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## RocCity Rising spotlights philanthropy

*Staff Report*

Hundreds of young professionals, business and community leaders gathered at the George Eastman House on East Avenue last night for RocCity Rising 2009.

"The turnout is incredible," said United Way Rochester president Peter Carpino. "To be able to see the future leaders, I wish more people in Rochester could see this."

Quickly gaining in popularity, RocCity Rising links young workers who are climbing the ladder, to local business and community leaders. Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks, Mayor Robert Duffy were among several leaders who encouraged young workers that they are important to the region's future.

"The fact that you've chosen Rochester and Monroe County is very meaningful," Brooks said during her remarks. "You embody a spirit of entrepreneurship and creativity that our county was founded on."

"We are in an awesome place right now," Duffy added, citing the city's 175th Anniversary. "We have incredible history, depth and incredible traditions here in Rochester. ... We want to drive the future here."

RocCity Rising highlights key initiatives young leaders are focused on for the year. Giving young professionals a voice on nonprofit boards was a key initiative from last year's event.

According to Maria (Thomas) Fisher, president of Rochester Young Professionals, the initiative resulted in 80 seats on nonprofit boards, with organizations such as Rochester Children's Scholarship Fund, American Cancer Society and Junior Achievement. Those seats mean YPs now have a voice on the issues that affect the community.

"We knew young people had passion," said Fisher. "No matter what nonprofit we put out there, that's an interest area for YPs."

This year, the focus turns to philanthropy, an area where young people also believe they can help.

"As a YP living in Rochester and growing up in Rochester, it's my duty to give back," said Andrea Fisher, a 24 year-old worker at Pics Telecom.

"I want to see how we can bring Rochester where it should be. I've got a few ideas." added 24 year-old Lacey James, founder of Get Persnickety.

Some young professionals attended on behalf of their companies, such as Danette Campbell-Bell, 35, of Charles Settlement House. It was her first time hearing of the groups involved, and she was glad to make new connections.

RocCity Rising 2009 was hosted by Eastman Young Professionals and Roc City Coalition, an umbrella organization for several local YP groups.

*Next week: Look for a follow-up article about RocCity Rising from Rufus Judson, president of Eastman Young Professionals.*

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