full-time U.S. Corning employees may nominate an eligible nonprofit organization to receive a \$1,000 grant.

Alternative School for Math and Science

Corning, NY

Nominated by Nikki Bower, Staff Sector, Corning, NY

The Alternative School for Math and Science (ASMS) provides a diverse community of students in middle school with an academically challenging and supportive learning environment based on trust and respect. ASMS was founded by parents that believe parental involvement builds trust and communication between the school families. “The Alternative School for Math and Science nurtures the whole self, whole school, and whole community,” writes Nikki Bower. “Having another educational option is important for local families.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

Bath Central School District

Bath, NY

Nominated by Michael Warren, Environmental Technologies, Corning, NY

The Bath Central School District is community centered, globally connected, and devoted to every student, every day. The school district creates a safe, nurturing, experience-rich environment that promotes life-long learning to empower all individuals to meet the challenges of an ever-changing future. “I feel “Ram Pride” every time I step into any of the schools within the district as a former student and a parent of children who graduated from the district,” writes Michael Warren. “The “Haverling Family First” mentality shows the engagement between the faculty, employees, community members, and students.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

Bath Youth Baseball
Bath, NY

Nominated by Scott Folckemer, S&T, Corning, NY

Bath Youth Baseball is a volunteer organization that teaches boys and girls ages four to twelve the sport of baseball. An emphasis is placed on sportsmanship and teamwork both on and off the field. "Through learning the basics of baseball, players learn how to work together as a team, accomplish a common goal, and good sportsmanship," writes Scott Folckemer. **This grant will be for general program support.**

Campbell Savona Central School District
Campbell-Savona, NY

Nominated by Michelle Mansfield, Optical Communications, Corning, NY

The Campbell Savona Central School District works to establish a community centered environment that engages and empowers students and staff to become independent, flexible problem-solvers fully prepared to reach their highest potential. Rigorous and relevant authentic learning experiences are the vehicle through which students learn the importance of integrity, preservation, collaboration, and communication. "The school and coaches are dedicated to the students," writes Melissa Mansfield. "By participating in the school's soccer program students gain sportsmanship skills and a broader team base." **This grant will be for the boys' soccer program.**

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Assist
Wilmington, NC

Nominated by Jennifer Adams, Optical Communications, Wilmington, NC

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Assist (CFPUAA) partners with WATERway NC to gather resources to help Wilmington-area families maintain critical water and sewer services. From the tap to the bill, CFPUAA helps households avoid interruptions in water service through emergency, one-time bill payments before water shut offs occur based on need. "Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Assist exists to help those in our community that need assistance so that no one has to go without fresh drinking water and available sanitary services," writes Jennifer Adams. "This organization helps ensure everyone in the local community has their basic needs attended to and helps keep water and sewer affordable for all." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Chemung County Humane Society & SPCA
Elmira, NY

Nominated by Chris Sharman, S&T, Corning, NY

Founded in 1891, the Chemung County SPCA is one of the oldest non-profit organization for animal welfare in the region. One of the focuses of Tom Geroy, executive director, is preventing overpopulation and implementing a variety of affordable care programs aimed to keep pets in their homes, with their families, and out of area shelters. "My experience adopting two cats from the SPCA was positive, professional, and made me feel prepared to bring home a pet," writes Chris Sharman. "When I found a stray kitten under a vehicle, I was confident that bringing it to the SPCA would provide the best outcome for the care needed." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Chinese School of Rochester
Rochester, NY

Nominated by Zhibing Zhan, Advanced Optics, Fairport, NY

The Chinese School of Rochester (CSR) fosters an appreciation for Chinese cultural heritage. CSR was the first Chinese school in New York State to teach Mandarin Chinese with Pinyin and simplified characters and offers a variety of classes including Chinese martial arts, dance, youth choir, chess, and science. "Through energetic volunteers and teachers the Chinese School of Rochester has provided my family with a high-quality opportunity for Chinese learning," writes Zhibing Zhan. **This grant will be for general program support.**

Christ Church Day Care (dba Ready Set Grow)
Corning, NY

Nominated by Jennifer Jones, Staff Sector, Corning, NY

Christ Church Day Care, known as Ready Set Grow Childcare (RSG), provides a unique learning and development environment for families and children as an accredited National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) early childhood education center. By incorporating the Conscious Discipline curriculum into daily activities, RSG equips children with the social and emotional skills they need as they transition to elementary school and throughout their educational journey. RSG uses a play-based learning style to teach children while making learning fun. "As a former center parent I chose Ready Set Grow because of their approach to learning and development," writes Jennifer Jones. "The skills my children learned helped them be successful in elementary school, from tackling new learning topics to making friends." **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Communities in Schools of Cape Fear
Wilmington, NC**

Nominated by Benjamin Castner, Optical Communications, Wilmington, NC

Communities in Schools of Cape Fear (CIS) works directly inside public schools, supporting vulnerable students and those with the greatest risk of dropping out. CIS has trained support specialists at 27 schools and provides summer enrichment camps, afterschool programs, and a restorative justice program that serves as an alternative to the juvenile justice system. “Communities in Schools mobilizes the community to offer students extra support to help them succeed,” writes Benjamin Castner. “The unique model works because it’s based on national research, driven by community relationships, and supported by local resources.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Community Foundation of Elmira, Corning and the Finger Lakes
Horseheads, NY**

Nominated by Julianne Santilli, S&T, Corning, NY

Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc. helps individuals, families, companies, and organizations invest in the future of the Southern Tier. The Nick Rossi Memorial Fund, administered by the Community Foundation, supports student governance training and mentoring for Corning Painted Post elementary school student council members. As part of the fund, elementary school Student Council leaders gather annually for a one-day leadership conference. “The Community Foundation looks at the holistic needs in the community, including education, arts, infrastructure, animals, the environment and wellness,” writes Julianne Santilli. **This grant will be for the Nick Rossi Memorial Fund.**

**Cooperative Extension of Chemung County
Elmira, NY**

Nominated by Amos Mainville, Environmental Technologies, Corning, NY

In pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County brings experience and research-based solutions together to help families and communities thrive in a rapidly changing world. Cornell Cooperative Extension offers programming in agriculture, community, energy, environment, gardening, nutrition, and 4-H. 4-H is a program designed for participants to gain life skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will further each person’s development as self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society. “The 4-H Youth Development Program allows young people to take on critical issues,” writes Amos Mainville. “By learning to address community health inequities and advocating for equity and inclusion for all, youth are able to influence and improve the world around us.” **This grant will be for the 4-H program.**

Corning Meals on Wheels

Corning, NY

Nominated by Melissa Colacino, Environmental Technologies, and Cara Groeger, S&T, Corning, NY

Corning Meals on Wheels (CMoW) helps make the Corning area vibrant by engaging volunteers to assist homebound and frail seniors in need. CMoW is designed to fight senior hunger and isolation. It allows seniors to safely remain in their homes by having meals delivered to those in need. Volunteers deliver a hot meal and a smile to seniors and, for many, these volunteers are the only people they see all day. “The Corning community is fortunate to have a program dedicated to ending senior isolation and hunger and I have seen firsthand how this community has pulled together to support this program and our seniors,” writes Cara Groeger. Melissa Colacino writes, “As a board member I’m able to hear many words of thanks and uplifting stories of how CMoW has made a positive impact. This organization is about neighbors helping neighbors to build a better community together.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

Corning-Painted Post Area School District

Corning, NY

Nominated by Maria Strinni Gill, Staffs, Corning, NY

At the Corning-Painted Post Area School District (CPPSD) the students are at the center of everything it does. By creating a diverse, challenging, high performing teaching and learning community CPPSD develops inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world. One of the clubs offered at the high school is the African American Culture Club which is focused on understanding and demonstrating an appreciation of Black Culture. “I was amazed at the sincerity and depth of conversation the students have on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics,” writes Maria Strinni Gill. “The group provides a safe and welcoming space for students to celebrate, commiserate, understand differences, and discover common ground.” **This grant will be for Corning-Painted Post High School Black Culture Appreciation Coalition**

Corning-Painted Post River Hawks

Corning, NY

Nominated by Natalia Hartmann, Staff Sector, Corning, NY

Formerly Crystal City River Rats, the Corning-Painted Post River Hawks offers training and practice groups for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. The swim club offers a year-round program with daily swim practices. Some participants have qualified for elite national championships. Governed by USA Swimming, the River Hawks have access to a robust set of resources around nutrition and training. “Swimming teaches meaningful life skills, such as teamwork, discipline, goal setting, strong work ethics, sharing in success, overcoming failures, and learning from mistakes,” writes Natalia Hartmann. “Through a shared interest in swimming, the club empowers young people to become champions for a lifetime, in and out of the water.” **This grant will be for scholarships.**

**David Walker Economic, Educational, Health, and Cultural Center
Wilmington, NC**

Nominated by Daawud N El-Amin, Optical Communications, Wilmington, NC

The David Walker Economic, Educational, Health, and Cultural Center recovers, researches, collects, preserves, and promotes the knowledge of the ancient and varied culture of African people. The cultural center poses historical and current African paradigms as a framework and foundation for thought and practice directed toward addressing the critical issues of the time. The chess park is open 24 hours daily and classes are available by appointment. The chess park is seen as a resource to develop cognitive skills and assist in decision marking. "The Center creates opportunities in four disciplines; economics, education, health, and cultural awareness," writes Daawud N El-Amin. "The African American Cultural Center is the start of many projects that will continue to grow in the years to come." **This grant will be for the Chess Park.**

**Draughn High School Athletic Boosters (dba DHS Althetic)
Valdese, NC**

Nominated by Melissa Abernathy, Optical Communications ,Charlotte, NC

The Draughn High School Athletic Boosters helps alleviate financial obstacles regarding transportation, equipment, uniforms, and activity fees for student athletes. The boosters encourages parents of sports participants to be involved with the club to build school spirit and assist in funding athletic programs. "The Draughn High School Athletic Boosters organization realizes and values the contribution of athletics and clubs to students and in the community," writes Melissa Abernathy. "These activities provide a much-needed social outlet and a way for students to connect with the community." **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Durham Central Park
Durham, NC**

Nominated by Matthew Herman, Life Sciences, Durham, NC

Durham Central Park (DCP) is a five-acre city-owned park which serves as a meeting place for all to meet, exercise, utilize the play structures, and enjoy a space in nature. DCP also holds free programs, the PLAYlist Concert Series, and Storytime to promote cultural activities. "Durham Central Park is the site of the Durham farmer's market which gives local farmers and vendors a place to sell their products and give citizens access to fresh food," writes Matthew Herman. "Durham Central Park has become a cultural hub in Durham that all can appreciate." **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Earnest Heart Foundation
Durham, NC**

Nominated by Lakeisha Howie, Life Sciences, Durham, NC

Earnest Heart Foundation seeks to restore and empower men, women, and children through education, training, and career development. It renews self-worth, dignity, and pride to those in need through education, training, and career development. The Foundation provides basic primary items to those experiencing socio-economic challenges and offers mentoring, tutoring, and job readiness skills to improve overall quality of life. "The Earnest Heart Foundation makes a powerful and lasting impact to the local community by providing Thanksgiving meals and hygiene bags to one hundred families," writes Lakeisha Howie. "The Foundation gave fifty students book bags filled with supplies before the start of the school year." **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Economic Opportunity Program of Chemung County
Elmira, NY**

Nominated by Claire Warren Ginnan, Gorilla Glass, Corning, NY

The Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) is a community-based program that directly links the needs of its members to resources. EOP provides educational, vocational, and holistic opportunities that help participants gain sustainable independence and strengthen the family unit. The staff is committed to what they do and carry out their duties with respect and kindness. "I am always impressed by EOP staff's dedication and have learned a lot working with them," writes Claire Warren Ginnan. "I have partnered with EOP on many successful programs, including Christmas Magic." **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Elkland Area Community Library
Elkland, PA**

Nominated by Deanna Sherman, Optical Communications, Corning, NY

Elkland Area Community Library provides a variety of services, including access to books, magazines, DVDs, discovery packs for children, internet access, meeting rooms, and special programs. Book clubs for adults and children, adult art classes, crafting for children, and a summer reading program are also offered at the library. "The summer reading program provides an important enrichment activity for two different age groups," writes Deanna Sherman. "The library provides a story, snack, and craft book, and reading enjoyment for every child that attends the program." **This grant will be for the summer reading program.**

Elkland Girls Softball Association
Elkland, PA

Nominated by Robin, Gee, Optical Communications, Corning, NY

Elkland Girls Softball Association (EGSA) helps community youth become better individuals and citizens through organized athletics. In the sport of softball, young athletes learn how to play softball, gain self-confidence, deal with defeat, set goals, and how to follow through with commitment. "Elkland Girls Softball Association gives participants an opportunity to participate in a team environment, learn problem solving skills, exercise, and have fun," writes Robin Gee. **This grant will be for general program support.**

Fayette Cooperating Nursery School
Lexington, KY

Nominated by Joel Vice, Gorilla Glass, Harrodsburg, KY

The Fayette Cooperative Nursery School believes that a child's preschool experience should be one in which the foundations are laid for a lifetime of learning through educational experiences. The school serves children from three to eight years old through a hands-on approach with the intent of fostering inquisitive, strong, and confident children. "The children develop a strong groundwork to help them become independent and self-driven learners," writes Joel Vice. "A lot of time is spent encouraging an interest in the natural world through nature discovery walks, raising baby chickens, butterfly life development, and other programs." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Finger Lakes Land Trust
Ithaca, NY

Nominated by Allison Draper, S&T, Corning, NY

The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) conserves the lands and waters of the Finger Lakes region to ensure scenic vistas, clean water, local foods, and wild places for everyone. At the Steege FLLT has preserved almost 800 acres, creating a place with seven miles of all season trails. "Steege Hill Preserve provides serene refuge for humans and wildlife alike," writes Allison Draper. "With critters around every corner and under every stone, this preserve provides a robust environmental and educational experience for the community." **This grant will be for Steege Hill Nature Preserve.**

Finger Lakes Falcons Travel Baseball Club
Horseheads, NY

Nominated by Kevin Lewis, Optical Communications, Corning, NY

The Finger Lakes Falcons Travel Baseball Club provides baseball opportunities for players ages eight to nineteen. The Falcons program emphasizes the importance of sportsmanship, teamwork, and dedication. The teams focus on providing a positive experience while growing self-confidence and building leadership skills," writes Kevin Lewis. "The expectations for a Falcon, both on and off the field, is to always strive to be the best, help the team, and involvement in philanthropic opportunities." **This grant will be for training, equipment, and facility improvements.**

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School
Elmira, NY

Nominated by Michelle Augustine, Staff Sector, Corning, NY

At Finn Academy students, scholars, staff, and families are a crew, working together to achieve an inclusive and rigorous educational environment. The Finn Family Crew creates an engaging culture that reflects the core values of leadership, kindness, reflection, aspiration, scholarship, and perseverance. “The students at Finn Academy learn the importance of community and to think critically,” writes Michelle Augustine. “Finn Academy makes learning engaging and enjoyable while emphasizing the importance of character traits such as kindness, aspiration, leadership, and perseverance.” **This grant will be for field trips to expedition field work or the school garden.**

Fostering Hope Catawba Valley
Hickory, NC

Nominated by Rebecca Reynolds, Optical Communications, Charlotte, NC

Fostering Hope Catawba Valley supports the physical, emotional, and social needs of children in foster care. Fostering Hope cares for the physical needs of foster children by providing diapers, suitcases, winter coats, car seats, and books. Support groups, social worker events, birthday cards for children, and adoption ceremony photography are a few resources for emotional needs. “By providing a “shower in a basket” for infant placements and monthly meals, Fostering Hope provides and supports foster and adoptive children and families in the region,” writes Rebecca Reynolds. **This grant will be for general program support.**

Friends Of Camp Gorton
Corning, NY

Nominated by Kurt Groeger, S&T, Corning, NY

Friends of Camp Gorton provides financial and personal resources to Camp Gorton on a project basis. It ensures that the facilities are maintained and expanded to meet the highest quality levels to benefit the community, youth, and families who attend the camp. During the summer, Camp Gorton offers Cub Scout Resident camp and Boy Scout Resident camp programs. During the off season, it is open for weekend rentals. There are cabins and tent sites available for Scouting and Non-Scouting groups. Scouting is a youth program that co-educationally teaches life skills including leadership, teamwork, communications, self-reliance, responsibility, sustainability, and humanitarianism. “Camp Gorton provides a safe and adventurous environment where youth can grow mentally and physically as they trek on their trail to adulthood,” writes Kurt Groeger. “The lessons taught and the adventures experienced in Scouting last throughout their life.” **This grant will be for STEM courses and programs.**

**Friends of Feral Felines
Charlotte, NC**

Nominated by Hannah Van Fleet, Optical Communications, Concord, NC

Friends of Feral Felines (FFF) aid stray cat colonies by providing food and health care, fostering cats prior to release or adoption, and educating the public on issues concerning cat overpopulation. FFF implements a Trap-Neuter-Return program, which is one of the most humane and efficient ways of stabilizing and eventually reducing the number of unowned cats in a community. “Feral cat colonies have a massive negative impact on the environment, so humane reduction of the feral cat population is important for local wildlife,” writes Hannah Van Fleet. “In 2022, Friends of Feral Felines in Charlotte helped spay and neuter a total of 1,378 cats. That translates to an estimated 4,626 cats saved from being born outside or entering a shelter in 2022, all done by volunteers.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Friends of Math, Science, and Technology Center
Lexington, KY**

Nominated by Deborah Baker, Gorilla Glass, Harrodsburg, KY

Friends of Math, Science, and Technology Centers (MSTC) was founded in 2010 with the aim of providing support for all aspects of the MSTC program in the public high school in Lexington, KY. MSTC is a four-year program designed to develop students who are internationally competitive in STEM disciplines. Friends of MSTC sponsors social and educational programs in addition to providing financial support for teachers and students. “This optional program is at the highest level for identified students in math or science,” writes Deborah Baker. “Students develop their capabilities and demonstrate their successes with Advanced Placement classes. A significant individual research project with local universities and businesses is also part of the program.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Greater Elmira Tennis Association
Elmira, NY**

Nominated by Dale Webb, S&T, Corning, NY

Greater Elmira Tennis Association (GETA) promotes tennis as a means of healthful recreation, positive social interactions, and a lifetime of physical fitness for all age groups. GETA organizes tournaments, doubles leagues, and single ladders during the warmer months on outdoor courts. During the winter, GETA manages Elmira College’s four dome-covered indoor courts. “The Greater Elmira Tennis Association is a great resource for tennis players in the area,” writes Dale Webb. “GETA follows requirements of the United States Tennis Association to be a Community Tennis Association (CTA) and has received awards from the New York Chapter as CTA of the year.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

Harris Hill Soaring Corporation
Horseheads, NY

Nominated by Douglas Harshbarger, Environmental Technologies, Corning, NY

Harris Hill Soaring Corporation (HHSC) advances soaring through demonstration, education, and competition. HHSC is one of the oldest and largest glider clubs in the country and offers rides to the public. In addition, adults can earn their pilot license in under a year and there is a junior program that allows for youth as young as 14 to learn to fly. "Flight training towards a career path in aviation can be very expensive and out of reach to many," writes Douglas Harshbarger. "By maintaining an airfield, aircraft, and a cadre of instructors, Harris Hill Soaring Corporation's operations enable anyone in the local community to achieve their goal of becoming a licensed pilot." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Harrodsburg Historical Society
Harrodsburg, KY

Nominated by Lonnie Coffman, Gorilla Glass, Harrodsburg, KY

Harrodsburg Historical Society seeks to collect and perpetuate facts of historic interest relative to Mercer County and awaken an interest in the study of the county. The Research Library holds a robust collection of local historical publications, files, newspapers, government documents, and other information to assist in searches for historical, genealogical, or geographical information. A large collection of artifacts provide insight into the material culture of the past. "The Harrodsburg Historical Society is a huge contributor to the 250th year anniversary of Kentucky's first settlement which will be celebrated in 2024," writes Lonnie Coffman. "HHS is a small organization with a huge task of preserving history from the past and making it available for the future generations." **This grant will be for updating computer software.**

Hickory Choral Society
Hickory, NC

Nominated by Sharon Milligan, Staff Sector, Charlotte, NC

The Hickory Choral Society (HCS) transforms lives through performance, support of music education, and the advancement of social harmony in the North Carolina Foothills. For forty-five years the Hickory area has looked forward to the annual HCS Christmas concerts which are held in early December. Performances also include a variety of classical, contemporary, and non-secular music in addition to commissioned works. "Annual concerts include seating that is free and open to the public, making them accessible to the entire community," writes Sharon Milligan. "The organization is a well-established and a long-time contributing member of the greater Hickory community." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Hickory Community Theatre
Hickory, NC

Nominated by Anita Doran, Optical Communications, Charlotte, NC

Hickory Community Theatre (HCT) transforms lives through performance, support of music education, and the advancement of social harmony in the North Carolina Foothills and beyond. HCT engages a diverse community of members by offering shows like "Memphis," the musical, which featured a cast of mostly African American actors and a guest director who is African American. In addition to live performances, HCT offers acting classes for elementary, junior, and high school students, and directing workshops for adults. HCT engages people in the community and helps them develop the skills and confidence to audition for plays offered at the theatre. "Hickory Community Theatre is growing its own resources while also opening opportunities to people of all colors and backgrounds who might not otherwise get engaged," writes Anita Doran. "I can't imagine Hickory without the community theatre; it is truly one of the gems of the community." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Horseheads Marching Band Boosters
Horseheads, NY

Nominated by Randall Youngman, S&T, Corning, NY

The Horseheads Marching Band Boosters (HMBB) provides direct support of the Blue Raiders marching ensemble by enhancing the musical arts education. The band regularly participates in field band competitions across New York, including two in Corning and one in Vestal to showcase the musical talents of the students. In addition to continuing support of our current and future marching band students, HMBB is deeply involved in hosting a newly established field band competition in Horseheads, which draws from several nearby school districts, bringing impact to more students and providing cultural programming in the Southern Tier. "This is just one of many cultural and educational programs in our local communities with long term benefit to students, parents, faculty and residents," writes Randall Youngman. **This grant will be for the 2023 field band competition.**

Kore Academy
Lexington, KY

Nominated by Alfred Hahnenstein, Gorilla Glass, Harrodsburg, KY

Kore Academy is a K-12 accredited school that helps students who face challenges in the traditional classroom due to various learning differences, including learning disabilities, ADHD, processing disorders, and autism spectrum disorders. Through recognition and support, the school provides meaningful involvement, beyond the idea of physical presence and attendance, to promote full participation, achievement, belonging, and interaction. "The program is individualized and structured to provide success for each student in school and in life," writes Alfred Hahnenstein. **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Lower Cape Fear LifeCare
Wilmington, NC**

Nominated by Donna Esteves, Optical Communications, Wilmington, NC

Lower Cape Fear LifeCare (LCFL) is dedicated to providing access to the highest quality end of life education and supportive services to patients, their families, and the community at large. The organization helps a spectrum of patients needing pain and symptom management, end of life care, and bereavement services, as well as family caregivers affected by those living with serious illness including dementia. LCFL never turns anyone away regardless of their ability to pay. “Lower Cape Fear Hospice programs promote education opportunities and engage community members,” writes Donna Esteves. “As the local community ages, equal access to a continuum of care, from hospice to palliative care, from dementia care to community education is important.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Manasota Chess Center
Sarasota, FL**

Nominated by Lirong Pei, Pharmaceutical Technologies, Remote

Since opening in June 2021, the Manasota Chess Center (MCC) is a destination for chess enthusiasts to gather, which is growing a community of players. Manasota Chess Center is the only active U.S. Chess Federation affiliate in the Sarasota metro area and one of only fifteen U.S. Chess Federation Gold-level affiliates nationwide. MCC has a diverse set of programs and activities that go beyond a traditional chess club. “The primary focus of the Manasota Chess Center has been to create an environment where chess players can learn, compete, and connect,” writes Lirong Pei. “The result has been a steady growth in its membership, which now exceeds 100 players and is continuing to grow.” **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Mercer Transformation
Harrodsburg, KY**

Nominated by Shawn Markham, Gorilla Glass, Harrodsburg, KY

Mercer Transformation works toward spiritual renewal at the community level through rallies, parades, and concerts. The organization creates opportunities for individuals and families to improve themselves by connecting them to resources around economic empowerment, health and wellness activities, educational enrichments, and recreational activities. The tutoring initiative program provides strong training to the volunteers in a safe and confidential environment,” writes Shawn Markham. “The volunteering students also benefit from the mentorship of the community tutoring initiative advisors.” **This grant will be for the community tutoring initiative.**

**Near Westside Neighborhood Association
Elmira, NY**

Nominated by Tammy Petriwsky, Advanced Optics, Corning, NY

The Near Westside Neighborhood Association (Nwana) serves to enhance the quality of life through the development and revitalization of housing and the preservation of historic structures in the City of Elmira. The association focuses on the maintenance and improvement of historic structures and provides safe, affordable housing for families and individuals. Nwana has rehabilitated more than 550 homes in the City of Elmira. "I volunteer with the Near Westside Association Neighborhood Association, and I enjoy seeing the reactions of first-time attendees to the Elmira Blooms Garden Tour and Homes for the Holiday Tour who were unaware of the hidden gems in the area," writes Tammy Petriwsky. **This grant will be for general program support.**

**North Carolina School of Science & Mathematics Foundation
Durham, NC**

Nominated by Robert Sanetick, Staff Sector, Charlotte, NC

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Foundation (NCSSMF) operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including receiving, administering, and granting funds for the support of the academic and educational programs at NC School of Math and Science. NCSSMF supports the education and growth opportunities for thousands of North Carolina's high school students. "Opportunities supported by the organization include engagement in real-world experiences with field professionals and outreach to schools across the state," writes Robert Sanetick. **This grant will be for general program support.**

**Notre Dame High School
Elmira, NY**

Nominated by David Exton, S&T, Corning, NY

Notre Dame High School is a Catholic school that seeks to prepare students for college by providing a challenging academic environment that stimulates students intellectually, physically, and spiritually. For the last twelve years, the FIRST robotics team at Notre Dame High School, Electric Fire, provides students interested in math, science, and engineering an exciting and creative opportunity to have fun exploring the world of robotics. "FIRST Robotics is a global competition wherein every year students are given a unique game challenge and a six-week deadline to design, prototype, build, and program a robot to compete with other teams from around the world," writes David Exton. "Electric Fire participates in numerous community events which helps build an interest and love for math and science in future generations." **This grant will be for the Notre Dame robotics team Electric Fire.**

Oneonta World of Learning

Oneonta, NY

Nominated by Julie Smith, Life Sciences, Oneonta, NY

Oneonta World of Learning (OWL) is a hands-on exploratory space for children to play in upstate New York. Established in 2008, OWL is a collation of volunteer parents, artists, educations, and other local professionals dedicated to building an interactive and engaging environment for play and exploration. This site hosts open play and special events throughout the year. "The museum is full of fun and wonderous things to do each time children visit," writes Julie Smith. "OWL offers a great opportunity to all in the community." **This grant will be for general program support.**

Portuguese Band of San Jose

San Jose, CA

Nominated by Jennifer Dinis, S&T, Central California, CA

Portuguese Band of San Jose represents the Portuguese culture locally and throughout California. The organization provides music lessons to the community free of charge, participates in local parades, and plays concerts at various community events. The band also hosts cultural events throughout the year. "The Portuguese Band of San Jose provides a safe place for the community to come together, celebrate music, culture, people, and community," writes Jennifer Dinis. "There is a large group of volunteers that help run the organization, by implementing fundraisers, dinners, cultural events, parades, and marching band." **This grant will be for community festivals and events.**

ROC City Sailing

Rochester, NY

Nominated by Tara Shedlosky, Life Sciences, Kennebunk, ME

ROC City Sailing (RCS) educates and facilitates the sport of sailing for the Greater Rochester Community in a safe, fun, and affordable environment. The sailing school teaches the fundamentals of sailing as well as the importance of getting outside and enjoying the world. RCS also teaches problem solving and gets kids and adults on the water. For the last two years scholarships for weeklong and day sails to students from the Rochester City School District have been available. "The city of Rochester sits very close to beautiful Lake Ontario, yet many of its residence do not get to enjoy this beautiful resource," writes Tara Shedlosky. "ROC City Sailing has built a curriculum of environmental science into its program and provides a way for residents to enjoy the lake." **This grant will be for scholarships to children in the Rochester City School District.**

Serenity House of Victor
Victor, NY

Nominated by Karen Simonds, Staff Sector, Remote

Serenity House provides 24-hour specialized care for individuals who are in their final three months of life, their families, and their loved ones. The House is a no-cost alternative to hospitals, nursing homes, and in-home care. A team of fully trained volunteers and on-call medical professionals are staffed at the House at all hours, every day. Care focuses on educational aspects of controlling pain, as well as helping residents and their families come to terms with the often-overwhelming emotional issues at the end of a loved one's life. "The facility opened its doors to its first resident in April of 1999," writes Karen Simonds. "The ranch home has four tranquil acres featuring orchards, wildlife, and gardens and all the comforts of home." **This grant will be for volunteer recruitment, training, and retention.**

World Wildlife Fund
Washington D.C.

Nominated by Claudia Milz, Optical Communications, Remote

The vision of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature. It conserves nature and reduces the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth. WWF seeks to reconcile the needs of human beings and the needs of others that share the planet by focusing on people, places, species, climate, and sustainability. The sustainability focus highlights that people can both prosper and use the planet's resources in a sustainable way by balancing basic human needs with the need to conserve the natural environment "The World Wildlife Fund is an organization that focuses on sustainability and reducing harmful impacts on the environment," writes Claudia Milz. **This grant will be for general program support.**

Wreaths Across America
Columbia Falls, ME

Nominated by Brenda Tong, Staff Sector, Corning, NY

Wreaths Across America (WAA) coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C. and 3,700 other locations across the United States. Each year, millions of Americans come together to remember the fallen, honor those that serve and their families, and teach the next generation about the value of freedom. WAA also shares millions of individual stories posted by WAA supporters. "Bath National Cemetery located in Bath, NY, twenty miles from Corning, NY, is a Wreaths Across America location," writes Brenda Tong. "It was heartwarming to see the community support veterans by providing wreaths." **This grant will be for Bath National Cemetery.**

**Young Scientist Academy
Wilmington, NC**

Nominated by Hannah Hawkes, Optical Communications, Wilmington, NC

Young Scientist Academy (YSA) is committed to empowering all youth to be community ambassadors of science and technology. YSA seeks to promote youth participation from underserved and downtown communities that are faced with personal or environmental adversity by providing services at no cost to participants. These career-building experiences provide leadership skills and confidence in youth to help establish partnerships and service opportunities. The impact to children's lives goes beyond an extracurricular activity to learning to be effective communicators and leaders in their families, schools, and community. "One of my favorite aspects of Young Scientist Academy is that they have also hired a social worker to teach emotional intelligence skills to the children as well as coping mechanisms and how to express their emotions in a healthy way," writes Hannah Hawkes. "The impact of YSA work can be seen everywhere in the awareness the young scientists are bringing to downtown Wilmington about urban sustainability as well as other community issues." **This grant will be for general program support.**