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**Incredible gift gives another $1 million at time of need**

Twenty-three nonprofits throughout northeastern Wisconsin got a boost at a time it was most needed from an extra $1 million in grants awarded from the *David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund* within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.

The additional grants, recommended at a special virtual meeting of the fund’s Advisory Committee in March, were made possible by available grant money held in reserve for important projects that emerged during the year and unspent money from past grants.

Greg Lemke-Rochon, CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley, said the $50,000 grant it received was badly needed. Kids are feeling isolated, unseen and unheard because of the COVID restrictions, he said, and abuse and neglect cases are going undetected because his staff and other caregivers aren’t seeing them in person.

“It’s a tremendous boost at a time of the most elevated concern for kids in our community we’ve seen. It makes us feel supported,” financially and by a community that values what they do, he said.

Fox Valley Literacy Council runs on an annual budget of about $300,000, with the help of 200 volunteers, so it's $10,000 grant was significant. “I was a little shocked,” Executive Director Brian Leone Tracy said of the call informing him of the grant. The Nelson Fund has been "groundbreaking" in its first few years, he said. “It's really cool to be a part of that.” The money will buy new technology to improve the services they provide immediately, Tracy said, “rather than have to plan and fundraise for 12 months.”

David and Rita Nelson died in 2017. They lived in De Pere. She was a teacher and he was the chief financial officer for the Post-Crescent in Appleton and the Green Bay Press-Gazette until the family newspapers were sold. He then invested in radio stations. They left more than $100 million from their estate to their family fund at the Community Foundation. The gift was by far the largest ever received by the Community Foundation and one of the largest charitable gifts in the state’s history.

Included in the grants were accelerated payment of a $500,000 grant to the Wisconsin Historical Foundation for construction of a new Wisconsin History Museum in Madison and $34,000 to the Brown County Parks and Recreation Department to rebuild an observation platform at Barkhausen Waterfowl Preserve in Suamico. These grants were approved previously but will be paid out sooner than scheduled, creating the capacity to award more grant money in those years.

Others awarded grants were:

* St. Vincent De Paul of Green Bay, $20,000, general support for basic needs of clients.
* 4th Hoohah Inc., $10,000, mental health needs of veterans from Outagamie and Brown counties.
* Fox Valley Veterans Council, $10,000, emergency financial support of veterans, especially for rent and mortgage assistance to prevent evictions.
* Aging and Disability Resource Center of Brown County, $10,000, general support, especially for the nutrition and home-delivered meals, and counseling/information connections, including additional staffing related to the pandemic.
* Thompson Center on Lourdes, $10,000, general support with a preference for programs to combat isolation and loneliness in the elderly population.
* Fox Valley Memory Project, $5,000, general support, especially for interactive activity bags for virtual Memory Café meetings and outdoor events this summer.
* Pillars, $30,000, emergency financial support of clients, especially to provide rent and mortgage assistance to prevent evictions.
* St. John's Homeless Shelter, $30,000, increased operating expenses due to the pandemic.
* Community Meal Program Fund, $15,000, to support future grants to community holiday meal programs.
* COVID-19 Community Response Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, $25,000, COVID relief for community nonprofits.
* COVID Fund within the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, $25,000, COVID relief to community nonprofits.
* Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley, $50,000, to support educational, basic needs and nutrition programs.
* Boys and Girls Club of Greater Green Bay, $50,000, support for educational, basic needs and nutrition programs.
* Literacy Green Bay, $10,000, IT and hardware needs to connect with students via virtual platforms.
* Fox Valley Literacy Council, $10,000 to fund IT and hardware needs to connect with students via virtual platforms.
* Samaritan Counseling Center, $15,000, help for clients unable to pay all or a portion of their counseling appointment fees.
* Foundations Health and Wholeness, $15,000, help for clients unable to pay all or a portion of their counseling appointment fees.
* NEW Mental Health Connection, $30,000, operational income and Victim Crisis Response Training.
* Friends of Grignon Mansion, $10,000, operating support.
* Divine Savior Holy Angels, $70,000 added to the Rita Nelson Scholarship Fund at the Milwaukee all-girls Catholic high school.
* St. Norbert Parish, $36,000, for an ironwork Portico at Old St. Joseph Church.

The *David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund* within the Community Foundation is a permanent, donor-advised endowment that will generate millions of dollars in grants annually to charitable organizations reflecting the philanthropic interests, primarily in the Fox Cities and Green Bay areas, of the late David and Rita Nelson and their family. These interests include parks, recreation and waterways; education; health care; community services and community centers; historic preservation and history, including lighthouses, museums and historical societies; and community catalyst. Other areas of family interest may be considered, as recommended by the fund’s advisory committee.

***The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region,*** *a Fox Cities-based nonprofit founded in 1986, helps people provide long-term support for favorite charities through endowments and other charitable funds. The second-largest certified community foundation in Wisconsin, its donors have allowed it to award more than $356 million to nonprofit organizations from more than 1,689 charitable funds. Affiliated community foundations operate in Brillion, Chilton, Clintonville, Shawano and Waupaca. To learn more, go to www.cffoxvalley.org, subscribe to The Loop at www.cffoxvalley.org/loop or connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.*