



**INCREASING
OUR IMPACT.**

**AMPLIFYING
OUR VOICE.**



Sometimes we focus so purposefully on the path ahead, we neglect to appreciate the remarkable progress we've made.

Our scholarship program began in 2010 with just one award; today our community of Lee Scholars exceeds 300. And thanks to our foundation's mental health funding, Western New York is gaining more qualified professionals and greater access to care. Our influence in the mental health field is growing as well, from local and regional advocacy to participation on a national scale. This report offers an opportunity to pause, reflect and celebrate the milestones we've achieved so far.



In 2019 the Lee Foundation's impact reached new heights and we are pleased to share some of these stories with you – our colleagues, partners, grantees and community members.

We proudly welcomed 92 students into our Lee Scholarship Program, raising our total number of scholars to more than 300. Our scholars bring enthusiasm and passion to their chosen professions – whether it is building a spaceship, ensuring communities have access to clean water or providing critical mental health care to those in need. They are simply amazing!

The dedication of our mental health partners and grantees is also inspiring. And while we have long appreciated their efforts, we were excited to have two of our grantees acknowledged at the state and national level.

- New York State Office of Mental Health presented the *Community Cares Award* to the **Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition** in recognition of the positive impact of its awareness campaign, *Join the Conversation*.
- Mental Health America recognized the **Mental Health Initiative of WNED/WBFO** with the *National Media Award*. The award honored WNED for educating the community on the issues of mental illness and addiction and helping to break down the associated stigma.

The Foundation expanded its advocacy efforts by joining with other national foundations to publish a series of behavioral health policy papers. This collaboration brings together experts from across the country to develop actionable solutions for policy makers. The Foundation's participation ensures that our region is part of the national mental health dialogue.

While it is important to celebrate the achievements of the past year, it is also necessary to recognize the immense challenges facing our community and country in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. In response to this crisis, the Foundation joined with other regional funders to develop a collective philanthropic response for Western New York. Part of that effort included the creation of the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund, which provided emergency grants to front-line agencies.

We cannot yet know the full impact of the pandemic on our grantees and community partners. We do know it will be significant. So, like a stream of water cascading down a mountainside, we will navigate the unexpected obstacles and, where necessary, forge new paths to address this crisis.

We remain grateful to our partners and grantees for their unwavering commitment to our community. We are truly stronger together.

Sincerely,

Patrick P. Lee
Founder

Jane M. Mogavero
Executive Director



EDUCATING FUTURE STEM PROFESSIONALS

Future prosperity – both for individuals and for the country – will hinge on success in STEM professions, especially technology and engineering. In addition, employers in advanced manufacturing and skilled trades are facing a scarcity of qualified candidates. These are the fields where jobs are now and where growth is projected. So these are the fields where the Lee Foundation concentrates its funding for higher education.

In 2019, we awarded 74 STEM scholarships. Recognizing the significant opportunities offered by technical degrees, we expanded our program to Niagara County Community College, modeled on our partnership with SUNY Erie. Included in this total are 41 recipients in the Buffalo Public Schools' Say Yes to Education program. Our ten-year STEM scholarship ranks have now reached 323, enabling 297 unique students to begin their careers with less debt.

“I’ll always want to give back to SLU and pay forward what the Lee Foundation has given to me.”

Parry Draper

PARRY DRAPER

St. Louis University
Class of 2014

Like many who grow up on military bases, Parry Draper acquired a passion for airplanes. What sets him apart is that he also developed a desire “to give back to our country.” Rather than flying, “I really wanted to be on the aircraft design and test side of things,” he explains. “I want to have an impact on our nation’s defense.” His “dream job” in Boeing’s TX Flight Test Program allows him to do just that.

Parry earned a B.S. degree in aerospace engineering from St. Louis University (SLU) and “will be forever indebted and forever grateful to Patrick Lee for that.” His scholarship “gave me a sense of freedom,” he says. Without the burden of student loans, “I could focus on pursuing the job I wanted, rather than taking the first job available.” Mentoring other students and networking with other Lee Scholars keeps Parry connected to the Foundation. “I’ll always want to give back to SLU and pay forward what the Lee Foundation has given to me.”

BETHANY RODGERS

SUNY Erie
Class of 2020

Bethany Rodgers, a self-described non-traditional student, will soon complete an A.A.S. degree in SUNY Erie’s occupational therapy assistant program. After earning a degree in psychology, accepting a “very unfulfilling job in banking,” getting married and then taking time off with two young daughters, she realized occupational therapy would be “a perfect fit.” And after paying off earlier student loans, she considers her Lee scholarship a tremendous help because it will allow her to embark on her new career without financial stress.

Bethany is particularly impressed that the Foundation supports students in the helping professions. “Alleviating debt for people pursuing these positions, I’m really appreciative of that,” she says. She looks forward to exploring jobs that serve a wide range of therapy clients, from grade school children to long-term care residents. “I want to work directly with people and impact their lives for the better – for me, that’s so fulfilling.”





EXPANDING THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

As more and more people seek treatment for mental health issues, communities across the nation are struggling with a shortage of practitioners. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, the United States will need 250,000 more professionals by 2025 to meet the demand for behavioral health services. In Western New York, the need is particularly acute. The Lee Foundation intensified its efforts in 2019 to alleviate the shortfall.

Our psychiatric nurse practitioner scholarship program, which began at D'Youville College, expanded to the University of Rochester, increasing our total number of awards to 18. We also continue to support a Professional Development Series that aims to strengthen the capabilities of current mental health practitioners and to provide them opportunities for growth within their field.

The Foundation's focus on psychiatric nurse practitioners represents a strategic decision to mitigate the high turnover rate in mental health professions. Because our scholarship recipients already have clinical experience, they understand the challenges and are deeply committed to serving mental health patients.



RECRUITING FUTURE PRACTITIONERS

Capturing the attention of high school and college students as they contemplate their study and career options is an effective tactic to attract candidates to the mental health workforce. The Lee Foundation partnered with Bring Change to Mind to create a national advocacy and awareness campaign titled “Between the Lines.” The campaign profiled individuals who have dedicated their careers to saving and bettering the lives of others; raised awareness about the breadth of professions in the field; and shared resources providing information about educational opportunities, scholarships, and loan repayment.

The Lee Foundation also participates on New York State Regional Planning Consortium’s mental health workforce workgroup.

“...the Lee Scholarship is a blessing that means freedom, and less anxiety – knowing I won’t have to think about paying off loans.”

Karla Shaw

KARLA SHAW D’Youville Class of 2020

Karla Shaw is a very determined young woman. The mother of a toddler, she had a second child in fall 2018, during her first semester of graduate school. “I pretty much left class, had the baby and was back in class the next week,” she recalls. Her graduation in May, with a master’s degree in nursing, will mark the culmination of a six-year journey toward a career as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.

While she’s “always been interested in the brain and how deficiencies in the brain affect people’s behavior,” she discovered that laboratory research was not for her. “I wanted to make a more immediate impact,” she says. Starting nursing school and meeting a psychiatric nurse revealed a better path. For Karla, the Lee Scholarship is “a blessing” that means “freedom, really – freedom and less anxiety – knowing I won’t have to think about paying off loans.”



A photograph of a woman with bangs, smiling and looking to her right. She is sitting at a desk with a smartphone on it. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is positioned on the right side of the image.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Enhancing quality of life for people affected by serious mental illnesses is a key goal of the Lee Foundation. Two major grants made in 2019 will greatly improve our community's ability to provide high quality treatment and support services.



BUFFALO CITY MISSION EXPANSION

“We are grateful to the Patrick P. Lee Foundation for their generous commitment,” said Stuart Harper, CEO and Executive Director of the Buffalo City Mission. About 40% of City Mission’s clients have a mental health condition, a major contributing factor to their homelessness. “Our new welcome center will serve as an entry point to preventive services that include case management, partner agency services, mental health services, an in-house medical clinic and so much more. It will provide residents with an immediate sense of community the moment they walk through our doors.”

Health care navigators and case managers are valuable components of City Mission’s approach, working with clients to coordinate critical services. They ensure that clients make and keep appointments, are enrolled for health insurance and other benefits, and are connected to community partners for job training, transportation and other assistance. With primary care and mental health clinics located right where they live, and health care navigators and case managers available to arrange it all, clients living with mental illness will have immediate access to care.

BESTSELF INTEGRATED CARE CLINIC

“People with serious mental illness often have multiple chronic physical health problems that seriously undermine their well-being and quality of life,” explains Howard K. Hitzel, President and CEO of BestSelf Behavioral Health. “Our Primary and Behavioral Health Care Integration (PBHCI) project allows us to offer specialized health care to individuals who might not otherwise have access to primary care.”

Dealing with complex health systems is difficult for anyone, but for people with serious mental illness the barriers can be insurmountable. The PBHCI clinic is specially designed and staffed to accommodate the unique needs of this population, providing primary care and behavioral care in the same location. Patients are treated by professionals they trust, in a familiar and comfortable setting where an interdisciplinary team of specialized providers collaborate to address the full spectrum of their physical and mental health needs.

“The Lee Foundation’s support has been instrumental to our ability to sustain this initiative,” Hitzel says, “and we are very appreciative.”

“Our new welcome center will provide residents with an immediate sense of community the moment they walk through our doors.”

Stuart Harper, Buffalo City Mission



ADDING OUR VOICE TO NATIONAL ADVOCACY

THINK **BIGGER** DO **GOOD**
POLICY SERIES

Youth Suicide Is Increasing: Modest Actions Taken Now Can Save Lives

Michael F. Hogan, Ph.D.

Summer 2019

In 2019, the Foundation took important steps to influence the nation's conversation about mental health. In collaboration with several like-minded funders – including Peg's Foundation, Scattergood Foundation and the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation – we began sponsoring a series of policy papers titled "Think Bigger, Do Good." Our support of the work of widely recognized experts will ensure that our region has a voice in national discussions of major mental health issues and will help to promote concrete action.

The first paper in the series focused on the alarming increase in suicides and attempted suicides among young people. Its recommendations included the introduction of a national three-digit number – "a 911 for the brain" – to link individuals experiencing a mental health crisis with immediate access to life-saving resources. The proposed number, 988, was approved by the Federal Communications Commission in December.

The second paper examined how behavioral health systems in the community can be engaged to meet the needs of people with serious mental illness who become involved with the justice system.

Future papers will consider housing, integrated care, and – of special meaning to us – the shortage of qualified professionals in the mental health workforce.

2019 COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS & DISTRIBUTION

ADVOCACY

Bring Change to Mind
Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation

MENTAL HEALTH

Association of Fundraising Professionals
BestSelf Behavioral Health
Buffalo City Mission
D'Youville College
ECMC Foundation
Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition
Gerard Place
Mental Health Advocates of WNY
People Inc.
Service Innovation & Impact Initiative
Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services, Inc.

SCHOLARSHIPS

D'Youville College
Niagara County Community College Foundation, Inc.
Rochester Institute of Technology
Saint Louis University
Say Yes to Education Buffalo
SUNY Erie
University at Buffalo Foundation
University of Rochester
University Psychiatric Practice

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Albright Knox Art Gallery
Ocean Reef Community Foundation
Tourette Association of America



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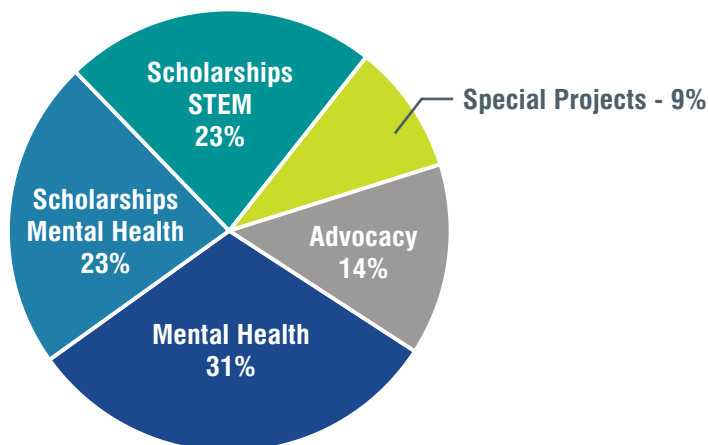
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2019-2020
St. Louis University
Lee Scholars



2019-2020
University of Rochester
Lee Scholars



Lee Foundation named Foundation of the Year by AFP WNY

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