

# Pulling Together to Help Neighbors in Need in Yates, Wayne

Our geographic affiliates – the Yates Community Endowment and Wayne County Community Endowment – know their neighbors, local businesses, and nonprofits, and generally what is happening in their communities.

So it made sense for each to establish emergency relief funds to collect donations from their own residents to help address immediate and urgent needs resulting from the pandemic and support later efforts to reopen nonprofits and maintain their critical services. Every dollar raised in each county has been directed to nonprofits working in their respective counties.

“Whenever there is a crisis or a natural disaster, the initial focus is on what can be done right away,” says Ann McMullen, co-chair of the Yates Community Endowment’s Advisory Board. “In the case of this pandemic, the Yates Community Endowment believes the best response is to help neighbors who are suffering and make sure resources are available to support and strengthen our communities until this crisis is over.”



Ann McMullen

The folks in Yates County know all about crises. When flash flooding in May 2014 destroyed homes, businesses, and roads, the Endowment set up a Disaster Relief Fund and in just a few months raised \$177,000. With help and expertise from community partners, that money was distributed quickly to assist those most deeply affected.

The **Yates Emergency Relief Fund** was launched in early May with a dollar-for-dollar match from the Nord Family Foundation – up to \$25,000 – and the community response was rapid and generous. The match was made within a few weeks and a \$25,000 contribution from Penn Yan-based Coach & Equipment Manufacturing Corp. pushed the fund's total over \$100,000. With 46 donations from individuals, families, and businesses, the fund reached \$141,000.

Grants have supported food pantries, purchased personal protective and sanitizing equipment, helped with reopening costs for nonprofits, and assisted households with utility bills.

Since its founding in 1984 with a portion of the estate of

Nettie Bullis, the Wayne County Community Endowment has awarded more than 550 grants totaling more than \$1.2 million to provide consistent and critical support to nonprofits serving county residents.

The goal of the **Wayne Emergency Relief Fund**, also launched in May, is to help ensure nonprofit agencies providing crucial services to residents have the resources they need during the pandemic and after it has abated.

“The ripple effects of this crisis have taken a toll on nonprofit organizations that have been valiantly serving Wayne County and our many neighbors in need,” says C. J. Britt, chair of the Endowment’s Advisory Committee. “It’s up to all of us to ensure that these essential services continue to be available.”



C. J. Britt

The first major gift to the Emergency Relief Fund was \$4,041 from the C.H. Stuart Foundation, which is dedicated to supporting charitable causes throughout Wayne County. Hank Stuart, a member of the Wayne County Community Endowment’s Advisory Committee, also serves on the board of the Stuart

Foundation. More than a dozen contributions followed, and the fund is making a difference with its targeted grants.

The first two rounds of grants, totaling \$19,250, provide support for essential services such as emergency alternate housing for homeless and low-income families who are struggling, supplies to keep a food pantry and a food distribution site open, and upgraded appliances at homes for adults with developmental disabilities.

To donate to these funds, visit [www.racf.org/YatesRelief](http://www.racf.org/YatesRelief) or [www.racf.org/WayneRelief](http://www.racf.org/WayneRelief).