CCCF COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grants

Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c) (3) certification & cannot be individuals.

Background/Eligibility
The Community Foundation’s COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund provides flexible resources to Chester County nonprofits that are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus and the economic consequences of this outbreak. This is designed as a flexible short-term response fund to provide relief for a variety of unexpected costs. We envision three funding priority levels:

- **Front Line Grants** fund community-based nonprofits that have increased demand for services due to COVID-19. These nonprofits have deep roots in community and a strong track-record serving people who are immediately and disproportionately suffering from this crisis. This includes services to financially vulnerable people who work in industries without sick leave &/or health care; homeless people; and health-challenged vulnerable people. Grants are intended to complement the work of public health officials and expand local capacity to address acute needs of the outbreak as efficiently as possible. These grants are NOT of the scale to support larger public institutions that are strained by increased demand for services. Examples of the types of nonprofits in most need of Front Line Grant Support, as service numbers rise: community-based health clinics; food bank & food pantries; meal delivery programs; homelessness programs.

- **Service-Challenged Grants** fund nonprofits that are modifying their in-person service delivery modes extremely rapidly due to COVID-19, and need assistance to do so. These nonprofits likely need additional assistance to upgrade sanitation protocols and obtain cleaning supplies & service personnel. This includes: youth centers, recreation centers, child care, senior services, adult day care, community-based education programs.

- **Collateral Damage Grants** fund nonprofits facing extreme difficulty because of lost revenue due to closures and cancellations, as well as other challenges.
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)**
   
   The majority of our riders served at Thorncroft Equestrian Center reside in Chester county however the scope of our therapeutic horseback riding services extends to residents of Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

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

   Under normal circumstances Thorncroft serves over 325 riders per week using therapeutic horseback riding to meet each rider’s individualized needs. During each lesson, riders address challenges associated with Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down Syndrome, PTSD, seizure disorders, and other specific needs through the aid of our horses. Cognitively, our riders make incredible strides in attentiveness, verbal processing and social cue recognition. Physically, motor function improves, as does strength and range of motion resulting in increased proficiency with activities of daily living. Emotionally, Thorncroft provides a consistent, safe environment of love and respect which fosters good mental health.

   Our therapeutic riding program cultivates the growth of the entire individual and facilitates their true potential.

   The immediate effects of covid-19 have forced us to cancel our weekly lesson program, suspend all activity excluding basic horse care by limited senior staff and alter our largest fundraiser of the year. By cancelling our weekly lesson program we expect to lose $47,000 of revenue for every month that we are forced to remain closed. Although our income is significantly impacted due to our closure, the daunting expense of feeding and housing over thirty-five horses and maintaining a 70 acre facility remains. Each month we must spend $58,000 to meet the most basic needs of our horses and farm. Additionally, the success of our largest fundraiser of the year, the 35th Annual Victory Gallop Gala expected to net over $157,000 in general operating and scholarship funding, has been significantly compromised. Without program and anticipated special event revenue to offset our monumental expenses, we must turn to our community for help.

   In addition to our organizational expenses, Thorncroft must anticipate the financial impact that Covid-19 will undoubtably have on our riders and their families. At Thorncroft, we take pride that no rider will be turned away due to personal financial constraints. In 2019, we awarded over $70,000 in scholarships, including full lesson waivers to every armed services veteran we serve. We anticipate this crisis will impact many rider’s ability to pay for lessons. A rider’s personal journey of cognitive, physical and emotional growth, which they have achieved through Thorncroft, cannot end abruptly due to family financial hardship.

   To financially respond to this crisis, we have shifted our Victory Gallop fundraiser to a virtual setting, limited all non-essential expenses, increased our social media impact presence and emphasized our scholarship funding initiatives to support our ridership in the future. In addition to the fiscally responsible steps we have taken to limit the covid-19 disruption, we must continue our efforts to externally address our funding needs so we may reopen our doors from a place of strength to support our devastated community.

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?**

   Through this Covid-19 Rapid Response Grant Program under the Collateral Damage qualification, we ask that you generously consider supporting Thorncroft with $5,000 to offset the financial effects of this crisis. While this constitutes only .3% of our annual operating budget, every dollar is critical to Thorncroft’s future through its immediate impact on our operational expenses. This $5,000 would be used within two weeks of receipt to address the immediate expenses of feed, hay, veterinary care and other necessary expenses which are currently not able to be met through program
revenue. This funding will be critical to address the immediate financial hardship Thorncroft is facing as a result of Covid-19 and it will allow us to reopen our doors from a position of strength so we may address the needs of our riders. Thorncroft Equestrian Center and our community thanks you for your consideration.

Please email grants@chescocf.org

- [X] This Brief COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request
- [X] Copy of annual operating budget or most recent audit
- [X] 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@chescocf.org. Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.