

FY20 Community Relief Fund Grantees Stories of Impact

Community Relief Fund grants provided unrestricted operating support to local human service nonprofits and community groups meeting immediate, emergent, and unanticipated needs of people and communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020. Below are stories of how these grant dollars positively impacted organizations and people in Washtenaw County.

Girls Group

NB is a student transitioning into 8th grade. She had some summer plans but was unsure and struggling with mental health and anxiety. Even though she participates in ballet and piano virtually, she felt disengaged.

We set up one-on-one mentoring with her. We used weekly meetings with a mentor to talk about anxiety and talk about how she manages that. She likes to make lists and that helps her with emotional management. She was engaging weekly in activities and her one-on-one session. In group, they played games "would you rather" "fear in a hat" and then debriefed. Over time, she felt empowered to manage her anxiety.

She worked on mindfulness tips and her parents commented on her relationship with her brothers. She was in a better spot than she was at the beginning of the summer. The client said, "Fear is like a cold pool, once you jump in you realize how great it is."

NB learned self empowerment and confidence in reducing her anxiety and improving her mental health during the pandemic and transition to online learning and engagement.

"Fear is like a cold pool, once you jump in you realize how great it is." -NB



United Way
of Washtenaw County



For additional information about our COVID Recovery and Relief efforts,
please visit uwgive.org or contact Bridget Herrmann, bherrmann@uwwashtenaw.org

A B C

Washtenaw Literacy

Rohullah and his family immigrated from Afghanistan 3 years ago. Here, he works as a custodian at a school but dreams of becoming a carpenter or an electrician. Rohullah's wife completed 3rd grade in Afghanistan. Rohullah is especially grateful that their tutors have provided activities they can do with the children at home and helped the family communicate with the schools to ensure their children get the devices they need.

As her children get older (8 years old, 6 years old, and 20 mo old), her low literacy will become a bigger barrier. In tutoring, Rohullah focuses on grammar, writing, financial literacy (credit cards, scores, saving for a house). His wife focuses on vocabulary, ABCs, and everyday conversation. We have provided a Kindle Fire for tutoring.



Mentor2Youth

We directly impacted 60 members of the community with some form of financial relief. But when a person tells you that they did not know how they were going to pay their mortgage this month and you help them, not with a handout, but a way to work that out, it provides financial relief and keeps dignity intact. Being a father that has had to face these types of challenges and hardships, I know what that means. Yet, my greatest take away from the campaign will be the look on a couple of teenager's faces when they received their stipends. One young man opened his first bank account with that check. To hear the pride in his voice when he shared that with me. To know that we were part of that story will live with me forever. Because of the COVID 19 Relief Fund, we were able to hire both of these individuals with stipends to help us do the work of The Good Neighbor Campaign.



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New West Willow

My voicemail was full when someone called me the Monday morning after being awarded the grant. Her household is comprised of 3 adults and 2 children. Her family had 2 Covid deaths in the previous 2 weeks and was going to a funeral that day. She was laid off from her auto parts job due to Covid, hadn't received unemployment she was due, had medical issues, and was behind on utilities. It was a powerful call. We are continuing to support her and attempting to stabilize many like her. This resident is excited to share her story publicly and with anyone interested.

I immediately paid her energy and phone bill. She is so incredibly grateful for that assistance. She has high blood pressure and anxiety (panic attacks). It was 98 degrees the day she tried to return to work and could not go back. She called me and said it was so difficult and "I thought of you and it helped". You read all these things but hearing the voice and knowing how we are impacting them is amazing. She has 2 children in her household and is still not working.



Dawn Farms

Our clients and staff at Spera have given us lots of feedback since Covid. Not only are our clients detoxing, they are in quarantine and tested for Covid. This could easily be an overwhelming time for those we serve and we have been so grateful for overwhelmingly positive feedback... All of the feedback from our clients who have gone through the Spera Quarantine project and were admitted to longer-term treatment has been incredibly positive.

"Amazing staff"
"Staff made me feel safe and comfortable"
"Staff always willing to listen to me"
"Thank you for not giving up on me"
"I felt hopeful for the first time"
"That the staff genuinely cared about me"
"The follow through and congruence with staff"
"They made the best out of a crappy situation (COVID)"
"How compassionate the staff is"
"Authentic and positive people"
"The welcoming environment"
"Staff treated me with respect"
"The love."

"I am so impressed/inspired/delighted with how well our clients are taking this whole quarantine thing. Every day there are new art pieces, funny new games being invented, etc."

"I'm SO incredibly grateful for our clients and staff who just keep on keeping on - whether from home or in our very much disinfected little space."

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