



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Peg Ellsworth

Peg Ellsworth has lived by the words of Maya Angelou, "Life loves to be taken by the lapel and told: 'I'm with you kid. Let's go'" - grabbing the communities she loves by the lapels and helping them thrive. In a part of the Catskills filled with both rich possibilities and deep challenges, and with courage, a firm mind, and an enormous heart, Ms. Ellsworth has led one of the most innovative community foundations in the country, building an area in ways most did not know was possible.

Under Ms. Ellsworth's guidance, the MARK Project has attained funds totaling nearly \$14 million for community projects, programs, flood relief, homeowner assistance, small business development, and Main Street revitalization. These funds have leveraged additional private and public assets, translating to a \$64 million investment in the region. Additionally, in coordination with local municipalities, the MARK Project has assisted income-eligible homeowners make more than \$2 million in repairs, while addressing health and safety issues.

With this work, Ms. Ellsworth has parlayed a 25-year career directing and administering federal, state, and locally funded projects into an extraordinarily powerful set of impacts for the region, bringing hope and help to community members in need, support and resources to a growing small business community, and tireless championship for good ideas and ventures across the region.

When the area was devastated by Hurricane Irene flooding, Ms. Ellsworth and the MARK Project worked around the clock, even as her own house flooded. When the wedding industry needed quality food for a growing clientele, she and her husband created a cutting-edge catering business, providing professional career opportunities for young residents. When the new statewide vision for economic development emerged, Ms. Ellsworth stepped up to serve on the Executive Committee of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council. She has unstinting energy, commitment, and belief in solutions - and she is making a difference.

If you attend a meeting in the area, chances are you will spot someone wearing a button that reads, "It's all Peg's fault." If there is a breakthrough idea to improve the community, a kind gesture to better lives, or an innovative proposal to grow the Catskills, it probably was.

***Peg Ellsworth was selected as a
2019 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator James L. Seward.***

