

# The Work Ahead

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## Our 2020 Blueprint



SISTERS of CHARITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF CANTON



December 2019

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## To Our Community Partners

Dear Friends,

Many of you took the time to respond to our survey, attend a focus group, or speak directly with our facilitator to help us revisit and revise the Foundation's goals. Thank you so much for your participation in these important discussions about community needs. Your perspective, along with the perspectives of other respondents, has become a crucial element of our strategic planning process.

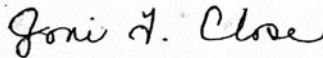
Rest assured, we've been hard at work turning your input into a blueprint for our work over the next several years. Our plan is outlined in this document.

We believe in Stark County, and we know you do as well. Thank you for investing your time in this important planning process.

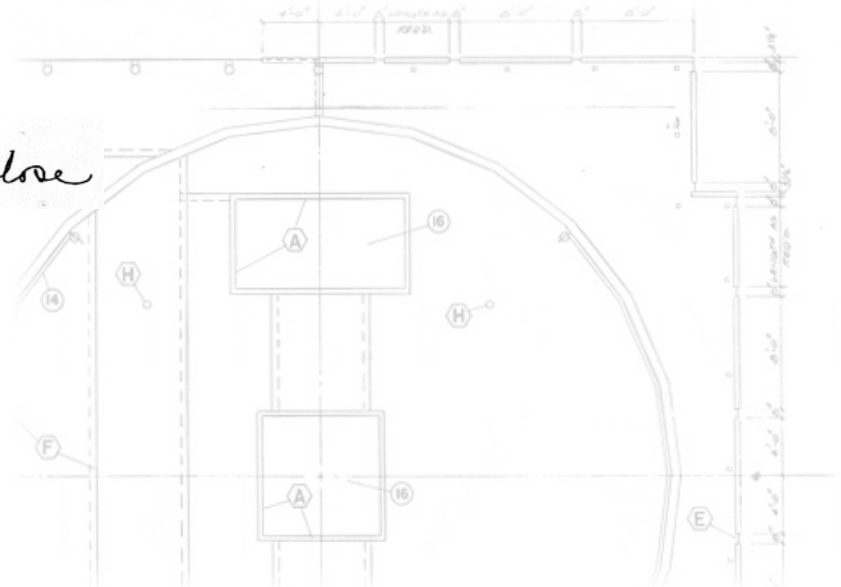
With Gratitude,



**Ronald S. Young**  
Board Chair



**Joni T. Close**  
President



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# Table of Contents

## Foundation-led Initiatives

Our efforts to develop and hone programs focused on systemic change.

Homelessness .....	7
Early Childhood .....	8
Mental Health Capacity .....	11
Mental Health System .....	12

## Strategic Collaborations

Our work alongside others to launch programs that build capacity and increase effectiveness in community services.

Community Health .....	15
Employment .....	16
Nonprofit Capacity Building .....	19

## Responsive Efforts

Our commitment to respond to specific or short-term community needs.

Education .....	20
Community Needs .....	23

## Organizational Infrastructure

Our commitment to ensuring the Foundation will continue serving its mission over time.

Organization .....	24
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## Our Guiding Principles

As a Faith-based organization, we believe in...

...approaching all that we do with deliberation, compassion, charity, integrity, prudence, inclusiveness, and humility.

...respecting and valuing cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity by operating in a manner that supports and enhances the dignity of individuals and communities.

...respecting and valuing each person's strengths and abilities by including in the decision-making process those affected by our decisions.

...addressing the root causes of poverty by focusing our efforts on nurturing healthy communities, especially with respect to the poor and underserved.

...supporting and enhancing the well-being of children and families.

...collaborating with foundations, organizations, and other systems to leverage assets and resources whenever possible.

...striving for actions that are strategic, timely, outcome oriented, and directed toward long-term systemic change.

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## Community-Driven Decision Making

To inform our 2020 strategic plan, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton sought the input of community leaders and providers. We started to gather feedback by distributing an electronic community survey to individuals on our mailing list; we received 41 responses. Then, the Markwood Partners consulting firm spoke with 74 people during key informant interviews and focus groups. Respondents included local and state government employees, educators, social service professionals, nonprofit and community leaders, and board members.

In addition to making candid observations about the Foundation and its work, respondents offered their perspectives on the most pressing needs in our community. Responses fell into four broad categories: the Foundation's impact, its grantmaking process, nonprofit sector needs, and community needs.

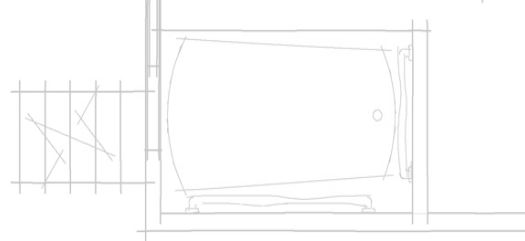
Overall, feedback about the Foundation's impact was humbly positive. Participants spoke about the Foundation's drive for mission and excellence and its lasting influence on early childhood and homelessness. Regarding the application process, many shared that the Foundation sets a very high bar. While this can be intimidating, it also helps organizations be their best. Participants shared a desire for more simplicity in our grantmaking process and increased Foundation interaction with the community. Nonprofit leaders requested help with organizational operations and management, and educators called upon the Foundation to act as a convener of peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

When respondents focused on community needs, they emphasized the root causes of poverty and their cumulative effects on what many now call the social determinants of health. From their perspectives, **mental health, education, and employment** were the three areas most in need of Foundation support.

On the following pages, you will learn why we do what we do, what we plan to do in the coming years, and the ten strategic goals that will guide our work.







## We stand by our commitment to eliminating homelessness.

A safe, reliable, and affordable home is at the root of a person's well-being. Imagine not having a home and trying to get to work on time, improve your mental health, or help your child with homework. **Homelessness** disorients, destabilizes, and exhausts families and individuals.

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### GOAL

Strengthen efforts to end homelessness in Stark County by providing strategic leadership and investing in the Stark Housing Network and direct service organizations.



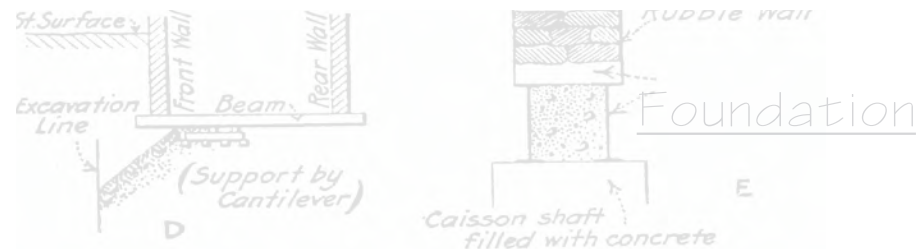
## We **hold firm** in our belief that we must support high-quality early childhood experiences.

We strive to keep our community's youngest children healthy and prepare them for school, because ninety percent of a child's brain develops by age five. An ever-growing body of research tells us that **early childhood** education is our best chance at ensuring all children have an equal opportunity to fulfill their innate potential.

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### GOAL

Advance early childhood efforts through local, state-level, and national work that ensures the Foundation and its partners understand current best practices and are aware of opportunities to improve the school readiness of low-income children.











**We will increase our focus on strengthening the workforce, processes, and leadership of local mental health organizations.**

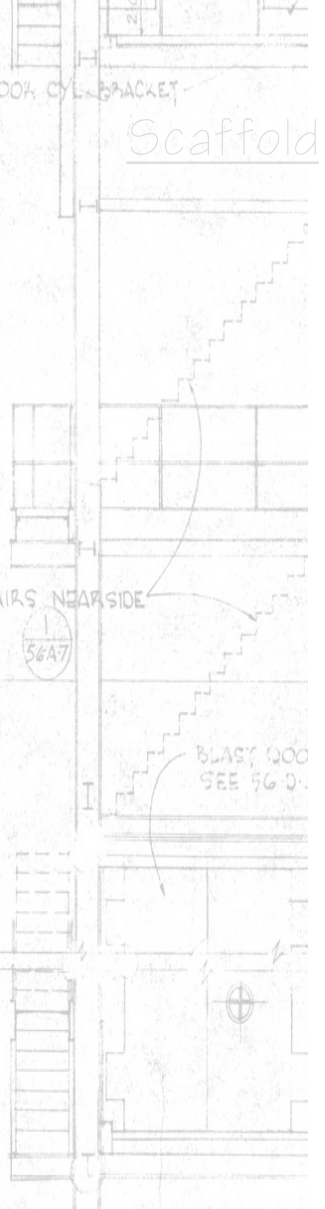
**Mental health** organizations must always be poised to respond quickly and meaningfully when people seek help. When these organizations are unstable, services become difficult to access, and individuals – both adults and youth – suffer.

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**GOAL**

Strengthen Stark County's mental health organizations by offering targeted and specific technical assistance and capacity building assistance to ensure high-quality services are available to those in need.





## We **will intensify** our efforts to learn from and communicate with local and state-level mental health partners.

A presence at the table with state-level **mental health** leaders can develop resources, knowledge, and partnerships; these can be mobilized to enhance our local system. It is a critical time to listen to the community. We must also speak up, so that the framework supporting our mental health organizations remains strong.

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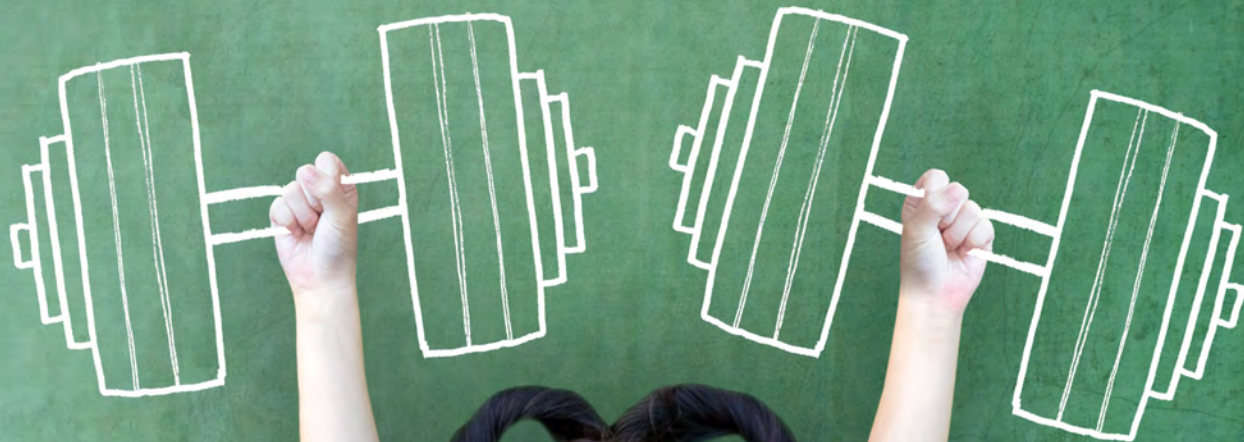
### **GOAL**

Improve the mental health system by working with local partners, state-level departments, and Stark Mental Health and Addiction Recovery to ensure strong, financially sound organizations are in place to serve those in need.









**We will continue to engage with partners who are keeping Stark County healthy, and we will track outcomes to inform future efforts.**

**Community health** is about so much more than routine check-ups – it’s also about healthy foods, support for pregnant women and young moms, and help managing chronic conditions’ symptoms and flare-ups. Lack of access to these essentials increases rates of obesity, infant mortality, and chronic disease.

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**GOAL**

Improve health outcomes for Stark County residents by offering oversight and evaluation support to efforts that promote healthy living, reduce infant mortality, and address chronic disease.

# We **will pursue** innovative models while continuing to support existing employment partners and programs.

A job gives us a way to support ourselves and our families and to save for our futures. A job can also help us feel valued, reliable, challenged, and competent – and give us a purpose. **Employment** helps us give of ourselves, so that we can grow into our best selves.

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## GOAL

Expand promising local efforts that increase employment among those who are chronically unemployed and underemployed through coalition building, funding, research, and data analysis.











## We will continue to guide and support effective leaders who can work toward sustainability.

Nonprofit organizations play a vital role in our community. By strengthening **nonprofit capacity and infrastructure**, we can make sure our partners are resilient and able to direct the most resources toward the people we hope to impact.



### GOAL

Strengthen the organizational capacity of Stark County nonprofit and government agencies that are critical to the overall health of the community by offering technical assistance and leadership development that will improve and sustain programs and services.





## We **will forge** a new path, working alongside local schools in their quest for equal educational outcomes for all young people.

**Education** is known as the great equalizer, and for good reason. When schools and communities join together to support education for young people, opportunities emerge. In 2018, high school graduates earned 33% more, and their unemployment rates were 27% lower, than those without diplomas.



### **GOAL**

Develop a new approach for improving educational outcomes for Stark County children and youth by studying national trends, connecting with local school districts and child-serving organizations, and determining where the Foundation can make the greatest impact.









Butterfly  
diner



## We **uphold** our commitment to partnering with and responding to our diverse community.

**Our community** is strong because it has a network of people and organizations striving to meet local needs, each focusing on a different element. Supporting that network—through funding, technical assistance, or staff involvement— is the heart and soul of our mission. Our vision and guiding principles come alive in this work.

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### **GOAL**

Ensure community needs are met by responding to requests to fund and participate in work that advances the Foundation’s mission.





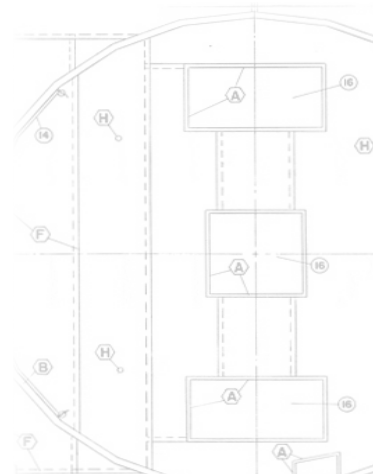
## We will strengthen our infrastructure, simplify processes, and explore broadening the scope of our communications.

We believe we can always improve **our operations** to be better stewards of our resources and more responsive to our community. Internal growth is imperative for the Foundation to fulfill its mission over the long term.

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### GOAL

Improve the Foundation's work by upgrading grantmaking processes, communication efforts, and staff knowledge so that grantees and partners are supported and informed.





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## Our Mission

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The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton supports and furthers the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. The principal components of our ministry are health, education, and social services. Our focus is on issues of social justice relating to the poor and underserved in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

## Our Vision

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To improve the quality of life of the poor and underserved so they can live to their fullest potential, by initiating systemic change, enhancing community connections, serving as a community change agent to advocate for the poor, and promoting innovative strategies to impact the root causes of poverty.



SISTERS *of* CHARITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF CANTON

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*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*