

Community Foundation Impact Report 2020

Together we do more good

COVID19 Advisory Coalition Making a Difference During the "New Normal"

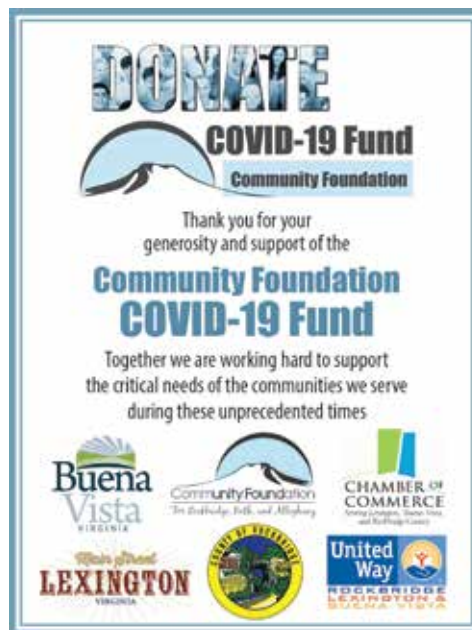
Who could have foreseen the challenges our world, country, and community would face during this past year? COVID19 brought about unprecedented strains in our community, challenging health and economic stability for all, but particularly our most vulnerable. The Governor's stay-at-home order in late March brought us face-to-face with the reality of the impact of the virus. Fearing a health crisis, families were forced to make impossible choices among work, childcare, and eldercare. Facing severe economic instability, some of our most vulnerable families grappled with shortages of food and perhaps even homelessness.

Fortunately, your Community Foundation (CFRBA) was uniquely positioned with the flexibility to deploy resources rapidly. Our Board swiftly created the CFRBA COVID19 Relief Fund and even contributed the first \$15,000 to its mission. We invited our donors and other local funders, including The United Way of Rockbridge, to join with us and our nonprofit partners in meeting the needs of our neighbors. This resulted in the formation of our COVID19 Relief Fund Advisory Coalition.

The grant approval process was streamlined to lessen the burdens on key agencies. Advisory Coalition members addressed the immediate needs in areas served by CFRBA to support long-term economic recovery efforts, thereby helping the impacted region become more resilient. We focused our funding on access to food, stable housing, protective supplies for essential workers, technology, and childcare for working families. We also focused on sustaining the local businesses who were struggling more than ever.

CFRBA's ability to respond in this time of need is due to many factors:

- Knowledge of the area we serve
- Sound leadership of our Board of Directors
- Collaboration with local nonprofit organizations
- Generous donors who believe in the importance of helping neighbors thrive
- Support from community leaders, who had confidence in our work to build a philanthropic campaign



In the presence of pandemic obstacles, the day-to-day work of the Foundation was undeterred in assisting organizations needing crisis support. CFRBA has an all-volunteer Board, and we are filled with gratitude for each member's service and leadership. We thank our Grants Chair Carol Grigsby for her leadership role to the COVID19 Relief Advisory Coalition, as well as the internal CFRBA COVID19 Relief Committee. We thank the members of these committees for their time and dedication to our efforts. We thank our donors for entrusting us with the stewardship of their gifts, especially in times of increased market volatility as we have experienced over the last three quarters. In a year like the one we are continuing to experience, CFRBA is steadfast in inspiring local philanthropy by "connecting people who care with causes that matter."

"The needs of the community have changed and have increased due to the loss of income, less access to housing, fewer accessible employment opportunities, increased isolation, and limited or no access to childcare. We are thankful for CFRBA funding to help us address that."



CFRBA COVID19 Relief Fund Distribution Committee

Carol Grigsby – Chair
Joshua Elrod
Tom Gosse
Barbara Luton
Woody Sadler
Lori Turner

COVID19 Relief Fund Coalition Advisory Task Force

Carol Grigsby – Chair
Lynwood Dent
Brandy Flint
Rebecca Logan
Tracy Lyons
Kristina Ramey
Joanne Robblee
Lori Turner

“Our sincere appreciation for your role in getting this grant for us. It is truly a blessing to be part of such a caring community.”

Essential Child Care During a Crisis

In late March, nonessential businesses were closed and most residents were ordered to stay at home. However, many workers still had to report to work and were struggling to find child care options. YMCA's across the state stepped up to provide child care for emergency and essential workers. The Rockbridge Area YMCA sprang into action to plan, prepare and implement emergency child care services. “I am incredibly proud of our staff team, who chose to step up and lead during a critical time for our community. One thing is for certain, we have a staff that loves our community and has stepped up without missing a beat.” said Executive Director, Bobbie Wagner.

Annie LePere, Child Care Director, worked with the child care team to launch emergency child care in April, summer camp at the end of May (which served 52 children) and then pivoted to open two child care enrichment centers around the area for the very different school year. “We entered a whole new world with guidelines and restrictions that were challenging to navigate. We spent countless hours making plans to change those plans then to make plans again. I am proud of our team for adapting and not only providing these services, but making it fun for the kids” said Annie.

Highlights from child care services included partnerships with Boxerwood who came once a week for environmental education outdoors, Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, Rockbridge Area Community Services where campers received weekly programming around self-esteem, and Campus Kitchen. Campers completed a service project almost weekly to include: thank you/get well cards for patients at Carilion Rockbridge Community Hospital, cards for local nursing homes and rice socks for kittens at the SPCA. Children even had their own pinewood derby car race during transportation week! We celebrated ‘Happy Everything Week’ where children were able to celebrate all the holidays and we could bring a little extra cheer that week. Other visitors included a variety of animals: dogs, ducks, a bearded dragon and tortoise.

Children were able to participate in multiple enrichment opportunities over the past 8 months due to those who have supported us. The emergency child care program was funded by the Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany, in partnership with other funders and individual donors in the area. Wagner stated, “It truly takes a village to pull off what we did (and continue to do) and we are eternally grateful for everyone who has supported our Y. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.”

“We worry that this is going to have impact on our families for months to years. The Community Foundation grants make it possible for us to help long term”.



Meeting Community Needs More than Ever

The Rockbridge Area Relief Association has been hard at work since March. COVID19 Relief and CARES funding from the Community Foundation has helped them to meet many critical needs in the area. During the pandemic, regional homeless shelters had to shut down or adapt to the pandemic by housing individuals in dorms or motels. In the past, RARA would provide occasional emergency shelter to transients. Since March, RARA has had to provide longer emergency shelter for homeless individuals until they could offer support with permanent housing. They have spent more than 8x their original budgeted amount for emergency shelter.

This year turkeys were provided to families throughout the County. In addition to their regular food program, RARA coordinated 14 different giveaway locations in an attempt to provide holiday meals to as many families as possible. Every turkey came with a bag of goodies which included potatoes, fruit, green beans, outreach materials, healthy recipes for Thanksgiving, and food safety instructions for thawing, cooking, and storing turkey.

The funding also helped with COVID19 support through the HelpLine which provided emergency financial assistance to families impacted by COVID19. The funds have allowed RARA to help with multiple bills from one household simultaneously and to help with much larger bills (due to cut-offs being paused for so many months). It also began additional ways to support the community. For example, they now offer assistance with internet access for families with virtual learners or remote workers.

“I cannot overemphasize how much these funds have helped us serve this community”, said Jen Handy, Executive Director. “We are thankful for the support of the Community Foundation during the pandemic.”



Keeping our Seniors Healthy and Safe

In Buena Vista and Rockbridge County, 85 frail, homebound residents receive five home delivered, nutritious meals weekly from VPAS Maury River Senior Center and the generous and committed Meals on Wheels volunteers who deliver meals and smiles to these neighbors. The number of Meals on Wheels being delivered has increased by 40% since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional appropriations in April through the Older Americans Act helped meet the need, but those funds were completely expended in September. Grants administered by The Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany from Buena Vista and Rockbridge County CARES Act funds have been a godsend, and will provide Meals on Wheels throughout our communities for six weeks - more than 2,500 meals and reminders to our neighbors that they are valued and not forgotten in these trying times.



Providing Shelter During a Pandemic

Project Horizon responded to community needs arising from the impact of Covid19 in the same ways they did before the pandemic affected our community. They continued to provide shelter, advocacy and counseling, and a 24-hour crisis hotline. The biggest difference is that when many public and private service providers reduced or eliminated their office hours or service provision, Project Horizon kept on going. As first responders, they continued to provide vital services for our community 24-hours a day.



With CARES funding from the Community Foundation, they added professional cleaning staff to regularly deep clean their shelter and hotline area. They isolated residents who had been exposed to Covid19 until they received negative tests. They provided masks, cleaning supplies and disinfectant to all staff and residents and stayed vigilant about reducing the risk of the spread of Covid19.

At times when the shelter has been full, victims of domestic violence have been housed in local hotels, following CDC guidelines for sheltering unrelated persons. The Community Foundation CARES funding was crucial as we sheltered over 30 families in safe housing, consistent with requirements for social distancing.

Helping Us Thrive: Boxerwood's Story

Support from the Community Foundation through CARES Funding has done more than just help Boxerwood survive. The CARES investment allowed us to step up and meet community needs in two important ways. First, CARES funding enabled us to make the investments needed to keep the garden a safe place of respite, rejuvenation and healing for weary individuals and families. Second, the funds helped our families and brought outdoor learning to children leading stressful and/or curtailed pandemic lives. Throughout this fall, Boxerwood educators created and simultaneously ran five different kinds of youth programming. Two ongoing programs were based at Boxerwood. The three others took place in the community. The programs had some streams of support already behind them, but four of them had a make or break funding gap. The gaps prevented launch of those programs. The Foundation closed those gaps—a lifesaver.

Thanks to the Foundation and CARES, a lot of lives were a lot more lively and happy this fall. Our PALS program came to the rescue for ten families. Led by Boxerwood staff, a dozen children met weekly for a half-day of nature play, learning, and community building in the Boxerwood woods. Families needing afternoon daycare, meanwhile, were relieved that rather than folding, the Woods Creek Montessori Elementary Afterschool program was able to keep operating by relocating to Boxerwood. This partnership provides five days/week childcare for another fourteen families and their children. In Buena Vista, The Parry McCluer Middle School Girls Hiking Club, ensured ten young teens, otherwise out of school on Fridays, stayed active and engaged. Hiking each week with Boxerwood staff, the girls discovered new capabilities, new friends, and new horizons. And what about the thirty children at two YMCA enrichment centers? They got to dig, hike, play, explore the natural world all fall, thanks to Boxerwood's roving educator. CARES Funding made a big difference for Boxerwood and those we serve. A big thank you to the taxpayers, the municipalities and the Foundation for facilitating this work.

"We would like to thank you for the check. It was most appreciated. And needed. We were able to pay our utilities and part of the rent."

A Quick Response Became A Lifeline

In early March of this year, our businesses were coming out of the deep winter months and were just beginning to prepare for the busy season of parties, reunions, Parents' Weekends, weddings, and graduations. By the end of March, that anticipated season of activity came to an abrupt halt due to the onset of the corona virus. Larders were full, inventories were stocked, professionals were booked – then – everything was shut down.



Main Street Lexington (MSL) was in the early planning stages of Rock the Bridge - their biggest fund raiser of the year. We immediately started a conversation to transition to a virtual concert and reached out to the Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany (CFRBA) as a partner. The idea was to put the money we raised from the concert into a fund that the CFRBA could grow and expand for the benefit of our community rather than accept the contributions for MSL's use.

"We understood at the time that this was not the usual way CFRBA managed grants and we are so grateful that the Foundation was willing and able to quickly take on a new role to address the needs of our community, by forming the COVID19 Relief Fund," said Rebecca Logan, MSL Executive Director.

There are no safety nets in place for our small businesses, which pay taxes to keep our cities and county functioning, our schools funded, and our neighbors employed. Our entire economy was in jeopardy. By mid-April, the COVID-19 Relief Fund had grown enough to begin disbursing the first round of grants to our local non-profits. At that point, the CARES Grant funding was not in place, so this pool of funds was not only timely, it was critical. As a non-profit organization, MSL was eligible to apply for these funds on behalf of our businesses, as it is our mission to support the vitality of our downtown.

Over the course of three months, CFRBA provided much needed financial support in three rounds, allowing MSL to provide funding to 33 businesses. Business owners were able to use the funds to pay rent, employees, utilities and inventory expenses incurred in those early months and before other Federal money was available. Several of the businesses had only been open for a few months, so this funding helped them to weather the shutdown.



Responsive and Impact-Driven Grantmaking

The Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany granted over \$600,000 in 2020 to successful nonprofit organizations to sustain and expand their valued work in the community. At the onset of the COVID outbreak, CFRBA adjusted its grantmaking process and priorities, responding to new challenges and increased needs to keep our community strong and safe.

COVID19 Relief Fund \$120,000
CARES Funding \$260,000
CFRBA Annual Grants \$220,000

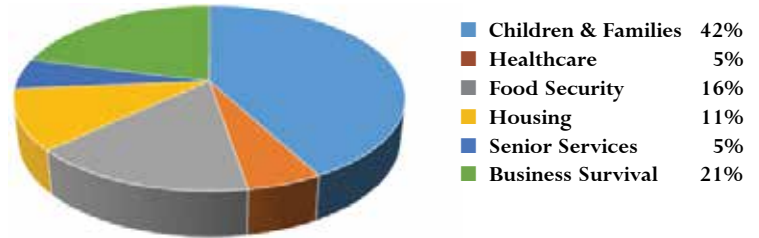
The COVID19 pandemic of 2020 created so many challenges for all of us and we were forced to completely re-invent ourselves. The Community Foundation stepped out of its box and worked hard to determine the most critical needs throughout the crisis. We worked to stay on top of the situation as new priorities emerged daily. We also worked with city leaders, business owners and not-for-profit directors to understand the influx of Federal funds that flowed into our communities, so that we were not duplicating efforts.

We've all been affected by COVID19 in one way or another, but some of our neighbors were particularly vulnerable to the wide-ranging and urgent consequences of this pandemic, including food insecurity, childcare needs, homelessness and mental health issues. We quickly realized it was critical that we help the nonprofits who were serving our at-risk populations and find ways to help our local businesses survive. Some local entrepreneurs stepped up to raise funds by contributing a percentage of their profits including John Stallard of CHEFS Catering and Photographer Natalie O'Dell.

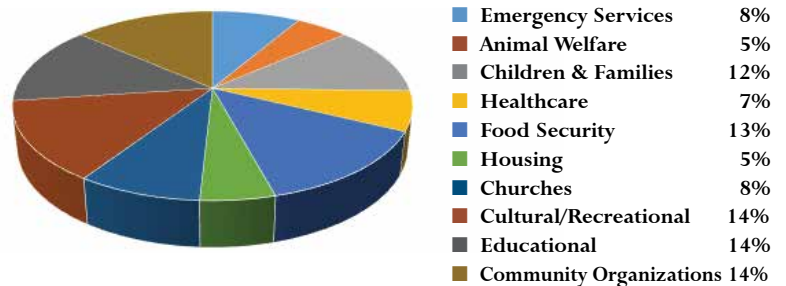
The Community Foundation contributed their fee for the administration during the COVID19 pandemic. As a result, 100% of every contribution benefited the communities we serve. The CFRBA Board of Directors personally provided the initial \$15,000 in contributions. Grace Episcopal Church followed by swiftly contributed an additional \$20,000 to the fund.

The CFRBA COVID19 Relief fund grew to over \$120,000, being supported by many local groups such as the Blue Ridge Garden Club, The Lexington Sunrise and Lexington Lunch Rotary Clubs to help their neighbors in need. This was soon supplemented with over \$260,000 in CARES funding from our local governments who entrusted us to make distributions for them. These efforts combined with our normal annual grant distributions of nearly \$220,000 allowed CFRBA to distribute \$600,000 to the communities we serve in 2020. We did our very best to play a strategic role during these difficult times. We are so thankful for our generous donors who made this possible.

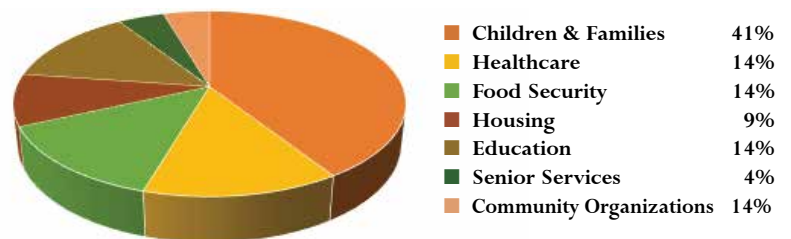
COVID 19 Relief Fund Grants



CFRBA Annual Grants



CARES Grants



CFRBA Board

- Buddy Bryan – Chair
- Robert Glidden – Chair Emeritus
- Barbara Luton – Vice Chair
- Woody Sadler – Treasurer
- Carol Grigsby – Secretary
- Josh Elrod
- Robert Glidden
- Tom Gosse
- Steve Grist
- Christy Harris
- Elizabeth Knapp
- Greg Madsen
- Ben Worth
- Lori Turner – Exec. Director

Header photo by
 Gail McLeod Photography
 Design by AB Designs
 2020 CFRBA Impact Report
 sponsored by



For additional information on the Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany please contact Lori Turner at:

Address

Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany
 7 East Washington Street
 P.O. Box 20
 Lexington, Virginia 24450

Phone
 540.463.0943

Email
 lori.turner@cfrba.org

“Seniors are isolated, families are less available to provide support like getting groceries and prescriptions - they are feeling alone, afraid and anxious. The CFRBA funding will help us provide these critical needs”.

“With funding from CFRBA we were able to secure Personal Protective Equipment to protect our staff and volunteers.”