

From the Buffalo Business First

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2015/01/09/oishei-move-to-larkin-bolsters-foundation-cluster.html>

Oishei move to Larkin bolsters foundation cluster

Jan 9, 2015, 3:54pm EST



[Tracey Drury](#)

Buffalo Business First Reporter- Buffalo Business First

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Google+](#)

The fifth floor of the Larkin at Exchange complex is growing into a center for philanthropy.

The **John R. Oishei Foundation** has finalized a move to 726 Exchange St., leaving a suite on the 36th floor of the HSBC/One Seneca Tower after 16 years.

On the fifth floor of the Larkin Building at Exchange, Oishei joins the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo and the Health Foundation of Central and Western New York. They are among the four largest [private foundations](#) in Western New York, with combined assets of more than \$700 million.

And just a few floors away is the **Children's Guild Foundation**, housed on the 10th floor of the same building.

For Oishei, the move to Larkin offered more amenities and created more space to house its expanded programs and staff, which has grown from six to nine in the past two years.

"We had to make a decision that's in the best interest of our folks to be able to do what they do best, and that's convene and collaborate and that's why we decided to go to Larkin," said [Robert Gioia](#), foundation president. "It's an exciting place and everyone's thrilled to be there."

In the past few years, the foundation has grown beyond just grant-making to offer a range of services to area nonprofits, including [philanthropic agency support](#), mission investment and knowledge management.

The Larkin space also provides opportunities to interact with lots of people, including the leaders of some of Western New York's largest philanthropic organizations.

"The expression now is 'Foundations on Five,'" he said. "We can walk down the hall and talk to other foundations. We do that anyway, but this will enhance that. We look forward to continuing to convene and collaborate with our colleagues in the philanthropic arena."

[Anne Monroe](#), CEO at the Health Foundation, said she's hopeful having Oishei next door will add to the collaborative environment in the office.

"More importantly than the physical space is the opportunity it gives us to have informal connections with one another," she said.

That includes not only having increased access between the financial or communications staffers from all three foundations, but also in introducing potential grantees and other resources to each other.

"When you run into someone in the hallway, there's stuff you probably wouldn't take the time to write an email about or make the phone call about," Monroe said. "We'll be right next to each other. It's going to be really good."

[Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker](#), president and CEO of the Community Foundation, said proximity and colocation make it even easier to work together and build on existing relationships and collaborative efforts.

"We have this continually strengthened collaborative ethos that is looked to as a best practice from communities around the country," she said. "I do a lot of traveling and speaking about the work we're doing in Buffalo to help other communities advance their community agendas and every time I speak about the collaborative nature of our philanthropic sector, other communities are just incredulous."

Tracey Drury covers health/medical, nonprofits and insurance