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COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request

Date: March 25, 2020

Contact Information

Organization Name: Mitzvah Circle

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Board Chair Name: Cynthia Stein, Attorney

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In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:

1. **What geographic area is served?** *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)*

Mitzvah Circle serves all areas in Chester county either by distributing needed items directly to families in need or by partnering with agencies like Better Tomorrows Coatsville and giving them diapers and soap to hand out in their direct community.

2. **What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?**

Mitzvah Circle has always been at the forefront of providing necessities for families experiencing a crisis and this current COVID-19 crisis is no different. Mitzvah Circle serves people of all ages, races and religions who are experiencing crisis, serious illness, poverty and homelessness. Of those served, ninety-five percent of them are living below the poverty level and in 2019 alone we served about 3,500 medically fragile people. The families we regularly provide diapers, wipes, soap, and period supplies to live paycheck to paycheck. Many of these families are unable to buy in bulk or had to wait to receive their paycheck to stock up on items needed to get them through a potential quarantine. When these families got to the store there were no diapers or soap or wipes because families that can afford to buy in bulk did so, leaving little left for families that can only afford to buy supplies in small increments.

As part of the National Diaper Bank we have been fortunate to purchase diapers and wipes at a deep discount however, we are no longer able to get these items at a discount because product marked for nonprofits must now enter regular markets due to increased demand. Instead, we have been forced to purchase bulk diapers from other suppliers that charge up to \$0.15 cents more per diaper. This small increase means the cost of our normal diaper order has jumped from \$30,000.00 to \$52,000.00 and given the increased number of families facing layoffs and quarantine we predict the need for our services will increase exponentially. We are also seeing similar increases to the soap and wipes we purchase, all due to having to find alternative ways of purchasing these lifesaving products. We know for many of our families the difference between a clean diaper and soap is life and death. Mitzvah Circle is committed now more than ever to fill this gap and get diapers, period supplies, wipes and soap into the hands of the people that need them. The money received from this grant will be used to purchase these products for distribution to families living at or below the poverty level, those uniquely affected by COVID-19, and families struggling with serious medical conditions like Ashley who recently reached out to Mitzvah Circle.

I am trying to reach out to your organization because I'm in need of some diaper help. I've even been reaching out to different pediatrician offices to get some samples but nothings cutting it especially with this corona virus outbreak and not being able to look for a job is killing me. I currently live with my sons fathers mother because I have no where else to go it's just me and my 1 year old son and I am struggling. I am on wic but it doesn't help with wipes or diaper, if you could email me back ASAP with some answer that might help that's be great thank you so much

Mitzvah Circle has always used a hybrid model of directly distributing our products to recipients and partnering with other community agencies to help us distribute diapers, soap, wipes, and period supplies to those in need. As many other nonprofits have had to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis, so has Mitzvah Circle. During the current COVID-19 crisis Mitzvah Circle will be distributing diapers, soap, and wipes through our 308 partner agencies at larger quantities to offset our temporary suspension of distributing directly to recipients. This change was necessary to protect the medically fragile people we serve by minimizing the number of people handling the products we distribute.

3. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget? What will the funding be used for? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?

Mitzvah Circle is asking for \$4,500 to offset the increased cost of purchasing diapers, wipes, soap, and period supplies. While purchasing diapers is part of our almost 3 million dollar budget, because we are purchasing diapers at almost double the cost, additional funding must be secured. Without a clean diaper and soap medically fragile babies are incredibly fragile, the products we provide are an absolute necessity for our families. Within 60 days of receiving funding, diapers, wipes, soap, and period supplies they will be swiftly distributed to some of our 308 partner agencies. Agency partners include Chester County Intermediate Unit, Chester County Maternal and Child Health Consortium, St. Agnes Day Room, West Chester Food Cupboard

Please email grants@chescofc.org

- _____ This Brief COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request
- _____ Copy of annual operating budget or most recent audit
- _____ 501c3 determination letter

Request letters will be posted on the Community Foundation's website, in order to share with fund advisors, donors, grant panelists, and other funding sources.

Grants will be processed a few times monthly.

We estimate mini-grants will range from \$500 to \$5000.

Please direct general questions & inquiries about the Rapid Response Mini-Grants to grants@chescofc.org.

Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.