

A Year Like No Other

It's been a year since the pandemic forced everyone home, shuttered businesses and schools, and greatly altered how we live our lives – with masks, social distancing and so much more.

Our staff at the Community Foundation kept working to take care of our community at this extraordinary time.

We wanted to share with you several highlights of our pandemic-related work in 2020, beyond our grant awards:



The Community Crisis Fund

We partnered with United Way of Greater Rochester to launch this fund on March 16 to address immediate and basic needs in the nine-county region. Together, and with many others, we raised \$6.8 million (\$1 million alone from Foundation donors and partners). Grants to cover basic and immediate needs were awarded weekly for 19 straight weeks. As the crisis continued, grants targeted organizations serving communities most impacted by the pandemic. In total, 282 grants were awarded to 184 nonprofits and distributed between March 2020 and January 2021.

Emergency Relief Funds in Wayne and Yates Counties

Our geographic affiliates knew nonprofits serving their counties would be eligible for Crisis Fund grants, but they wanted to do more. The Wayne County Community Endowment and the Yates Community Endowment each established Emergency Relief Funds to raise money from residents and businesses to ensure the essential work of nonprofits continued to help neighbors in need. To date, more than \$264,000 has been raised and 44 grants totaling \$167,277 awarded.



Addressing the Digital Divide

The pandemic brought these disparities to light very quickly when schools were closed and students sent home to learn remotely. Some students only had a parent's phone for internet and many others didn't have any internet access or a computer. We established a COVID Education Fund to raise money to help

close this gap. With \$170,000 from the Maxion Family Charitable Fund created at the Community Foundation more than 20 years ago, plus gifts from other generous donors, we were able to address a niche need of the Rochester City School District (RCSD) – tablets for pre-K and kindergarten students. In the fall, we joined Monroe County, ESL, Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, and other funders to raise \$855,000 for better and more reliable WiFi for RCSD students through the end of summer school this year.

Two New Funds for Equity

In July, our board of directors approved the creation of a Racial Equity Growth Fund and an Arts Prevail Fund to raise money to support:

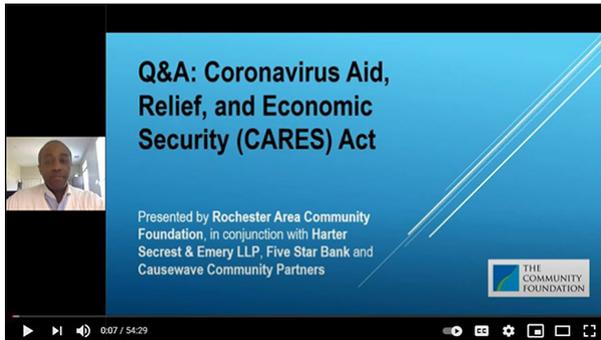
- Professional development for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) nonprofit leaders;
- Innovative ideas for new BIPOC-led organizations;
- Racial equity education and training, primarily for small businesses;
- Safety equipment for reopening of the arts, including tech support for virtual programming;
- Documentation of this historically significant moment as Rochester addressed the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter social justice movement; and
- Arts organizations that are led by and serve BIPOC.

Helping BIPOC Artists

We were able to partner with the WOC Art Collaborative and AKWAABA: The Heritage Associates to take in contributions during a 24-hour event in April 2020 that featured dozens of virtual live performances. The goal of COVID-Live ROC was to raise money to support artists of color who have experienced significant losses during the pandemic. An anonymous donor matched up to \$15,000 in donations for this virtual fundraiser

and more than \$34,000 was raised.

Hosting Webinars to Help and Educate



For Nonprofits

- When Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in late March 2020 to provide fast and direct assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses and preserve jobs, it was greeted with great enthusiasm. But there were many questions and much uncertainty related to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). We quickly partnered with Harter Secret & Emery LLP and Five Star Bank to host a webinar on March 31 to explain to nonprofits and businesses the PPP applications and details on how repayment would work for these “refundable loans.” A week later, these legal and banking experts were joined by Causewave Community Partners to answer questions as more details of the PPP were unveiled.
- In November, we partnered with New York State Attorney General Letitia James for a virtual Charities Symposium on working together during the pandemic and the implications for mergers and dissolutions.

The Arts

The local arts community was desperate for answers as to how its various members would survive during the shutdown and what reopening would look like. Initially, our Community Programs

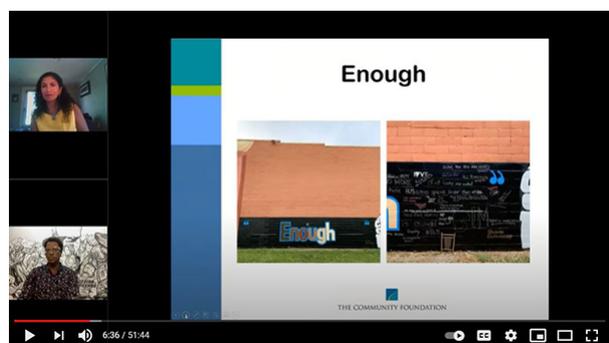
team held a two-part webinar series on the pandemic's impact and recovery for the arts. We partnered with Rochester Fringe Festival for a third webinar discussing safety planning for reopening that featured Monroe County Health Commissioner Dr. Michael Mendoza and a representative of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

A fourth webinar featured international expert Dr. Stuart Weiss, whose specialty is business continuity, crisis management for special events, and safety precautions for the performing arts.

Racial Equity and Justice

In November and December, we featured two national experts – Paul Butler and Desmond Meade – in the two-part series Racial Equity and Justice: From Protest to Policy. The two speakers attracted several hundred participants who wanted to hear their inspiring stories.

For Donors



When we established the Arts Prevail Fund and Racial Equity Growth Fund, we hosted two separate webinars to explain why this funding is needed and what it would support. In the case of the arts, most organizations have only a few months' worth of reserves.

The uncertainty of our world and the impact on the stock market was unsettling. We held two briefings with our investment consultant Mike Miller from Crewcial Partners (formerly Colonial Consulting) to answer questions from our

fundholders.

The Work Continues

Stay up-to-date by signing up for news and finding us on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube).