

# The Sophie Fund

Newsletter 1/2017



The Sophie Fund was established in memory of Sophie Hack MacLeod, a 23-year-old Cornell University fine arts student who lost her battle with depression in March 2016.

*“Supporting mental health initiatives aiding young people in the greater Ithaca, New York community”*



*Volunteers at the 1st Annual Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest, organized by The Sophie Fund in the Ithaca Commons October 15, 2016.*

200 East Buffalo Street Suite 202 Ithaca, NY 14850  
thesophiefund2016@gmail.com • [www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org)

# 1st Annual Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest

The Sophie Fund launched its first public event on October 15, 2016: a cupcake baking contest held in the Ithaca Commons, designed to raise funds for mental health programs and to raise awareness about suicide prevention.

A cross section of the Ithaca community enthusiastically participated in the event. Fifty-seven contestants young and old submitted dazzling entries, with Monica Lee Cotto taking home the \$250 Grand Prize; her masterpiece was a pumpkin cheesecake cupcake, set in a chocolate cage and topped with a confectionery yellow and coral rose and a butterfly crisp.

The Best Youth Award went to 9-year-old Natalie McCaskill-Myers, whose batch of lemon cherry cupcakes with lavender were decorated with an Eiffel Tower, the Egyptian Pyramids, and a cat to represent Sophie's life.

GreenStar Natural Foods Market was the contest's official sponsor. Volunteers from student organizations publicized the contest, ran the registration desk, assisted judges, and handled other logistics: Active Minds of Ithaca College, and Cornell Minds Matter, Phi Sigma Pi, and Alpha Phi Omega from Cornell University. Pastry chefs from three top local eateries—Madeline's restaurant, Felicia's Hive 45 Kitchen and Bakery, and GreenStar—served as judges.

Representatives of Ithaca's Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service (SPCS) and the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County operated information tables on the sidelines of the contest. Lee-Ellen Marvin of SPCS and Chris Choi of Cornell Minds Matter delivered brief remarks during the awards ceremony highlighting ways for people suffering from distress to get help.

George Ferrari, Jr., CEO of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County, commended the cupcake contest for raising the visibility of local mental health services. "This is a great celebratory way of doing that," he said. "We all have times when we need help. This encourages people to both help and also to ask for help if they need it."

Local news media turned out to cover The Sophie Fund's cupcake contest, including the *Ithaca Voice*, *Cornell Daily Sun*, and WBNG in Binghamton, New York.



*Student volunteers from Cornell University*

*Monica Lee Cotto receives the Grand Prize from Debbie Lazinsky of GreenStar Natural Foods Market*



*Grand Prize cupcake*



*Contest judges Teri Miller, Amelia Sauter, and Daleila Norman*

**1<sup>st</sup> Annual Ithaca Cupcake BAKING CONTEST**

**ITHACA COMMONS**  
**Saturday October 15<sup>TH</sup>**  
**\$250 GRAND PRIZE**

**who** Individual or Team Entries Welcome  
**what** Submit 6 Cupcakes  
**where** Bernie Milton Pavilion  
**when** 10 - 11:30am Registration & Submission  
 3pm - 4pm Awards Ceremony

**MORE INFO**  
[www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org)  
 The Sophie Fund  
 In support of suicide prevention  
 Initiatives in the Ithaca community

sponsored by **GreenStar** Natural Foods Market

The Sophie Fund Community Foundation

*Social media graphic promoting the Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest*



*Natalie McCaskill-Myers's award-winning cupcakes representing Sophie's life*



## 2016 Highlights

- The Sophie Fund was established at the Community Foundation of Tompkins County to provide financial support and serve as an advocate for mental health initiatives aiding young people
- The Sophie Fund launched a resource and blog site at [www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org), a Facebook page, and Twitter and Instagram accounts
- Ninety-five individuals and foundations donated to The Sophie Fund as of October 31, 2016
- The Sophie Fund organized its inaugural public event, the 1st Annual Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest
- The donor advisors of The Sophie Fund held exploratory meetings with key mental health stakeholders across the local community and the Cornell University and Ithaca College campuses.

## 2017 Agenda

- Establish The Sophie Fund's Community Advisory Group
- Adopt The Sophie Fund's Strategic Plan
- Call for grant proposals from local mental health organizations
- Develop priority areas under consideration: suicide prevention awareness programs; mental health first aid; mental health community educator for college campuses; zero suicide initiative; services for students on health leaves of absence
- Organize a meeting of community and campus mental health stakeholders to promote coordination and synergies
- Organize the 2nd Annual Ithaca Cupcake Baking Contest



[www.thesophiefund.org](http://www.thesophiefund.org)