A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) presented new challenges to our world, nation, and Black Hills. Many have been impacted by the virus—by job loss, illness, lack of child care and financial strain. As this pandemic unfolded, we recognized the added pressure on local nonprofits to serve the capacity of increasing needs.

In March 2020, United Way of the Black Hills (UWBH) developed the United We Stand COVID-19 Relief Fund as an effort to provide financial assistance to nonprofit agencies to serve the increasing demand for services. Shortly following the announcement of our fund, Black Hills Energy and ELEVATE Rapid City each offered a dollar-for-dollar match up to $25,000. 100% of the donations raised were used to support organizations and nonprofit agencies in the Black Hills who experienced increased demand and/or increased costs to provide their services due to COVID-19. The rest of this newsletter highlights the various services we have supported.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have been working with local community leaders, nonprofits, healthcare officials, and local government to stay abreast of the ever changing needs of residents in the Black Hills as a result of COVID-19. This information was invaluable in helping us identify where our grant funding was needed most as well as allowed us to leverage other resources to meet those needs. Not only did we play a strong role in facilitating these conversations, we partnered with NewsCenter1 Media Group to bring this information to the public through a virtual panel series with community leaders to highlight pressing topics and available resources such as: basic needs, educational supports (child care, online learning, etc.), mental health resources, and more.

We have also taken the lead in working with our Black Hills Reads partners to understand and address learning loss that children may have experienced due to the pandemic and the shift in the learning environment. As a result we offered “COVID-19 Education Slide and Early Learning” innovative grants through the Black Hills Reads Initiative to encourage local libraries, schools, and nonprofit organizations to implement innovative solutions and encourage summer learning. This is a prime example of the work that we do at United Way of the Black Hills every day. Our mission is to collaborate with our communities strongest advocates to meet the demanding needs of our community; while identifying anticipated and future impacts to find solutions so our communities can emerge stronger from this.

We are now asking you to give back to your community. Please consider making a donation to our campaign to help fight for the future of the education, financial stability and health in your community. To learn more about our COVID-19 relief efforts, please visit our website at: www.unitedwayblackhills.org/coronavirus-information.

Sincerely,

Jamie Toennies
Executive Director
United Way of the Black Hills
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are you still distributing grants from this fund to the organizations?

Yes, we are still accepting and reviewing grant applications from applicants whose services have been directly impacted as a result of COVID-19. Due to the uncertainty of this virus, we are being strategic in distributing funds to ensure both immediate and pressing needs can be met over the next few months.

How much of the funds are going to the organizations?

100% of the funds raised in this grant are going towards the organizations. All of our grants to these organizations were matched by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation and others to double the award.

How can I apply?

You can apply for a grant if you have experienced an increase in demand for services and resources related to providing: financial assistance, educational supports, or food and cleaning supplies. To apply, please visit our website at: www.unitedwayblackhills.org/donate

Can individuals apply for funding?

No. This fund is strictly to provide grants to organizations to provide the necessary resources to help our local families throughout the Black Hills receive the help they need.

How can I give?

Due to the impact that COVID-19 has had on our funded agencies, we are encouraging donations to our annual campaign fund. You may give by visiting: www.unitedwayblackhills.org/donate

I already gave to this fund, why should I give to UWHB in the fall?

In January of every year, our funded agencies perform the allocations process and apply for our traditional funding. Their funding requests came in prior to the pandemic and are experiencing an increase in operational funding to meet the demand of the resources that are pressing in our community. The implications of the pandemic will leave a financial strain on these organizations for months to come. We must be prepared to meet the financial demands of these organizations, so they can continue to provide the necessary resources in our community for years to come.

How is this fund helping my local area?

Below, you will find a graph of our breakdown of grants distributed to organizations.

UNITED WE STAND COVID-19 RELIEF FUND IMPACT

Thanks to the generous support of our community, we have been able to fund the following organizations to meet the needs in the Black Hills. (As of July 31, 2020)

Food

Organizations who received grants for food support showed a 30% to 50% increase in demand for their services during the pandemic. More than 400,000 meals were provided in the Black Hills by these organizations. All of our grants to these agencies were matched by the Black Hills Area Community Foundation and others to double the award.

- Custer Schools $5,000*.
- Feeding SD $10,000*.
- Fort Rapid $3,000.
- Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Health Board $7,500*.
- Meals on Wheels $10,000*.
- Spearfish United Methodist Church – Children First $2,000.
- YMCA of the Black Hills $20,000.

Mental Health

Pandemics are extremely stressful for everyone due to the uncertainty of employment and fear of the virus. Organizations provided 1,271 telehealth counseling sessions and 2,071 people were referred to other services to help address their needs and alleviate their stressors. One grantee provided Happy Packs to seniors, which provided an opportunity for a volunteer to check in on their well-being while also providing activities and food.

- Food Foot Print Coalition $5,000.
- Minneluzahan Senior Center $2,000.
- New Dawn Enterprises $2,500.

Economic Assistance

A 200%-500% increase in need was experienced by organizations who were awarded grants to provide economic assistance. One agency reported that 50% of their clients were new and had never accessed their services before. 54 individuals received rental assistance, 56 individuals received utility assistance, and more than 100 received monetary assistance for other items like gas, internet, and medication.

- Black Hills Works $8,500.
- Catholic Social Services $20,000.
- Operation Home Front $2,500.
- Rapid City Club for Boys $5,000.
- Salvation Army $25,000.
- Youth and Family Services $5,000.

Shelter

Organizations providing shelter continued to offer their services 24/7 in spite of the pandemic. They dealt with increased costs for groceries, cleaning supplies, and more. In addition there was a shortage of spots for youth in group care homes which one agency used our funding to address so they could serve more youth.

- Abbott House $3,000.
- Crisis Intervention Shelter $3,500.
- Volunteers of America $25,000.
- WAVI $5,000.

Education

Children and youth of the Black Hills will inevitably face challenges with learning loss due to COVID-19. Grantees found ways to address this by supplying education kits for children and providing technology to children who can access school work and on-line resources.

- Abbott House $6,000*.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters $6,000*.
- Black Hills Special Services – Career Learning Center $12,000.
- Boys and Girls Club of the Black Hills $2,800.
- Rural America Initiatives $8,000*.
- Sturgis Public Library $6,000*.

UNITED We Stand Fund Grant Awards

Grantees were distributed to those in need.

- United Way of Black Hills
- United Way of Inland Empire
- United Way of Northern New Mexico
- United Way of North Dakota
- United Way of Southern Oregon
- United Way of the Concho Valley
- United Way of Western Montana
- United Way of Westmoreland
- United Way of Western Wisconsin
- United Way of Wisconsin Rapids
- United Way of the Chesapeake Bay
- United Way of the Coastal Bend
- United Way of the Heartland
- United Way of the Heartland of Kansas
- United Way of the Heartland of Missouri
- United Way of the Great Plains
- United Way of the Mountain West
- United Way of the Mississippi Valley
- United Way of the Ozarks
- United Way of the Rockies
- United Way of the Southern Tier
- United Way of the Upper Midwest
- United Way of the Valley
- United Way of West Central Minnesota
- United Way of Western New York
- United Way of Western Washington
- United Way of Western Wyoming
- United Way of Western Wisconsin
- United Way of WNC
- United Way of WNY
- United Way Worldwide

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