

Villa of Hope's Work Based Learning Program awarded \$25,000 from Rochester Women's Giving Circle to support young adults develop their careers

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Rochester, NY – Tuesday, May 31, 2022 — Villa of Hope was awarded a \$25,000 grant from Rochester Women's Giving Circle at Rochester Area Community Foundation to support its Work Based Learning Program. Funding for this program will provide young adults with leadership development and work readiness skills, vocational screening assessment and job interest survey, coordination of work opportunities, financial literacy workshops, and providing work opportunities for our participants by networking with local businesses.

Villa of Hope's Work Based Learning program originated in 2016 as a small, work-based learning pilot for our youth who faced challenges from trauma, mental health illness, and substance use issues. The program combines comprehensive vocational and leadership development and is designed to give people real-world work experience, confidence, and skills to shape responsible citizenship. Since conception, the program has quadrupled in size, now serving both youth and community members, with demand continuing to increase during the COVID crisis and a reconstituted job market.

"We believe that access to proactive career planning and vocational services can help address inequity and improve opportunity, self-determination, and overall health for our community. Villa of Hope's Work Based Learning Program (WBL) prepares youth, ages 12-21, with skills that are necessary to obtain a sustainable wage. We work to prepare individuals to succeed in today's economy, by exposing them to high-growth middle-skill occupations in promising fields such, as health care, manufacturing, and IT."- LeVar Sanders, Senior Director of Community Restoration.

Villa of Hope remains one of the only vocational partners to be an expert in Trauma-Informed Care and specializes in working with individuals and families who have experienced significant trauma and have mental health or substance use issues. The program is unique and expertly qualified to support these individuals in other Villa of Hope programs and empower them to overcome barriers related to employment. Villa of Hope's Work Based Learning is unique in that it works to overcome these barriers to career exploration and acquisition while providing a safe, accepting, and therapeutic environment.

The Rochester Women's Giving Circle is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Monroe County. They provide support to nonprofit organizations that help women and girls gain the education, training, skills, and jobs necessary to attain economic independence. Over half of Villa of Hope's work based learning participants are young women and this funding will support internship salaries, job coaching, and career supplies to successfully engage in the program. Villa of Hope is grateful for the generosity of the Rochester Women's Giving Circle and their investment in this trauma-informed career development program.