

**Your
story
matters.**



★ We're listening.

Every day, across our community and beyond, people are writing the next chapters of their lives. Some chapters begin with a spark of confidence at summer camp. Some are held together by the steadfast love of a family member. Others are drawn out by a mentor's belief, a book shared at story time, or a peaceful space where a teacher can finally exhale.

Stories change everything. They connect us to one another. They remind us of who we are, what we've overcome, and the futures we're building together. That's why we've chosen to highlight the voices of some of our grant partners and those they serve. Their stories are powerful testaments to resilience, creativity and hope.

At the Farash Foundation, our role in these stories is simple: we listen, we learn, and we invest in the people closest to the work. Because when the right support shows up at the right moment, a life can turn. A neighborhood can breathe. A future can widen. And when we hear these stories, we become a part of them — we carry them forward, shaping how we give, who we partner with, and what we champion next.

We're here to open doors so that others can step through them boldly. To every grant partner, every family and every child: Your story matters. And we are honored to be a part of it.

A Q&A WITH FARASH FOUNDATION CEO JENNIE I. SCHAFF, PH.D.

More than a grant: Here for the community, in more ways than one

How does the Farash Foundation's own story shape the way it listens to and engages with grant partners?

We ground ourselves in Max and Marian's story every day. Their values guide how we show up. The work that they did, the people they were, the words they left us in the trust that governs what we do, it all tells us a story of strength, generosity, legacy, values, and vision. We try to live up to their story and their words in every connection we make. Max was an entrepreneur. We aim to carry that spirit forward through our grantmaking and by celebrating the entrepreneurial creativity of our grant partners.

How do you see storytelling amplifying the voices and impact of Farash Foundation grant partners?

Challenges in Rochester—and in the world—are very real. But

amid them, extraordinary work is happening every day, led by incredible people across our community. Too often, that work goes unseen or is misunderstood. By telling these stories, we make the work visible, and relatable. And through our grantmaking, we don't just listen to these stories—we help amplify them, supporting the people and organizations and turning solutions into reality. Storytelling helps shift the narrative from one of struggle to one of strength. From being defined by problems to being inspired by how we meet them.

Where do you see Farash's role when a bold idea is unproven but promising? What makes you say yes?

We're fortunate here that we're able to take risks while making good investments. We balance financial diligence with alignment with our strategy, our geography, our community's needs—and we

actively look for grassroots energy. We want a healthy mix of proven efforts and new initiatives that haven't had the chance to leap forward yet. But it's important to know that we're here not only for well-established organizations, but for up-and-comers. People who bring fresh thinking, renewed energy, and drive to their causes.

How does the Foundation balance providing resources with listening to grant partners?

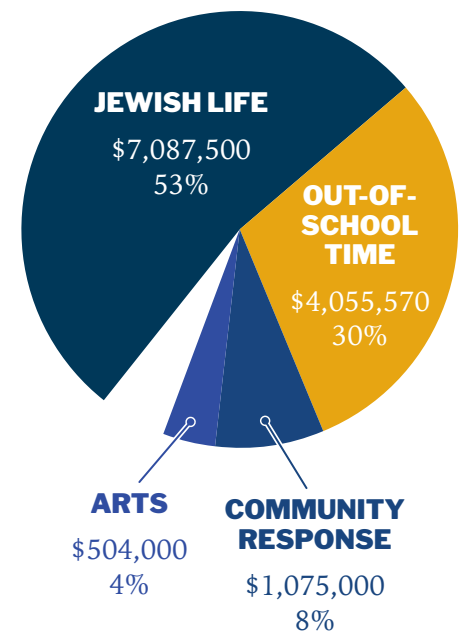
We always say that they're the experts, not us. Our program officers spend time engaged in one-on-one conversations that go well beyond the application—listening, advising, and helping applicants decide whether to apply and what to apply for. Data drive much of our work, but people give it meaning. By listening, we ensure every story we tell reflects the full picture.

OUR STRATEGY, PRIORITIES, AND APPROACH TO GRANTMAKING

Illuminating the brilliance of organizations & individuals

The Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation supports dynamic organizations that help make our community a brighter place—full of opportunity, connection, and joy. We believe collaboration and creativity spark lasting change through:

- **Jewish Life**—Strengthening an evolving Jewish community through collaboration and innovation. Our support of every Jewish organization in the Rochester area helps provide stability while creating opportunities for new ideas.
- **Out-of-School Time**—Creating more opportunities for young people to learn, grow, and thrive outside the classroom. We support more than 4,000 youth annually in high quality after school and summer programming.



- **Arts**—Supporting small to mid-size arts organizations nurturing creativity. Our flexible operating grants span every artistic medium across every quadrant of Rochester.

- **Community Response**—Meeting urgent and unexpected needs as they arise. Our nimbleness provides opportunities for a wide range of programs impacting families in Rochester.

Our work carries forward the spirit of Max and Marian Farash—thinking boldly about investments in our future.

As a private foundation, we fund organizations in Monroe and Ontario Counties, along with Jewish initiatives both here and in Israel. Guided by our trustees and staff, we bring heart, curiosity, and commitment to every partnership. We're honored to work with people and groups who are helping stories of resilience and possibility unfold.

How do you go beyond the check?

We aim to take the mystery out of grantmaking. Through workshops and webinars, we offer practical help—like building a budget or getting acquainted with completing a grant application. We hold convenings and bring people together all the while encouraging collaboration. We make introductions to other funders, when appropriate. Even if we don't fund an application, we try to think of other ways to help organizations make connections or provide other types of support.

What gives you the most hope about the stories you're hearing now—and the ones yet to be told?

There's no shortage of people in this community wanting and willing to help. Their resilience is astounding, their ability to try something and if it doesn't work, try something new – and then if that doesn't work, they still are not walking away but rather trying to problem solve some more. This perseverance to help better the community in which we live, gives me hope. So, do the people doing the actual work. The front-line workers who day after day are committed to a wide range of causes. They, too, give me hope.

If a nonprofit leader is reading this, what advice would you offer as they prepare to share their story with Farash?

Reach out. Sign up for our workshops or call one of our program officers, even if you're not sure if we're aligned with your mission. We will talk to you and if it's not a fit, we will work to point you toward another potential funding opportunity or partner. I spent years writing grants as part of my previous work. I understand the complexities and time drain of grant seeking and grant writing. At Farash, we understand it can be daunting just to reach out to a foundation. We don't want it to be scary. We want to hear from you. We want to hear your story.

where YOUNG Jewish stories BEGIN—and FLOURISH

JEWISH LIFE:

HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION — SIFRIYAT PIJAMA

An early start makes a lasting gift.

Each month, children across Israel bring home a new book through Sifriyat Pijama (“Pajama Library”), a Harold Grinspoon Foundation initiative run in partnership with the Israeli Ministry of Education.

The program was launched in 2009 as an Israeli version of Grinspoon’s PJ Library program. Today, Sifriyat Pijama, alongside its Arabic-language counterpart, Maktabat Al-Fanoos (The Lantern Library), now delivers over 3.7 million free, high-quality books annually to more than half a million children from preschool through second grade.

Israel. “We’re here to instill a love and a culture of reading and moments of shared reading with parents and siblings and daycare centers. To build stories and imaginations. To have quiet time with your children. Our goal is to maximize engagement with books for all these reasons.”

Farash Foundation has been funding Sifriyat Pajama since 2012, but in 2022 expanded the effort to reach 1-2 year olds through Sifriyat Pijama for Little Kids and Maktabat Al-Fanoos for Little Kids in daycare centers nationwide.

Practitioners see the impact daily.

“The Sifriyat Pajama for Little Kids program makes it easier for the educational staff to cultivate the love of reading among the children,” says Tal Kalo, educational counselor, Na’amat Day Care Center Network.

Municipal leaders agree.

“The expansion of the program to early childhood day care centers is a strategic investment to reduce social gaps and to lay a solid literacy infrastructure for all children in the city, regardless of their socioeconomic background,” says Yifat Mordkovich, educational supervisor, Netanya Municipality.

Truth is, the simple act of sharing a book can inspire resilience, hope, and community building. In that



(TOP) Little readers show off their tote bags. (MIDDLE) Teachers read with youngsters. (BOTTOM) Children form a reading circle with their teachers.

sense, Sifriyat Pijama is delivering moments of connection, the building blocks of language, and the boundless world of imagination.

When children have the chance to see themselves and their culture reflected on the page, they can see a future where they’re the authors of their own stories.

JEWISH LIFE:

PROJECT CAMPFIRE/ MAGIC OF CAMP

Summer camp anchoring identity for a lifetime.

For generations, Jewish overnight camps have been places where young people form friendships, strengthen identity and gain confidence. Through two complementary Farash Foundation initiatives, Project Campfire and Magic of Camp, Jewish Rochester families can now more easily access these transformative summers.

Project Campfire at Camp Seneca Lake removes the biggest barrier—cost—by covering camp tuition for one summer session each year for Jewish youth living in the Rochester area.

“At camp, these kids are in a community with so many others who are Jewish and they’re not in a minority,” says Marissa Klegman, director, Camp Seneca Lake. “And that’s really hard to find these days. A lot of our campers might be one of only two or three Jewish kids in their class. Camp is the place to go where they feel like they’re in more of a communal environment.”

The Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester manages the Magic of Camp, which offers stipends to offset the cost of any other Jewish overnight camp across the U.S. and Canada irrespective of finances for Jewish Rochester youth. There is needs-based aid for additional support should a family need it to send their children to summer camp. Both programs are a way to reiterate Farash’s commitment to the proven value of Jewish camping.

“It’s such an essential part of growth for Jewish children,” says Elana Vigdor, who manages the Magic of Camp program through the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester. “Whether they go to Camp Seneca Lake or somewhere else, they’re gaining tremendous skills—and finding their Jewish identity.”

Beyond affordability, both programs broaden horizons and help ensure a strengthening of Jewish identity. Research from the Foundation for Jewish Camp shows camp

experiences ripple long after summer ends, influencing one’s Jewish communal involvement, campus life and future personal and family choices.

“Camp is not a luxury,” Klegman says. “It’s a transformational experience. We’re helping kids feel proud, confident, and part of something bigger.”

At a time when identity can feel complicated for kids, camp offers clarity and strength. Through friendships, traditions, and songs, young people carry what they gain at camp long after summer ends.

In the past year alone, 152 children from Rochester benefited from Project Campfire, while 58 benefitted from The Magic Of Camp. Additionally, \$20,600 was provided in needs-based scholarships beyond both programs.



“Whether they go to Camp Seneca Lake or somewhere else, they’re gaining tremendous skills—and finding their Jewish identity.”

Elana Vigdor,
Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

(LEFT) Campers bond over fun-loving activities. (ABOVE) Campers embrace as they make memories together.

“We’re here to instill a love and a culture of reading and moments of shared reading with parents and siblings and daycare centers.”

Andrea Arbell,
executive director, Keren Grinspoon Israel

The model equips educators with discussion prompts and activities while sending every child home with a personal copy of a book. From classroom to backpack to bedtime, the program is stitching together an educational continuum between teachers and families.

“Our scope is not just distributing books,” says Andrea Arbell, executive director, Keren Grinspoon

CREATIVE ARTS
MENTORS INSPIRING BOYS & GIRLS

Message to budding artists:
you belong here.

Mentors Inspiring Boys & Girls began with a mentor and a promise. Founder Robert Ricks grew up on Jefferson Avenue, where a teacher, Mr. James Perkins, introduced him to creative writing and performance—and changed the course of his life.

“This man and the arts made such an impact on my life that I couldn’t see myself doing anything else,” Ricks says. “Whether it was for a living or just to impact young

people in our community, I knew I wanted to do for others what he did for me.”

Mentors serve youth ages 5 to 18 with theater, hip-hop, spoken word, step, music and dance alongside accelerated reading and math. What starts as expression becomes a pathway to confidence, academics and leadership.

The program now serves well over a hundred youth annually. Farash’s belief in the organization showed up early on in the form of equipment, supplies, and flexible support. And that vote of confidence helped MIB&G create a permanent home.

Flexible support from partners has fueled growth.

“Farash funding helped us buy TVs, more computers, supplies—all the things we needed to keep going,” Ricks says. “They believed in the mission and let us run with it.”

(LEFT) Robert Ricks at the Roxie Ann Sinkler R-Center.
(BELOW) Students in the Mentors Inspiring Boys & Girls summer program practice a dance for an upcoming performance.

“Participating in drama helped me project my voice more. I can talk to people better, and the program was really fun,” says student Ishana Rodriguez.

The program’s performances across Rochester and beyond, along with a growing “8 to 8” initiative for teens and young adults, reflect a simple conviction: when kids are seen, they soar. Ricks’ vision is clear: more space, longer hours and room for hundreds of young people to find their voice, their discipline and their future.

Students have gained measurable academic progress, with many leaping ahead in reading or math. The ripple effect is just as powerful: alumni lead teams, clubs, and initiatives of their own. Finding a voice on stage changes how young people move through the world—and inspires peers to join.

experienced
artists
HELP **youths**
DISCOVER **their**
gifts

Penelope Galens, 11, takes a piano lesson with Rachael Mantelli at St. Peter’s Community Arts Academy.



“Everything we do is about ‘Arts for All!’”

Kirsten Burrall,
managing director, St. Peter’s
Community Arts Academy

(RIGHT) George Dornberger, 75, takes a cello lesson at St. Peter’s Community Arts Academy.



CREATIVE ARTS
ST PETER’S COMMUNITY ARTS ACADEMY

Rural Finger Lakes students
study with masters of their craft.

In Geneva, St. Peter’s Community Arts Academy is a thriving hub where music, dance and community intersect. With private and group instruction in piano, violin, cello, voice, guitar, ukulele, ballet, tap, modern dance and choral singing, more than 300 students each week—from toddlers to adults—find a place to learn and belong.

“Our whole goal is to make ‘Arts for All!’ a reality,” says Kirsten Burrall, managing director at the academy. “We strive to eliminate financial and geographical barriers, we ensure all students can explore their artistic potential.”

Faculty include professional performers, many connected to the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and Eastman School of Music, ensuring high-caliber instruction close to home for families across the Finger Lakes. Long-standing programs like the Community Choirs extend the Academy’s reach into schools, streets and holiday traditions.

As the Academy has grown, so has its need for structure and storytelling. With Farash’s support, St. Peter’s invested in a new website, a school management system and professional video materials while connecting with

Causewave Community Partners to refine outreach.

“It was an excellent experience with Farash as a resource,” Burrall says. “Not just as a funding organization, but setting up opportunities with other like-minded organizations who are trying to learn how to put both our successes and needs into a narrative.”

Currently celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Arts Academy is planning for the next chapter: expanding programming across underserved counties and exploring new disciplines.

“Participating in drama helped me project my voice more. I can talk to people better, and the program was really fun.”

Ishana Rodriguez





caring FOR THE caregiver



COMMUNITY RESPONSE BREATHEDEEP INC.

BreatheDeep: Teaching the language of healing

In communities where the weight of trauma and systemic inequities fall heavily on young people, BreatheDeep, Inc. is creating spaces for healing and resilience. Founded by counselor and educator Dr. Melany Silas-Chandler, the Rochester-based nonprofit equips youth and families with tools to understand and care for their mental health.

Dr. Silas saw a serious gap in mental health care.

“Historically or culturally, it has not been something that has been generally accepted,” she says. “So we try to close the gap in terms of mental health education for our community at large.”

BreatheDeep’s work is intentionally rooted in reaching communities that are often under-resourced when it comes to mental health support. The organization works to make mental health care accessible to

marginalized and underrepresented groups by dismantling the stigma around mental health while providing realistic pathways to wellness.

What began as a hashtag—#breathedeep—has grown into a 501(c)(3) that, in 2024 alone, directly impacted more than 1,800 people and provided over 200 hours of free counseling.

At the center of this work is the Peer Ambassador Program. BreatheDeep hires and trains youth ages 14–18 to become paid advocates for mental wellness in their schools and neighborhoods.

“We think that if you cannot identify the emotion with language, then you cannot address the emotion overall,” Silas-Chandler says.

Ambassadors learn to expand their emotional vocabulary and to recognize when peers may be in crisis.

“Sometimes youth talk more to youth. I mean, most

times youth talk more to youth than they do to adults.”

The organization also models care for the caregivers. In 2024, BreatheDeep launched Project Restore, a dedicated sanctuary where frontline workers—those responding to crises and community trauma—can take a day to rest, reflect, and recharge. With a living room, art space, and spa room, the space affirms that wellness must begin with those who shoulder the hardest burdens.

This mission is sustained by a coalition of partners, including the Farash Foundation, whose multiple years of support, has helped fund the clinicians, programming and Project Restore that make healing accessible.

“We pay our clinicians through our grants so that the community doesn’t have to go through the red tape or pay out of pocket because you shouldn’t have to choose between counseling and food—or have to wait weeks before you can get a session,” Silas-Chandler says.

(LEFT) The massage chair and sauna at BreatheDeep.
(RIGHT) Melany J. Silas-Chandler, President and CEO of BreatheDeep Inc.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF ROCHESTER

An innovative model gives families precious time together.

For families with critically ill children, every minute matters. Ronald McDonald House Charities of Rochester has long cleared barriers—food, lodging, transportation—so parents can remain at their child’s side. With support from the Farash Foundation, Ronald McDonald House is taking that philosophy on the road with House to Home, a mobile medical unit serving some of the region’s most medically complex children.

“It’s the first of its kind in the Ronald McDonald House world,” says JoAnne Ryan, president and CEO of the local organization. “And this will be replicated. We presented to Global Ronald McDonald House Charities—they’re so excited about this.”

The unit brings enhanced telehealth, equipment and wraparound supports to families’ doorsteps, reducing missed appointments and stress while preserving the moments that matter most. The fully outfitted mobile unit brings practical help straight to families with medically complex children. The unit brings care right

into the home, facilitates virtual appointments, and even delivers fresh produce—clearing obstacles so caregivers can stay at the bedside.

The aim is simple and urgent: design care around families, not institutions—and give them back what can’t be replaced: time.

“These families become part of a club no one wants to belong to, but they’re so grateful that Ronald McDonald House is here when they need it,” Ryan says. “They need tangible things like food and lodging, but also intangible things—like every minute they can get with their children.”

She recalled a family whose child lived for just three weeks.

“It was 30,240 minutes. How do you put a lifetime into that? Every one of those minutes was at the bedside. We were clearing all barriers so there is no distraction.”

“It’s the minutes that matter,” Ryan says.

Early results are promising: missed appointments dropped dramatically, preventing costlier crises and keeping care on course. Farash Foundation funded the vehicle and a multi-year runway to prove the model.



(LEFT) The mobile unit makes its way through Rochester’s streets.

(MIDDLE) Firstname and Firstname Lastname hold their infants, Firstname and Firstname, inside the mobile unit.

(RIGHT) Firstname and Firstname Lastname stand outside the mobile unit.

The living room area inside BreatheDeep





HELPING kids grow into thoughtful ADULTS

(LEFT) Oryia Brown and other youth organizers rehearse on stage for a “Stories in the Stitching” fashion show.
(TOP RIGHT) Namari Fuqua and Jeylani Muktar experience the Lincoln Memorial during their first trip to D.C..
(BOTTOM RIGHT) Teen Empowerment students travel to Albany to speak against the overuse of school suspensions.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME ROC ROYAL, INC.

A positive presence for kids and teens.

In 2010, Khadija Yawn lost her brother Ya-sin to gun violence. He was sitting in his car when he was caught in crossfire, shot in the head, and later pronounced brain dead. Yawn and her family had to make the heartbreaking decision to take him off life support.

From her grief came a fresh calling.

“That hurt me to the core,” says Khadija Yawn, founder, Roc Royal Inc. “But one of my biggest things is I turn my pain into passion.”

That passion became Roc Royal Inc., a grassroots nonprofit serving Rochester youth through after-school programs, summer camps, and entrepreneurial training that’s creative, compassionate, and grounded in lived experience.

What began with borrowed space and volunteers is now a growing nonprofit serving 200 campers each summer and 60 students in year-round after-school programs, with a teen entrepreneurship track in culinary arts, graphic design, event planning and more.

“I already worked with young people. I already was doing the work. But after my brother’s death, it was personal,” Yawn says. “It fueled my fire.”

Farash’s early grant helped launch the summer camp; later support expanded after-school programming and strengthened the organization for long-term growth.

“Farash helped us learn how to do that,” Yawn says. “They don’t just hand out money—they equip you.”

Roc Royal doesn’t promise perfection; it promises presence.

“We’re going to love on them... teach the tools to be successful, help their parents, give them resources,” Yawn says.

And kids change course: from being written off by school to landing on the honor roll.

For Yawn, the Farash Foundation has been more than a funder—it’s been a classroom, a coach, and a critical partner.

“They’re always hands-on. I could call or email them anytime. They come back with answers. They don’t want you to fail—and as long as you communicate, they’ll do everything in their power to make sure you have what you need.”

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

CENTER FOR YOUTH & CENTER FOR TEEN EMPOWERMENT

A trusted setting helps youth reimagine their life story.

It began with a meeting—and a question from the Farash Foundation: How can we create a collaborative network to support teens? The prompt catalyzed a multi-year collaboration between the Center for Youth and the Center for Teen Empowerment to reach youth disconnected from school, services, and support.

“Farash didn’t come into this thinking they themselves were the experts,” says Elaine Spaul, executive director of the Center for Youth. “They said, ‘Tell us what’s happening, and how you’d use this money.’”

School district leaders had just revealed that nearly 300 young people under the age of 16 were perpetually absent—disconnected from schools, services, or any adult support system. Independently, the Center for Youth and the Center for Teen Empowerment returned with nearly identical goals: target this same group with urgency and hope.

The result: two powerful new programs now serve more than 150 young people ages 13 to 21, offering wraparound support, stipends, restorative circles, employment pathways, and—critically—hope.

“These are young people who are out of school, out of the system, involved in criminal activity, or coming out of jail,” Spaul says. “But with the right support, they can thrive.”

What sets this work apart is how it builds youth skills and confidence. “The focus of TE’s program is to develop relationships, heal trauma, and help young people learn to use their voices,” says Doug Ackley, director of the Center for Teen Empowerment. “We’ve seen an incredible transformation

when youth realize they are truly supported and valued.”

Flexible funding ensures needs are met in real time—whether it’s work boots, driving lessons, or rent to prevent eviction—so young people can keep moving forward.

“There’s a difference between charity and justice,” Spaul says. “Charity is transactional. Justice is transformational.”

The results are undeniable: a young woman hired as a workforce navigator after finding her voice; a young man once too anxious to speak now a youth leader and college student. This is what happens when a safe setting changes the story.

“There’s a difference between charity and justice. Charity is transactional. Justice is transformational.”

Elaine Spaul,
executive director of the Center for Youth



Karihana Williams performs a dance routine with other campers during the 585 Dream Summer Camp.

A TRIBUTE TO MAX AND MARIAN FARASH

Their story shapes ours.



Every story begins somewhere. For the Farash Foundation, it began with Max and Marian Farash—two visionaries whose generosity and commitment to community created a legacy that still shapes lives today.

Max's journey began in 1919, when his Sephardic Jewish family immigrated to Rochester from Macedonia. Out of resilience and determination, he built the Farash Corporation into one of Western New York's largest real estate companies. Alongside him, Marian shared a deep belief that enterprise and empathy belong together. Their partnership reflected ambition not just for themselves, but in service of others.

In 1988, Max and Marian established the Foundation that now bears their names. Guided by their enduring values, it supports education, Jewish life, and the arts in Monroe and Ontario counties, in Israel, and beyond.

Their legacy is more than philanthropy—it is a belief that every person's story matters, and that opportunity can be the turning point. With every grant awarded, every door opened, and every story uplifted, the Farash Foundation carries forward their vision: courageous, compassionate, and committed to helping thousands of people write their lives with hope and resilience.



Tell us your story.

Let's build a stronger community together—where every voice is valued and every chapter moves us forward.

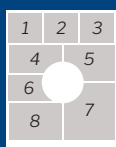
PHONE: 585-218-9855 • FARASHFOUNDATION.ORG/CONTACT

OUR STAFF

(Back row, from left) **Pamela Schlierf**, Office Manager; **Trisha Butera**, Chief Financial Officer; **Michael Zimmerman**, Program Officer; **Alicia Jinks**, Grants Management Officer; **Jennie I. Schaff, Ph.D.**, Chief Executive Officer; **Megan Bell**, Chief Program Officer; (Seated) **Marcus Bliss**, Program Officer; **Todd Waite**, Program Officer

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On the Cover:

(1) The new mobile unit of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Rochester. (2) Khadija Yawn, founder, Roc Royal, Inc. (3) Children and teachers read as part of the Sifriyat Pijama in Israel. (4) Dishawn Mays, 11, engages in a creative writing activity during the Mentors Inspiring Boys & Girls summer program. (5) Semajia Jackson, a youth organizer with Teen Empowerment, paints a hoodie in preparation for a fashion show. (6) An inviting space inside BreatheDeep, Inc. (7) A summer camp participant at arts and crafts. (8) Children enjoy choir practice at St. Peter's Community Arts Academy.