

MAY 2025

NEWS LEAF

Important Dates

June 2 | 4:00 PM

BIENNIAL INVESTMENT MEETING:

Rochester Area Foundation will offer a virtual presentation from our Investment Manager partners, so we can understand their investment strategy, thoughts on current market trends, and how this benefits our RAF Fundholders.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/mt653475>

Meeting ID: 834 3114 0661

Passcode: 863603

Dial by your location: +1 646 931 3860

June 4 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Virtual Coffee & Conversation -
Youth Leading: Celebrating Positive
Change and Impact

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/yjw8dfsk>

Meeting ID: 838 8098 1636

Passcode: 560301

Dial by your location: +1 312 626 6799

August 6 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Virtual Coffee & Conversation

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/yjw8dfsk>

Meeting ID: 838 8098 1636

Passcode: 560301

Dial by your location: +1 312 626 6799



President's Letter

Happy Spring!

Now that April 15th has passed, this is a good time to consider how you can minimize your 2025 tax obligation by incorporating more charitable giving into your financial plan. Or perhaps you need to take a Required Minimum Distribution from an IRA this year. These types of planning or events often prompt individuals to consider a philanthropic partner to assist with these goals. Rochester Area Foundation is experienced in assisting individuals, families, and businesses in creating a charitable giving plan which benefits both you and our area nonprofit organizations.

You receive the following benefits through a RAF partnership:

- **Experienced staff to assist you**
- **Sound investment vehicles guided by the RAF Finance Committee and Board of Trustees currently over \$53M worth of assets under management**
- **RAF is experienced in accepting complex assets on your behalf – appreciated stock gifts, property, IRA's, and other retirement accounts**
- **Comprehensive knowledge of area nonprofit organizations**
- **Flexible charitable funds for your giving today and the future**

Please reach out if you have questions about how the Foundation can partner with you to meet your goals.

Our 2024 Annual Report is available and we are excited to share our collective impact. View the report online at www.rochesterarea.org, or if you prefer, we are happy to mail you a copy.

Contact Ellen Hegge - ellen@rochesterarea.org

Thank you for your partnership!

Jennifer Woodford





First Homes: Rochester Area Foundation's solution to preserving and creating affordable home options



We are honored to celebrate community member and CLT homeowner, Zenebech Aly, who received the 2024 Heart of Community Honor award after being nominated by fellow community members. Formerly, the Unsung Hero Award, the Heart of Community Honor award presented by the McKnight Foundation honors “everyday champions” across Minnesota “whose compassion and contributions serve as the heartbeat” of their communities.

One recipient was chosen from each of seven regions of Minnesota, with Aly representing the Southeast region. Nominated by members of the community, Aly was touched by their recognition and humbled to win the award.

After emigrating from Ethiopia, Aly struggled to find the same sense of community she had back home. She began building her own sense of community through her work with Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association and United Way of Southeast Minnesota, assisting other immigrants and refugees settle in Rochester. She is also a dedicated volunteer with the Ethiopian Community of Rochester.

Aly has worked to help people find employment, housing, support, translate materials, and navigate an unfamiliar space. In 2021, Aly purchased her home through First Homes. “For me, homeownership is more than just having a place to live; it’s about creating a space where my family can grow, create memories, connect to the neighborhood, and continue contributing to the community,” Aly explained.

She now also works to educate others on the homebuying process and helping to provide translation services. We are thankful to have people like Aly dedicated to our community and working to help everyone who calls Rochester home.

The First Homes team works diligently to support affordable housing options for individuals and families in our area. Currently, there is 310 homes within the Community Land Trust portfolio.

If you are interested in learning more about the program please visit the First Homes website

<https://rochesterarea.org/initiatives/first-homes/>



Spring Grants Showcase
Tuesday, May 6
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

**The Spring Grants Showcase will highlight
area nonprofit organizations receiving competitive grant funding from
Rochester Area Foundation.**

West Bank
2188 Frontage Rd NW, Rochester
Please RSVP by May 5 to ellen@rochesterarea.org



Coalition for Rochester Area Housing Initiative

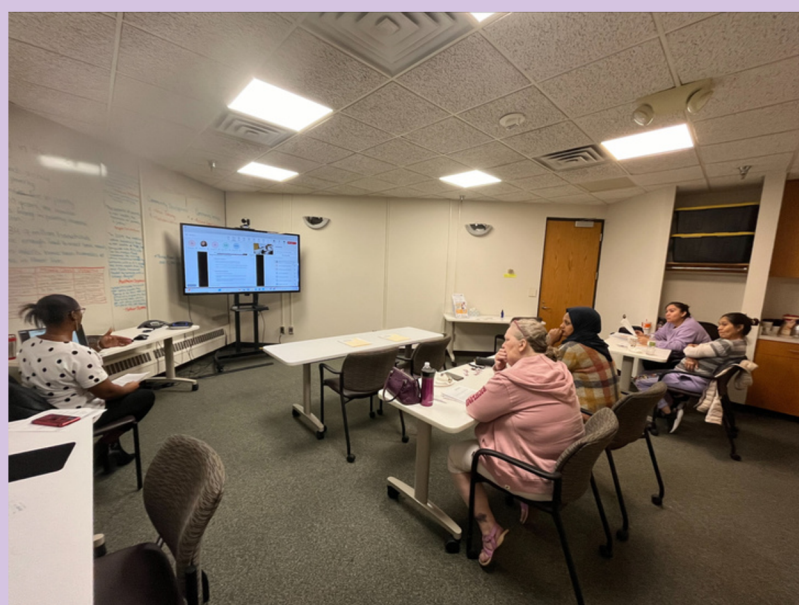
One of the five key priorities that the Coalition for Rochester Area Housing invests in is to increase homeownership for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In order to determine the best way to approach this priority, the Coalition partnered with BIPOC community members to identify barriers, evaluate opportunities, and recommend strategies to close the homeownership gap. A key recommendation was the creation of a mentorship program for prospective BIPOC homeowners.

The Coalition collaborated with Three Rivers Community Action to develop and launch the BIPOC Homeowner Mentorship Program. The program aimed to recruit up to ten mentors, successful BIPOC homeowners in the community, to provide one-on-one guidance to home-seekers, in partnership with a Mentorship Coach. The pilot program successfully served 20 BIPOC households, pairing them with ten trained mentors.

Abiola and his family arrived in the U.S. with the dream of building a new life. At an outreach event at his employer, he learned about the BIPOC Homeowner Mentorship Program. Excited about the prospect of homeownership but unsure of the process as a New American, Abiola and his wife joined the program. Matched with a mentor, they gained confidence and knowledge through homebuyer education. Their hard work paid off, they were approved for a mortgage loan and received First Generation community downpayment assistance. Today, Abiola and his family are proud homeowners, achieving a major milestone towards their American dream.

MyKitta Davis, Homeowner Advisor with Three Rivers Community Action, shares, "Through community co-design, we learned that prospective homebuyers could benefit from personal mentors with shared cultures and lived experiences. Traditional funding channels did not account for this approach, but partnering with the Coalition made all the difference. Half of the mentees have already achieved homeownership, and more are actively seeking homes with preapprovals in place. Having mentors who reflect the communities being served, share similar lived experiences, and speak the same language made the process more accessible and supportive. This program is creating real change, and Three Rivers is committed to integrating mentorship into our programming long-term."

This Co-Design project and program is just one way that the Coalition for Rochester Area Housing is fulfilling its mission to ensure stable, accessible, and affordable housing for all. As a partner in this critical work, Rochester Area Foundation is proud to invest in this collective work, understanding that together we create community.



Thank You to Our Generous 2025 Sponsors





Rochester Area Foundation



**For \$1 a day, you can make a great impact in our community by joining weGive365!
With your investment in this giving circle, you will meet like-minded charitable members, participate in service projects, learn about our community and the many nonprofit organizations that serve, and engage in yearly grant making distributions to support local organizations.**

Join today because together we can do more!

