The year commenced with the implementation of the Foundation’s Strategic Direction: 2019 – 2023; a staff-led project guided by the principles of race equity and inclusion (REI) and the engagement of residents.

Moving away from a focus on personal bigotry and bias, Foundation-sponsored REI workshops presented a historical, cultural and structural analysis of racism. Since 2017, nearly 500 Valley influencers, representing 131 organizations, have participated. Visit www.rjweanfdn.org for 2020 Training opportunities.

The Foundation’s grassroots grantmaking program, Neighborhood SUCCESS, culminated its 10th Anniversary Celebration with the release of SUCCESS: A Decade of Transformation, a book chronicling the impact of 241 Warren and Youngstown organizations and the 468 resident-led projects funded through the program.

Seeking a coordinated and thoughtful approach to community-building, the Foundation collaborated with community stakeholders and civic groups including the Communities of Excellence and The Fund for Our Economic Future.

Insight to inform the Foundation’s grantmaking, capacity building, convening and partnerships was garnered from community stakeholders across the Valley who were invited to share their experience in neighborhoods through a community survey. Visit www.rjweanfdn.org for the full report.

Honoring the Foundation’s long tradition of supporting initiatives that strengthen community, the Raymond John Wean Foundation Park opened in Youngstown late summer 2019. Intentions for the 20-acre riverfront property include opportunities for engaging residents and promoting diverse participation.

Activities and achievements throughout 2019 both reflect and celebrate the Foundation’s values and its commitment toward a vibrant Mahoning Valley.

COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

THE MAHONING VALLEY’S FUTURE

- A lovely place to live
- More diverse
- More progressive
- Safer, smarter and more prosperous

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

- Blight
- Crime
- Failing Education
- Poverty
- Literacy
- Food insecurity
- Housing

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION - 28%
100% of those selecting this priority considered “Strategies that rehabilitate blighted, vacant residential properties” to be most important.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY - 23%
94.8% of those selecting this priority considered “Access to quality programs serving grades 6-12”, “Attainment of skills to succeed in postsecondary job training/apprenticeships”, and “Connections among providers serving students and families” to be equally important.

PUBLIC CIVIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP - 11%
88.2% of those selecting this priority considered “Achievement of excellence in operations, governance, strategy and leadership” to be most important.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - 38%
94.8% of those selecting this priority considered “Access to qualify jobs, job training and job placement” to be most important.

“The Foundation is already the best in their commitment to REI. Conversations in schools and honest teaching of subjects dealing with these critical issues is definitely a plus.”

“77.3% of 150 respondents report a positive perception of the Foundation’s commitment to Race Equity and Inclusion.”

“...seek the voice of those they seek to better serve. Maybe more roundtable discussions and open dialogue to better understand the racial divide that exists in the Valley.”