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**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF TOMPKINS COUNTY IN WASHINGTON, DC TO MEET WITH CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

**(ITHACA, NY)**—Community Foundation of Tompkins County Executive Director George Ferrari joined the New York state foundations group at Foundations on the Hill. They met with Congressmen Hinchey and Reed and staff members for Congressman Hanna March 21–22 to tell them how philanthropic investments are serving youth in libraries, building community in rural townships and making the arts more accessible in Tompkins County and why federal policies that support local philanthropic giving are critical to the program’s continued success.

The meetings were part of an annual effort, [Foundations on the Hill](http://www.foundationsonthehill.org/) (FOTH), attended by more than 200 community, private, and corporate foundation grant making representatives from across the country. These individuals went to the nation’s capital to communicate philanthropy’s value to federal lawmakers—and to show how the sector is using its financial resources to provide innovative solutions to some of the nation’s most pressing social problems and helping communities recover from the recent economic downturn.

At this year’s FOTH, foundation representatives demonstrated to Congress how the sector’s financial independence allows it to take risks, achieve extraordinary results, and affect change. Government can learn from philanthropy how innovative solutions may be developed and implemented in ways that are cost-effective to taxpayers.

Though 2012 is an election year—and expectations are low that Congress will achieve much in the next nine months—comprehensive reform of federal tax policies that affect Community Foundation’s ability to serve Tompkins County is scheduled for 2013. One of the best-known policies being targeted by some in the nation’s capital is the charitable tax deduction. Congressional cuts to the deduction could jeopardize support for much-needed community programs. Ferrari also sought renewal and expansion of the popular IRA Charitable Rollover bill which expired on December 31, 2011.

“Community Foundation of Tompkins County joined its colleagues in the philanthropic sector in Washington, D.C., for Foundations on the Hill to show Congress that the programs our grants support are helping to lead Tompkins County through these difficult times, improve our residents’ quality of life, and make our community a desirable place to live and work,” said George Ferrari. “Congress should consider new ways to encourage and increase philanthropy and charitable giving in our community in order to help.”

“Every day, all across the country and here in Washington, D.C., there are important and ongoing conversations between philanthropic leaders and elected officials,” said Jeff Clarke, interim president and CEO of the Council on Foundations. "Foundations on the Hill is the sole, annual gathering where philanthropic leaders collectively share stories of how their work strengthens local communities and suggest opportunities for partnering around issues such as workforce development, veterans and military families, social innovation, and rural economic development.”  
  
“In our meetings for Foundations on the Hill, we want lawmakers and staff on Capitol Hill to know that they can rely on us for more than information about philanthropic activities in their districts.” said Michael Litz, president and CEO of the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers. “We are there to help Congress and elected officials at all levels of government understand philanthropy’s role in assuring the long-term success of our communities and our nation.”

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