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SPRING 2019 EDITION

Chautauqua Fund Leadership Community Positions Institution for Place on World Stage

Thanks to generous gifts from the community, each year the Chautauqua Fund contributes a critical part of the Institution’s overall budget by augmenting gate ticket and other revenue streams with philanthropic support that helps cover the cost of annual operations. In appreciation of this support, leadership giving societies recognize the institutional investments of

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MAJOR GIFTS

Strategic Investments In Technology Expand Amphitheater’s Reach

As Chautauqua moves toward President Michael E. Hill’s vision for the Institution to become a greater thought leader for the nation and a model of civil dialogue, the Department of Marketing and Communications, led by Vice President and Chief Brand Officer Emily Morris, and the Department of Education, led by Vice President and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education Matt Ewalt, have been examining ways that Chautauqua can deliver its program content to a broader audience. As Ewalt put it, “We want to take an event that has traditionally been all about the in-person experience and think about the life of that work beyond the grounds, through live streaming and packaging that content for classrooms and other learning experiences later.”

To help the effort, longtime Chautauquans Ted and Betsy Merchant have stepped forward to invest in several technological amenities for the Amphitheater that will both enhance the lecturer’s experience and provide the capacity to stream and/or package programming for later dissemination. Now retired from a 35-year career in obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Ted Merchant was a founding partner of HealthCare Partners Medical Group in Pasadena, California. He and Betsy, his wife, are active in a number of nonprofit ventures, including a health care center in Ethiopia and Villa de Vida, an independent apartment community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in San Diego County, California. They also share a passion for Chautauqua and have been coming here together since 1978, the year they married. Like so many Chautauquans, the Merchants talk about Chautauqua’s programming all the time back home in California and have brought many friends to the grounds as their guests. Ted’s Chautauqua roots run deep. His grandmother bought a house in 1930, and Ted has come for at least part of every season since he was in eighth grade. The Merchants have also been members of the Bestor Society for a number of years.

“We decided we wanted to make a significant gift to Chautauqua in support of Michael Hill,” Ted said. “We are so impressed with him. He is a visionary who gets the importance of Chautauqua’s presence in the world, and he is also just a plain old nice guy.”

“We also wanted to invest in something the Institution really needs,” Betsy added. “We did not want to dictate the use of the funds. The administration should decide that.”

“The Merchants are visionary Chautauquans who are key partners in making Chautauqua’s lecture platform as accessible as possible.”

— President Michael E. Hill

see MAJOR GIFTS p. 12
FROM THE CEO

Second, from the Fund’s perspective, while it’s always a difficult philanthropic recognition, there are several key things to keep in mind,” Tim Renjilian said. “First, and most importantly, we all have a stake in the vibrancy of Chautauqua. That means that it’s important for all of us to contribute, at whatever level we are able, to make a tangible statement that we believe in Chautauqua’s relevance and importance.”

“We need $7 million in philanthropic gifts annually to deliver our current level of operations. Simply maintaining our current level of operations requires an even greater commitment than Chautauqua has been part of the way Chautauqua has been developing, including, in particular, the strategic plan and the master plan. Anyone who loves Chautauqua is eager to dig in and start having those conversations.”

Tim Pardo, chair of the Institution’s board of trustees, also strongly endorsed the increase, citing the ever-increasing importance of annual philanthropy at Chautauqua. “We need $7 million in philanthropic gifts annually to deliver our current programmatic offerings and meet our current level of operations. That number will only grow over time with inflation and with the success of the Institution’s objectives of greater dissemination of our programs year-round, having a national profile in civil dialogue, increasing the diversity of our community, continuously improving the range and quality of our programming, and enhancing the sophistication of our technology,” Pardo said. “We are grateful to have many Chautauquans who are capable of a leadership commitment to this Institution, an organization that is unlike any other in the nation. At the same time, as we invite younger generations into the mix, we will continue to welcome and acknowledge their support at all levels.”

Susie Kuhn, who currently serves as chair of the Bestor Society, the pre-eminent leadership giving society within the Chautauqua Fund, is enthusiastic about the research she has done with comparably sized organizations as to how they recognize their most generous donors. “Better defining the benefits associated with each level of giving and adding meaningful forms of recognition is how the Institution can best honor its donor community,” she said.

Kuhn, who lives in Tampa, Florida, and has been coming to Chautauqua for a decade with her two sons, engaged in several conversations last season to learn from other Bestor Society members about what kinds of recognition would be most meaningful.

“Special invitations to luncheons, tours or panel discussions, and select events like the Scholar in Residence Program or the annual President’s Address have long been part of the way Chautauqua recognizes its donors,” Kuhn said. “Other new programs such as more intimate ‘Conversations and Cocktails’ events and offering engagement opportunities with speakers and performers will also become a growing focus of our donor stewardship,” she said.

As Tim Renjilian expressed, “From the vantage point of the Institution, we have lofty goals and ambitions that make increased giving essential. Simply maintaining our current level of excellence is becoming more and more expensive each year; achieving our longer-term vision of what Chautauqua should be will require an even greater commitment of energy, resources, and time, as well as greater appreciation for our donor base. The Chautauqua Fund needs to keep pace with that, and we are grateful to those who have made this investment and who will continue to position this Institution for what’s to come.”

"We all have a stake in the vibrancy of Chautauqua. That means that it’s important for all of us to contribute, at whatever level we are able, to make a tangible statement that we believe in Chautauqua’s relevance and importance.”

— Tim Renjilian, 2019 Chautauqua Fund co-chair
Setting the Stage for Future Philanthropy

Taking a cue from President Michael E. Hill’s message delivered to our community in the winter Chautauquan, we at the Foundation have also been setting the stage for the 2019 season and beyond. In December, we successfully concluded our Amphitheater endowment effort “Stand Up and Be Seated,” which is an accomplishment that should generate well-deserved pride among our donors. To raise $5 million in endowment after the Amphitheater was already in use, and to raise it from people who mostly had not been involved in funding the facility itself, is quite a rare achievement. This was a last piece of “unfinished business” on the Promise Campaign agenda. We now move forward, with gratitude, to the next stage in our work serving this Institution’s mission.

In 2018, Foundation staff, with input from other fundraising professionals, began to reflect on our development staffing and the certain need for additional personnel to drive our efforts toward the sesquicentennial of Chautauqua in 2024. We are fortunate to be able to depend on wonderfully generous Chautauquans who have perennially helped us close the gap between earned revenues and the actual cost of creating the Chautauqua experience, including our investment in capital projects. Fulfilling the goals of our forthcoming strategic and campus master plans, however, will require additional resources to invest in and elevate the Institution’s work. We remain grateful for gifts of all sizes according to each donor’s capacity, and we seek to recognize your gifts in ways that are meaningful to you. We anticipate that many of you will be excited to increase your investment in Chautauqua as we share the forthcoming strategic plan.

A number of donors stepped forward in the last year to make significant endowment gifts in the performing and visual arts and, as you will read in this issue, in creating new science literacy programming (Page 4), helping with the first and second years of our Poetry Makerspace (Pages 6–7), and in expanding our capacity to offer student scholarships (Pages 8–9). All of these investments help to build momentum for future resource development.

As our cover story illustrates, the lecture program remains a signature element of Chautauqua’s identity. Now we will be able, thanks to a gift from the Merchant family, to make our sharing of the Chautauqua experience easier on those who graciously come to share their work through various media. The improvements will reach those beyond the grounds with the highest quality presentations possible — live and recorded. We are most grateful to the Merchant family for their gift. These significant investments and the actions we are taking at the Foundation set the stage for a robust season in 2019 and for years beyond. I and my colleagues are eager to share it all with you and thank you for the investments you have made to bring Chautauqua to this very important time in its history.

“We now move forward, with gratitude, to the next stage in our work serving this Institution’s mission.”

Chautauqua Foundation staff celebrate the “Stand Up and Be Seated” matching gift challenge for Amphitheater endowment on the big bench in Bestor Plaza.
Barbara Foorman, a lifelong Chautauquan, has recently stepped forward to help build the foundation for a multi-generational approach to science education at Chautauqua Institution. Foorman, the Frances Eppes Professor of Education at Florida State University, has created the Barbara R. Foorman Science Literacy Endowment at Chautauqua to be used for the purpose of building science literacy through lecture programming, including morning and CLSC author presentations, science education and mentoring programs, and related support to science education for all ages.

Foorman’s distinguished academic career has focused on improving the acquisition of foundational reading skills among public school students across many states, and she has been the principal investigator for numerous studies funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and Institute of Education Science.

“I believe that people of all ages need to know more about their world and how the scientific method can play a role in solving problems,” Foorman said. “I think we have to go beyond simply listening to opinions on an issue and to think scientifically, keeping an open mind as we examine and test various ideas.”

Topics in science have been a powerful part of the lecture platform at Chautauqua in recent years, particularly through the Institution’s sturdy partnership with National Geographic. In the coming season, during Week Three’s examination of “A Planet in Balance,” Chautauqua will present, in partnership with National Geographic, a series of lectures and discussions on shifts in global climate, habitat conservation and the overall human impact on the environment. During Week Four’s series on “The New Map of Life: How Longer Lives Are Changing the World,” a new collaboration with the Stanford Center on Longevity will bring speakers to address the biological, political, financial and psychological impacts of longer human lives.

Foorman hopes that through her endowment, and with additional investments from other donors, these kinds of topics can inform everyone’s Chautauqua experience, from youth programs to the CLSC to Special Studies offerings.

“Barbara’s generous support comes at a time when we are thinking critically about how we enhance the role of science in our interdisciplinary approach to programming, right alongside the arts, humanities and religion,” said Matt Ewalt, vice president and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education. “Program partners like National Geographic and other thought leaders have expressed to us a fierce desire to engage with young Chautauquans, to build their knowledge and capacity as citizens to effect change in their communities and world.”

A youth-focused program partner returning again for the 2019 season is the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh. The center’s “Science on the Road” staff lead a weekly series of science education programs at Chautauqua for youth and families through a combination of small-group, hands-on activities and larger public lectures and demonstrations. This summer, during Chautauqua’s Week Nine with Jazz at Lincoln Center and Wynton Marsalis, Carnegie Science Center activities will focus on the science of music and sound.

Ewalt noted that National Geographic master classes, which continue in 2019, have the highest enrollment by high school and college students than any master classes in Special Studies. The Institution’s new Club Plus program for youth — an interdisciplinary curriculum that complements the traditional day camp model of Boys’ and Girls’ Club, sponsored by the Elise M. Beshoff Charitable Foundation, Inc. — will offer science programs in 2019 led by such organizations as the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Audubon Community Nature Center of Jamestown, New York, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County. A series of lectures and special events throughout the summer will focus on the future of space exploration, including a morning lecture and afternoon youth program by former U.S. astronaut Scott Kelly on July 19. Developing additional season-wide threads that follow scientific issues is one method to enhance this kind of programming.

“Building science literacy through youth and family programs also has implications for how Chautauqua Institution works with educators and youth throughout Chautauqua County, building upon the work of the Institution’s arts education initiatives,” Ewalt said.

In her career, Foorman has encountered a fear of science in some quarters. Working in the south — consulting with Texas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and North and South Carolina school systems most recently — she has found a reluctance among some educators to teach basic science, fearing a push back from religious groups. This concern has led some schools to err on the side of technology as a quasi-stand-in for basic science.

On a more personal level, Foorman observed that her teenage grandchildren have had a tendency when at Chautauqua to hang out in her basement using social media and playing computer games.

“We should have more to bring the teenage boys out of their dens!” she said. During the 2018 season, Foorman noted a keen interest in the new Poetry Makerspace. She hopes Chautauqua looks at the possibility of other makerspaces that, through the mentorship of visiting scientists and graduate students, challenge teens and younger adults to solve scientific problems.

Foorman’s Chautauqua roots run deep. Florence Hall, with its handsome cupola on Irving Place near the Gleason, is named for her great-grandmother, Florence A. Roblee. The Joseph H. and Florence A. Roblee Foundation has long supported Chautauqua, including funding the Louise Roblee McCarthy Memorial Lectureship, the Eugene Ross McCarthy Memorial Fund, the Joseph H. and Florence A. Roblee Scholarship, and the Roblee Scholarship for Families, as well as supporting the Abrahamic Program for Young Adults (APYA). Florence Roblee’s CLSC diploma from 1891 still hangs in the St. Elmo Hotel where Foorman’s aunt, Carol Duhme, now 102 years of age, lives on the grounds.

Foorman came to Chautauqua every season as a small child and later returned in her 30s, bringing her daughter to the grounds for 31 years in a row. She and her late husband, Justin Leiber, taught in the Special Studies program in the 1980s, but it wasn’t until just two years ago that Foorman purchased her own residence on Haven Avenue. One of her neighbors is a biologist. “Just think about the excursions to study the flora and fauna of the region that Chautauqua could sponsor for young people!” she said, still dreaming of ways for the Institution to incorporate more scientific literacy in the Chautauqua experience.
For decades, Chautauquans have gathered on porches after the morning and afternoon lectures to discuss what they heard, to engage in friendly debate, and to share their own knowledge on any given topic. These informal, pop-up colloquia are part of what makes the Chautauqua experience in any given week so appealing. Now, as the Institution seeks to broaden its reach and impact in the region and across the country, it is exploring ways to provide more formal access and deepen these discussions.

“We want to create smaller spaces on and off the grounds for meaningful dialogue around issues, where a skilled facilitator or content expert might provide direction and additional context for follow-up conversations,” said Matt Ewalt, vice president and Emily and Richard Smucker Chair for Education. “Such a format is also a great way for us to invite those who are new to Chautauqua into the conversation, to participate in a multigenerational experience that’s designed for everyone to contribute to a topic, to listen and engage.”

During Week Two of the 2018 season, Kimberly Hamlin, associate professor of history and director of the American Studies Program at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, visited Chautauqua as part of a new partnership with Miami University of Ohio, funded in large part by a gift from donors who have connections at both institutions. Following the morning Amphitheater lecture, Hamlin led follow-up discussions on the theme of “American Identity.” The number of participants in the sessions was limited to ensure that everyone would have a chance to speak. “It was a lively exchange. People shared their narratives about their own identities,” Hamlin said. “Chautauquans have a lot to say, and their comments were substantive and smart.”

Toward the end of the week, Hamlin asked participants to imagine the Amphitheater speakers in conversation with each other. “Where did their positions align and where did they differ?” Hamlin asked. “People compared the anecdotes and stories from David Brooks and Amy Chua one day and we had a great conversation. No one identified themselves in partisan terms. We had moments during the week that could have been confrontational, but they were not.”

For Hamlin, the experience was energizing, and said she would love to return to the grounds to lead more sessions. “I feel like I had my faith in humanity restored. As a history professor, I was moved by how Chautauquans turn out for lectures and are so enthusiastic about America. It was very inspiring.”

Hamlin’s Miami University colleagues, James Tobin, a professor of journalism, and Steven Conn, the W. E. Smith Professor of History, led post-lecture conversations during Weeks One and Five, respectively. To set the stage for their engagement each week, the three penned articles for The Chautauquan Daily. Steven Conn also served as the 2 p.m. Interfaith lecturer on July 24 as part of “The Ethics of Dissent” series. His talk illuminated perspectives on Henry David Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience.”

Experiment in Dialogue
In Week Three, the Department of Education arranged another experiment in dialogue around “The Art of Play” theme. A group of early childhood educators from the region signed up to take a class through Jamestown Community College. Taught by Beth Staiks, an assistant professor and coordinator of the Early Childhood Education program at JCC, the for-credit continuing education seminar provided local teachers with a chance to attend the morning lectures all week and then gather in a Hultquist classroom to debrief on what they heard. In two of the sessions, they were joined by Amphitheater speakers Jill Vialet, the founder and CEO of Playworks, and later by the distinguished Boston College researcher and professor of psychology Peter Gray, author of Free to Learn.

Day after day, this animated group of early childhood professionals shared vivid stories of their classroom challenges, the bureaucratic barriers to success, and how parents often unwittingly hinder their children’s progress in pre-school. They debated the merits of intellectual learning versus academic learning among young children. They questioned the current metrics of achievement being used. As colleagues from across the local school districts, they compared notes and found renewal and affirmation among themselves. Of the sessions, one participant said, “I walked away feeling so excited by how the speakers got us thinking about how to change and improve structured systems. I couldn’t believe we got to sit with those amazing speakers.”

Other courses offered last summer by JCC through its partnership with the Institution included a week on “The Ethics of Dissent,” featuring lectures by Ralph Young and Shaun King, in Week Five and “Music and Global Understanding” in Week Seven, with the Silkroad Ensemble and Yo-Yo Ma. The cost of these classes for local participants — including instruction, parking and a morning gate pass — was in line with tuition for other JCC continuing professional education classes, under $200.

Area of Great Opportunity
Such partnerships with JCC and Miami University of Ohio — much like the Poetry Makerspace project hosted in collaboration with Kent State University’s Wick Poetry Center — serve as potential models for building new audiences, engaging educators and students who can play a role in spreading the word about opportunities to connect with Chautauqua on and off the grounds.

“The enthusiasm demonstrated by these colleges and universities to develop partnerships with Chautauqua suggests this is an area of great opportunity and likely untapped potential.” — Matt Ewalt

Early childhood educators visit the Institution as part of the teacher education program at Jamestown Community College.

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Poetry Makerspace Returns to Chautauqua: BROADENS TO NEW MEDIA

It's early afternoon on the first Wednesday of Chautauqua's 2018 season. On the front steps of the Colonnade building, a diverse crowd of young people are gathered — laughing, talking, fidgeting, glancing at the sky and pulling up their hoods against the rain that is barely spitting from the clouds. A mockingbird chatters in the nearby shrubbery. A FedEx truck grinds by. Random backpacks, half-open umbrellas and water bottles are set around the Colonnade's characteristic columns. On “Education Wednesdays,” local public school students can access the grounds and Chautauqua’s programs free of charge, and today, a pop-up poetry reading is about to begin.

The students — middle and high schoolers from Jamestown and Clymer — have already participated in spring 2018 poetry workshops at their schools sponsored by Chautauqua Institution and taught by the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University. Now, they are here at Chautauqua’s newly installed Makerspace in the storefront beside the Plaza Market. This joint venture between Kent State and Chautauqua was engineered by Emily Morris, vice president of marketing and communications and chief brand officer, along with Atom Atkinson, Chautauqua’s director of literary arts.

Among this group of young people are Wick Poetry Center interns, Kent State undergraduates who applied to live on the grounds and take workshops from the writers-in-residence at the Chautauqua Writers’ Center in exchange for serving as docents in the Makerspace. One Kent State graduate student and Wick Poetry Center graduate fellow, Sony Ton-Aime, from Haiti, is on the grounds for six weeks. Today he is wearing a Wick Poetry Center T-shirt with “Word Nerd” printed in bold letters on the front. Ton-Aime helped facilitate the spring workshops along with Wick Poetry Center Director David Hassler and Wick’s outreach manager Charles Malone. Through the entire 2018 summer season, the Kent State team will be welcoming guests into the Makerspace to view a poetry exhibition called “Traveling Stanzas” and to use some of the unique, hands-on tools in the lab to create their own poems.

The local teens line up to present poems they have come to love through the course of this poetry adventure. An enthusiastic young woman goes first, taking the microphone to recite Ted Kooser’s poem “Abandoned Farmhouses” from memory, while gesturing rhythmically with her free hand. She is followed by another student who offers Marge Piercy’s poem “To Have Without Holding,” scrolling through the lines as she reads it on her cellphone. One by one, other poems by important contemporary voices — Jimmy Santiago Baca, Dana Gioia, Naomi Shihab Nye — are recited as the drizzle begins in earnest. The students continue to happily huddle under the porch overhang in rapt attention and clap wildly for their peers as each completes a recitation. Finally, a young man presents Rudyard Kipling’s classic “If.” He emphasizes every line with a fresh passion and commitment, giving the old chestnut new life. Chautauquans moving in and out of the Colonnade stop to listen.

Atmosphere of Mutual Respect and Curiosity

As on that particular Wednesday, throughout the 2018 season the Poetry Makerspace drew in curious Chautauquans of all ages like a magnet. The interactive, highly visual poetry experience offered here appealed to visual arts students and Children’s School students. It inspired performances on Bestor Plaza by dance and opera students and compelled countless Chautauquans to complete and print postcard poems in the lab that were mailed on site.

The Wick Poetry Center mission is to bring poetry to everyday lives. The Traveling Stanzas program was launched in communities local to the Kent, Ohio, campus and quickly became a tremendous engagement resource for a wide range of constituents, including the growing immigrant community in nearby Akron. “Chautauqua’s Poetry Makerspace hosted the second installation of the Traveling Stanzas exhibition,” Morris said. “The first, fittingly, was in Akron, Ohio, at the Summit Artspace.” Morris added that the project seemed to be ideal for Chautauqua, where hearing multiple voices in an atmosphere of mutual respect and curiosity is an institutional imperative. “Our current vision is to provide invitational spaces on the grounds that encourage self-expression, communication and mindfulness in pursuit of civil dialogue. Poetry as a practice involves listening with intensity, and you can’t have true civil dialogue without mindful listening,” Morris added.

Chautauquan Kathryn “Kate” Dillon Hogan supported the Poetry Makerspace through a generous donation in 2018 and will make another iteration of the project possible in the coming season. “I am neither a poet nor a writer,” Hogan said. “I am a philosopher by profession, and I think about what is important to us as a community.” Hogan, who grew up in Brooklyn and was a senior member of the administration at St. Bonaventure University, has now retired to Arizona, but recently purchased a condo on the Chautauqua grounds.

“The intergenerational connections that are emphasized at Chautauqua and in these poetry programs are really important to me,” Hogan said. Poetry as a practice invites reflection and engagement.

For the 2019 season, Chautauqua’s Poetry Makerspace will relocate to Hulouquen Center, where organizers aim to make use of the proximity to the Smith Memorial Library and daily foot traffic to and from the Amphitheater while also positioning the facility for potential use by area schools and other groups throughout the year.

“I am excited that Chautauqua’s Poetry Makerspace is moving near the Amp this season. I think it

— Kathryn Dillon Hogan
will continue to draw more people on the grounds and enhance the connection to students in the region,” Hogan said.

Coincident to the move, the Makerspace will feature new ways to engage. “The Listening Wall,” as Wick has dubbed it, is a new tool developed by the programmers and designers who created the “Traveling Stanzas” exhibit. The Listening Wall will showcase various images, short videos, poems, narratives and archival documents related to each week’s theme. The Listening Wall — actually a large touchscreen sheltered from the elements in Hultquist Center — will allow visitors to respond in kind with their own uploaded videos, images, poems or comments on the week’s theme via their personal wireless devices.

Plans for this year’s experimental Listening Wall fit well into the vision that Atkinson expressed last season. “We want the Makerspace to be one mode of engagement that invites everyone at Chautauqua — a means to engage with texts, with lectures, and with the issues of the day in a way that feels inviting, challenging, and genuinely draws passersby into conversations.”

The Wick Poetry Center has also developed an activity book “that is a cross between a set of word games and a coloring book,” Hassler said. The family-friendly booklet will be available in the Makerspace for free and will be suitable for all ages. After dark, the Makerspace — in its new location adjacent the Smith Memorial Library — will be projecting poems on the backside of the library for evening passersby to contemplate.

In addition to all of these interactive opportunities, the Kent State University Press in association with Chautauqua Institution has recently published a book of poems and stunning artwork from the Traveling Stanzas project and exhibition. *Speak a Powerful Magic: Ten Years of the Traveling Stanzas Poetry Project* presents poems by representatives from the various groups that have engaged in this innovative community arts project over the years — including the young Chautauqua County poets who participated in last year’s in-school workshops. The work of those Chautauqua County students, presented in this book alongside world-renowned poets such as Naomi Shihab Nye, will be celebrated on the grounds this summer. *Speak a Powerful Magic* will be available for sale at Chautauqua during the 2019 season while supplies last.
Community Supports Young Artist Experience

Each year, the Institution invites approximately 300 talented students from more than 40 states and several foreign countries to join the Chautauqua community for intensive and enriching artistic experiences in the Schools of Performing and Visual Arts. Cutting across different areas of study, members of this diverse student body are enrolled in either the School of Art, School of Dance, Music School Festival Orchestra, Opera Young Artist Program, Piano Program, Theater Conservatory, Voice Program or the Writers’ Center.

To attract the very best talent and to encourage young artists from all walks of life as they launch their professional careers, scholarship support is offered to the majority of students (more than 80%) in the form of full or partial scholarships. Of the $778,000 provided in scholarships in 2018 against an overall need of approximately $1.35 million, 50% came from donors making gifts to the annual Chautauqua Fund. Endowed scholarships provided another 30% of the scholarship support awarded, and 20% came from general operating revenues of the Institution.

In addition to the many individuals and families who generously contribute annually to the Chautauqua Fund, several auxiliary and community support organizations invest considerable volunteer time and resources to raise scholarship funds.

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Richard Osborne, a longtime resident of Charlotte, North Carolina, is a relatively new member of the Chautauqua community, having visited for the first time in 2012. However, once he experienced the arts here and then found a home on the grounds two years later, Osborne became a dogged supporter of the Chautauqua Dance Circle.

Osborne, the former CFO of Duke Energy Corporation and a longtime patron of the arts in Charlotte, said that every arts group in the country is raising money. “It’s part of what we have to do,” he said. “And at Chautauqua, we know that dance students, in particular, must start their journey into the art form when they are 8, 9 or 10 years old. They can’t wait until they are teenagers.”

An Institution trustee and president of the Dance Circle, Osborne has been a key player in encouraging his fellow Dance Circle members to increase their scholarship support every year over the last three years. “One of the issues with performing arts, in general, is making them accessible to broad portions of the population,” said Osborne. “We can’t leave it to market forces and ticket sales to support developing young artists.”

In the case of male dancers who are rarer in the field than their young female counterparts, Chautauqua must offer generous stipends to be competitive. “Some summer dance programs not only cover all expenses but compensate young male dancers for their participation,” Osborne explained.

Discussions continue regarding the creation of a larger studio to accommodate the dance program, and Osborne said he’s particularly happy with efforts by School of Dance Artistic Director Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and his staff to track young artists and stay in touch as they move forward in their careers.

The now-annual Alumni Dance Gala, Osborne said, “helps demonstrate to Chautauquans the fruits of their investment in the arts.”

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For Betsy Vance, becoming a member of VACI (Visual Arts at Chautauqua Institution) Partners launched a brand new passion. “I really had no clue,” she said. “I was not a gallery-goer. But when I was asked to join the VACI Partners board and be secretary, I jumped in unwittingly and learned new things.”

Vance is especially excited by the initiatives being created by Sharon Louden — the new Sydelle Sonkin and Herb Siegel Artistic Director of the Visual Arts — who is now building on the legacy of former artistic director Don Kimes and managing director Lois Jubeck.

“At Chautauqua, the theater, opera and dance programs get a lot of visibility, but I think it’s a bit harder for the visual arts to reach some people,” Vance said. “You have to find us, and the new VACI complex is so amazing — the galleries and the exhibitions.”

VACI Partners annually raise scholarship funds that are awarded according to need. According to Chautauqua Fund Director Tina Downey, the 2018 season was the first in which 100% of School of Art students received some form of aid — an accomplishment that benefits the program immensely in terms of the competitive choice among students. And, like dance, the School of Art also follows its students as they go forward in their careers. “We had a student come back after 15 years to exhibit here,” Vance said. “VACI students tend to be older, more mature and engaged. Many are grad students who come to Chautauqua to work on building their portfolios during the summer.”

The School of Art is open to applications from artists who work in all media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, metal work, installation, writing, curating, performance, social practice and more.

Vance, who recently finished her VACI Partners board service, is proud to point out that several of the current board members belong to the NOW Generation. “We have worked hard to cultivate interest in the visual arts among younger Chautauquans,” she said. “I really enjoyed my six years on the board. I was lucky to have had the opportunity to work with some very talented and committed people. VACI Partners now number around 200 members.”

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The nimble efforts of Chautauqua’s discipline-based support groups that focus on supporting the student experience — such as the Dance Circle, VACI Partners, Friends of Chautauqua Theater, Opera Guild, and Literary Arts Friends — are multiplied in a significant way by the efforts of one of the Institution’s longest-running and most active auxiliary organizations. The Chautauqua Women’s Club (CWC), now in its 130th year, has been contributing to arts scholarships since 1977 and is continuing to strengthen its donor base, comprising mostly CWC members. The CWC appeals for scholarship support in a variety of ways — baskets passed at recitals, numerous fundraisers, the regular Flea Boutique, Artists at the Market,
“The Chautauqua experience can be a transformative one in the life of an artist or musician. Young artists are also engaging with the broader community and receiving nurturing support to explore deeply the breadth and diversity of their craft.”

— Tina Downey

the annual Valentine Appeal, and through invested funds. As CWC President Barbara Brady, who lives in the Atlanta area, explained, “In the 33 years the CWC has raised money for scholarships, we were able to serve 1,300 students and we raised a total of $1,583,645, with $400,000 of that in the last five years.” As part of its strategic plan, the CWC has set a goal to raise $80,000 for scholarships in 2019, and to increase that amount by $5,000 each year in order to reach $100,000 in 2023. “Our donors often have the satisfaction of following their students through their careers in the arts. Some stay in touch with their benefactors over time,” Brady said.

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Again and again, scholarship donors hear from student recipients that studying in Chautauqua’s Schools of Performing and Visual Arts is both intensive and inspiring. This experience is made even more meaningful by being in community with peers and accomplished faculty who are practicing a variety of art forms. “The Chautauqua experience can be a transformative one in the life of an artist or musician,” Downey said. “Young artists are also engaging with the broader community and receiving nurturing support to explore deeply the breadth and diversity of their craft.” Their brief but impressionable time in residence at Chautauqua stays with many students for a lifetime. Beyond the camaraderie and companionship of others hard at work in their craft is the unbelievable environment of Chautauqua — the lake, the lectures, the chance to perform and have your work seen by such enthusiastic audiences.

Scholarship gifts of all sizes make a difference for these young artists, and may be allocated to either a program of one’s choosing, or be applied wherever it’s needed most. For gifts of $1,000 or more through the Chautauqua Fund, a named scholarship will directly underwrite the experience of a student who the donor will be notified of and may meet as their sponsor. For more information or to make a contribution to scholarship, please visit giving.chq.org or contact foundation@chq.org or 716-357-6404.

Average Attendance, By Area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number of Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Art</td>
<td>38 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Dance</td>
<td>86 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano Program</td>
<td>22 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers’ Center</td>
<td>18 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opera and Voice Program</td>
<td>47 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theater Conservatory &amp; Fellows</td>
<td>19 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music School Festival Orchestra</td>
<td>82 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo: Riley Robinson, The Chautauquan Daily
Throughout Week Eight of the 2018 season, Chautauqua Institution commemorated the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a series of remembrances. On that Tuesday, the speaker scheduled to deliver Wednesday’s Interfaith Lecture, hosted by the Department of Religion, canceled suddenly. Chautauqua Vice President of Religion and Senior Pastor the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson noted that “while such a cancellation brought instant panic to me, this was not, of course, my colleague Maureen Rovegno’s ‘first rodeo.’” Rovegno, director of religion, recalled someone telling her about a young woman, in her 20s at the time, who had been an eyewitness to Dr. King’s assassination. Rovegno retrieved from that friend a phone number for that woman, Clara Ester. Ester answered Rovegno’s phone call in Mobile, Alabama, and by that afternoon, was on a plane to Buffalo, and then on the road to Chautauqua.

Not accustomed to lecturing, Ester agreed that a conversation/interview was the best way to present her story. “In our public conversation, when we got around to that awful moment at the Lorraine Hotel, Ester began describing how she had come for a glimpse of Dr. King, whom she so admired, and there he was standing on the balcony of the motel. She couldn’t take her eyes off him,” said Robinson. “Then, suddenly, she saw the bullet pick him up in the air and slam him down on the balcony floor. She told us how she ran upstairs and helped to loosen his collar so he could breathe.” Robinson recalled looking around the Hall of Philosophy at that point. Many in the Chautauqua audience were weeping. He, too, was filled with emotion and asked for a pause so that everyone could let the moment sink in. “I had never heard a historical moment described so well. It was as if we all were there,” Robinson said.

Two days later, after the Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke in the Amphitheater, Jackson came forward to the edge of the stage and greeted the Chautauquans who gathered there to meet him. Ester was among them. Robinson pointed her out to Jackson. “When she reached him, Jackson took her hand in both of his and kissed it. Not many saw that special greeting between those two witnesses to history, but I thought to myself, this is the kind of moment that only happens at Chautauqua.”

This extraordinary experience was one of many that Robinson says he will hold in his heart from his first year at Chautauqua as the Institution’s vice president of religion and senior pastor. Robinson also recalled how, during Week One, retired bishop Jack Spong, Robinson’s lifelong friend, announced at the beginning of his week of lectures in the Hall of Philosophy that this would be the very last public speaking engagement in his global career in the ministry. Everyone present in the Hall of Philosophy felt honored that Spong would choose Chautauqua for that last lecture.

Spong, the author of many highly accessible but theologically controversial books, brought a modern critical analysis to fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture and argued in favor of a more compassionate, inclusive, and expansive view of Christianity. “Spong described the devastation of his 2016 stroke in vivid terms,” said Robinson. “He talked about how hard it had been for him to keep up his speaking schedule and then said his goodbye to us in that moment with such grace and intimacy.”

Robinson also cited Fr. Greg Boyle’s sermons in Week Four, full of optimism and hope from his work with marginalized groups through Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, the largest gang intervention through Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation and re-entry program in the world. “It is always good to hear stories of success,” Robinson said. ***

“What I didn’t anticipate in my first full season, however,” Robinson said, “was just how long every day is for a staff person at Chautauqua. The pace is unrelenting. Twelve- to 14-hour days, seven days a week for nine weeks!” Robinson is part of the executive leadership team charged with making sure that the 100-some speakers and presenters who come to the grounds during the season — often with spouses and children — are made welcome and given Chautauqua’s finest hospitality in hopes that they will return again to become a fixture of the community.

“Even for an old extrovert like me, I had to go home at the end of the season and hole up in my apartment — no going out to eat, no meet-ups with friends. I just needed to rest,” Robinson confessed.

There were nevertheless some other rewards for his hard work during the summer. Robinson is the new occupant of the Miller Edison Cottage during the Chautauqua season. “I was an American studies major in college, so to live in that cottage is an indescribable honor,” he said. Robinson didn’t move a thing in the living room of the house. He wanted guests and friends to see how the family experienced the house when all of the Edison and Miller guests — the captains of industry, inventors and state leaders — visited there when Mina Edison was in charge of the household. Robinson has also had the opportunity to visit with Ted Ann, one of the last Miller family members who owned the cottage before the Institution purchased it thanks to a generous gift from longtime Chautauquan Tom Hagen.

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Well rested and looking toward the 2019 season, Robinson is buoyant. Among the highlights ahead is Week Two’s Interfaith Lecture theme, “Common Ground Change Agents.” That week, Chautauqua favorite James Fallows will interview a variety of people “who are working for the common good in their communities. The value Americans place on both rugged individualism alongside working for the common good is a constant struggle, and we tend to swing one way and then the other throughout our history,” Robinson said. Fallows will tackle the issue of whether this precarious balance in the 2 p.m. Hall of Philosophy sessions programmed by the Department of Religion.

Celebrated Chautauquan, award-winning broadcast journalist, author and documentary filmmaker Bill Moyers will also return to take the podium for the entirety of Week Eight in conversations with speakers on the topic of “The Power of Soft Power” in the Hall of Philosophy. “We will be exploring other notions of power besides having a strong military or controlling vast resources,” Robinson said. “Instead, we’ll be examining restorative practices, negotiating for peaceful ends and building solid relationships.”

For the first time ever, the Department of Religion has also enlisted a rabbi as a guest chaplain. Rabbi Sharon Brous of the IKAR Synagogue in Los Angeles will lead Sunday and daily worship services in Week One. Robinson was quick to assure that “these services will remain Christian, and the readings will come from the Hebrew Scriptures, the only ‘Bible’ Jesus knew. Brous was designated as the No. 1 rabbi in the United States by The Daily Beast and Time Inc. Her TED Talk has had more than a million views,” Robinson explained.

In addition, Fr. Richard Rohr of Albioncque’s Center for Action and Contemplation will come to the grounds for his first visit to Chautauqua and will preach in the mornings as well as lecture in the afternoons during the week on longevity (Week Four). “Rohr has always had a conflict in the summer with an annual conference he helps to organize,” said Robinson. “The conference is not happening this year, so we are hopeful that his presence at Chautauqua will draw some of those conferees to join us this season.” Rohr is the popular author of Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life.

For Chautauquans interested in supporting the Department of Religion’s “Interfaith Friday” series, these sessions will continue for a second season in 2019 on the topic of how each of nine different faith traditions tackles the issue of why a loving and omnipotent God allows evil and suffering in the world. “We will ask each presenter to address how their faith tradition wrestles with this profound question,” Robinson explained. “I’m really excited about the conversations ahead.”
The faint presence of his Southern accent comes through when Leland Lewis says the name “New Orleans.” The culinary capital of Louisiana is his hometown, and that’s likely a good omen for his work ahead as the new general manager of Chautauqua’s Athenaeum Hotel. Lewis’s long career in hospitality and guest services has taken him from high-end hotels in New York, New Orleans, Houston, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal and Cleveland to a number of executive management stints in New York City. He is soft-spoken but firm in his principles of customer service. “I am a positive person,” Lewis said, “and it’s always good to have a fresh set of eyes to observe what might be improved at such a historic institution as the Athenaeum Hotel.”

Lewis was invited to oversee the transition in July 2018 as former GM Bruce Stanton prepared to leave the Institution after 25 seasons to manage the Moonbrook Country Club in Jamestown. Initially, Lewis was to cover management duties while Chautauqua began its search for a new GM, but after a two-month dose of what he called “the real affection for and deep sentiment of Chautauquans for their iconic hotel,” Lewis suggested that the Institution leadership might consider him for the position.

As a seasoned veteran, he has managed the launch of brand new, deluxe hotels and has also overseen the restoration and renewal of vintage properties. While serving as general manager of the Intercontinental Hotel at Cleveland Clinic from 2001 to 2005, and later as the executive director of Patient Support Services at the Clinic from 2009 to 2013, Lewis discovered and visited Chautauqua. He began traveling to Western New York with a colleague on weekends for fishing and boating at Maple Springs, across the lake from the Institution. More than once he came by boat to walk the grounds and even wandered through the stately hotel. Fast-forward to late July 2018 when Lewis found himself being driven through South Lake Drive. “At a distance, the hotel, the grassy lawn, the huge trees are so beautiful as you arrive,” he said. But Lewis also found “the magic” a bit diminished toward the end of the 2018 summer season that ran through the autumn shoulder season to raise the bar on customer service. As a result, a new rotating team of supervisors in 2019 will monitor the lobby, restaurant and porch areas to make sure guests immediately feel that they have stepped back in time,” he said, adding that decluttering and maintaining the historic integrity have been readily embraced by the staff.

Enhancing Customer Service

A bigger challenge is shifting the longstanding culture in an operation that is dependent on seasonal employees including college and high school students, interns and local residents. Chautauqua’s relatively short season of operation and the annual turnover in waitstaff and other service positions requires intensive training in customer care with each new hiring cohort. Thankfully, Lewis brings years of experience in employee selection, training, coaching and supervision. He introduced a program toward the end of the 2018 summer season that ran through the autumn shoulder season to raise the bar on customer service. As a result, a new rotating team of supervisors in 2019 will monitor the lobby, restaurant and porch areas to make sure guests quickly receive the attention they need.

During the 2019 season, the hotel’s year-old lobby lounge will offer a menu from noon to midnight, with cocktail waitstaff to deliver drinks and snacks so that the lobby does not get overcrowded. “The new bar was a huge success last year, and we want to keep it quiet and not too hectic,” Lewis says.

Expanding Food Service and the Shoulder Season

Lewis and his food and beverage team have been in discussions with the Culinary Institute of America to develop an externship program with their talented chefs in training. The Heriloom Restaurant will also add hours of operation to allow two dinner seatings prior to Amphitheater events in 2019. Sunday brunches will include live music.

Food service at Chautauqua also extends to the Brick Wall Cafe, Afterwards Cafe (now open year-round), Plaza Market and Gallery Cafe. Here, Lewis and his culinary team are studying how to reduce wait times, lower food costs, and increase overall efficiency in these outlets. With the Chautauqua Bookstore and Smith Memorial Library open year-round, Lewis is also exploring how to enhance Chautauqua’s presence as a food destination in the non-summer months.

He also plans to solicit more business in the shoulder seasons. The Athenaeum operates 200 days per year, and only 65 of those days are within the nine-week season at Chautauqua. The potential is strong for additional weddings, conferences, retreats, workshops, and family reunions on either side of the traditional summer season, Lewis said, and staff have already become more adept at hosting these kinds of events. Also, for the first time, guests can now book a room directly through Chautauqua’s website from April 15 to November 15.

“The hotel, with its considerable age and fabulous history, will always be in need of constant care and improvements. It will never be perfect,” says Lewis, “but it is at the very heart of the grounds.”

Lewis clearly relishes what he sees as his biggest challenge — to improve the details in guest rooms and hallways within his working budget. As of November 2018, he was the only occupant of the hotel, living in a top floor apartment in the Arts and Crafts wing with his Welsh Corgi named Roscoe and studying every inch of this real estate.

Lewis enjoys close proximity to the Amphitheater and the lake and, though he still has a home in Westchester, New York, and a house in Pepper Pike, Ohio, that he rents out, he hopes to stay at Chautauqua, perhaps until his retirement. “The reason I wanted the job was that I learned so much about this place and got invested in it,” Lewis said of his interim position. “I couldn’t imagine training someone else and leaving so soon,” he says. Look for Lewis and Roscoe to welcome you back to the Athenaeum Hotel this summer.
MAJOR GIFTS from p. 1

As a result of the Merchants’ gift, Chautauquans will see a newly designed backdrop on the Amphitheater stage this season that will visually brand the Institution’s programming. As a pilot program in 2019, live captioning of the morning lectures will also be available to anyone in the audience with a personal mobile device — a smartphone or tablet — so that those who are deaf, have hearing loss or prefer to see the text while listening, can follow the spoken word with an easy-to-use app.

In addition, new lecterns for the speaker and moderator will be used on the Amp stage during lectures, outfitted with computer screens and communications links with backstage staff. The current pulpit will continue to be used for Sunday morning worship services and special events, such as the Three Taps of the Gavel. The technology package installed in the new system will provide a mechanism for the moderator on stage to access questions digitally from the live audience and from off-site viewers of the lectures. Tech and production staff backstage will also be able to communicate with both lecterns in the case of unexpected noise, distractions or weather alerts.

“These are investments to streamline the experience for our distinguished speakers, including how they connect with their audience — from those gathered in the Amphitheater to those accessing the lecture from around the world,” Ewalt said. Betsy Merchant said she is particularly pleased at the prospect of live streaming. “I’m excited because I can’t be there every week,” she said. Ted agreed. “This is a big step forward,” he said. “We have been asking ourselves how we can make Chautauqua bigger than Chautauqua, the place. We want greater diversity in our audiences, especially those who may be restricted by geographical distance or economic means, and technology is one way to make our program content accessible. We have to reach out to people where they are, speak to their interests and then invite them to join us on the grounds.”

For his part, Hill is grateful. “Ted and Betsy are visionary Chautauquans who are key partners in making Chautauqua’s lecture platform as accessible as possible,” Hill said. “It has been a delight to get better acquainted with the Merchant family, to visit in their home at Chautauqua, to spend time together in California and meet their daughter Mollie and her partner. I hope Chautauquans will join me in thanking them for these enhancements to the Amphitheater and for the shared experience it will provide beyond our gates.”