

## **Remarks on Siena Research Institute Survey / United Way of the Greater Capital Region Poll on Capital Region Social Conditions from Joanne Yepsen, County Supervisor for Saratoga Springs**

On behalf of Saratoga County, Thank you to the United Way and to the Siena Research Institute for providing this opportunity to learn more about perceptions in our region on social needs and programs and to share them this morning.

I am particularly thankful because elected leaders and non-profit organizations should be positioning ourselves to be ready to change directions, adjust the programs we offer, and to move funding around to respond in a timely manner to the greatest needs of our residents.

Studies like this are extremely helpful and critical to those of us as government decision makers and to non-profit agencies whose best interests are to make every effort to better meet the needs of the public. Those needs and priorities are fluid and so are the individuals and groups who are affected. It can happen to any of us at any time. Public and private programs have a significant role to play now more than ever.

Being the fastest growing county in New York State may bring relatively positive economic projections, but with that also brings an increase in serious social, human and financial issues for our residents. Saratoga County is not immune to the problems of our time. Costs of utilities, demand of food from food pantries, need for a roof over their heads, losing access to healthcare, and unemployment are all also on the rise. My work these days involve more one-on-one constituency service and case work, connecting families to services and programs, and working harder to keep or find funding than ever before to respond to these cries for help.

The study shows more people are volunteering and we can attest to that in Saratoga County. We are blessed in Saratoga Springs with a very generous and altruistic community, in general, with the majority of our residents involved in many of the approximate 200 nonprofit organizations serving on board committees, and volunteering hands on and making charitable donations on a regular basis.

Thank you to our volunteers of the Capital Region for wanting to be part of the solution. Our dedicated residents and corporate donors who continuously respond when asked to make a contribution to aid those agencies and individuals in need should be commended and recognized.

Private and public sectors must work together to stay on top of the demands and trends and work with as many individuals throughout our region to begin to chip away at and reverse some of the trends of the real problems facing real families and to provide incentives to keep our volunteers and donors motivated to continue and increase their service.

To the United Way, to Siena College and to the media, your time and efforts this morning and throughout the year are most appreciated.