Chester County Community Foundation
COVID-19 Rapid Response
Mini Grant Letter of Request

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Surrey was founded nearly 40 years ago to help seniors regardless of income, live with independence and dignity and to continue as active members of the community. Surrey offers a full range of aging-related services to thousands of senior citizens in Chester and Delaware counties from the “younger-old” to the frail. Faced with a tremendous opportunity, as more and more people are living longer and healthier lives, Surrey’s integrated approach to programs and services is designed to support the physical and mental health of older adults, increase socialization and a sense of community, and promote healthy and artful aging.

A typical Surrey member or client is a single, widowed or divorced woman over age 75 who is living alone. Nearly one in four is over age 85, while one in three is under age 75. Approximately 20% of Surrey’s membership have incomes less than 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines. As a result, Surrey offers free or low-cost programs and services, directly or in collaboration with other organizations, including an on-site dental clinic, personal financial counseling, rides to medical appointments, grocery list shopping, nutritious meals, tax filing services and center-based lifelong learning and health and wellness programming, volunteering, and socialization opportunities.

PROVIDING CRITICAL SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The health and wellbeing of our Surrey community is our primary concern and on Thursday, March 12th, Surrey Services made the difficult decision to close our five centers (Devon, East Goshen, Havertown, Media and Broomall) temporarily to protect our vulnerable elderly population. However, our services now continue in new and different ways to address the physical, emotional and social needs of older adults during this crisis and period of social isolation.

We continue to provide essential services to those in need including nutrition, homecare services and transportation. Additionally, we have increased outreach and added new virtual programming to help reduce the feelings of social isolation, depression and anxiety that we are all feeling now, especially older adults. We have also implemented “friendly calls” by staff and volunteers to check on the well-being of those at home, and initiated member-to-member phone chains to augment that wellness check-in service.  Our philosophy of “Neighbor Helping Neighbor” has never been more important than today!

NUTRITION

- Monday thru Friday, nutritious Grab and Go lunches are available to seniors free of charge at our Devon, Havertown and Media centers. Our meal distribution has more than doubled in 10 days and continues to increase. These meals ensure older adults have access to at least one nutritious meal a day. For those that do not have transportation, Surrey staff is delivering meals daily.
• Additionally, we are continuing to work with our community partners; Main Line, Havertown and Media area Meals on Wheels, as well as the Delaware County Office of Aging (COSA) to continue providing 100+ home delivered meals.

• In an abundance of caution, we implemented a new policy that regular volunteers 65 and over and those with pre-existing medical conditions must stay home. Staff has been cross-trained and have now taken over the meal prep and distribution duties that volunteers used to do. Screening questions are asked, temperatures are taken, and gloves and masks are required for all staff/volunteers entering any building or providing any service. A plastic shield was installed in Devon between the kitchen and packing area for added security.

• We continue to be vigilant yet concerned about food preparation and the welfare of staff and volunteers that support these efforts, as well as our Surrey community. Should a complete shutdown become necessary, we have secured 100+ boxes from Chester County, each providing five complete shelf stable meals, and we will be receiving an additional 60 boxes each week from the county for the remainder of the shut down if needed. These will be delivered once a week to seniors we have identified as most in need. We are also working closely with FEMA, Delaware County and COSA to plan for shelf stable or frozen meals for our most vulnerable seniors connected with our three Delaware County Centers.

**HOME CARE SERVICES**

• Essential home care services, including personal care and live-in care, are continuing and we regularly receive new requests, albeit at lower levels than normal. In the interest of safety, we have canceled all nonessential services such as cleaning and most companion care. This change is just one example of how this public health crisis has negatively impacted our revenue. Surrey remains vigilant with screening protocols and communication with our home care clients and care givers to ensure the safety of both the caregiver and those served.

**TRANSPORTATION**

• We are seeing a steady stream of calls and emails coming from older adults who have health or mobility issues and are afraid to go to the grocery store. Thanks to our tremendous volunteers and staff, we continue to grocery shop for any senior who requests it. And, Surrey continues to provide free transportation to essential errands such as medical appointments.

**VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

According to Pew Research, on average, older adults across the economic spectrum spend over half their waking hours alone. This social isolation leads to depression and other negative health outcomes. Surrey’s array of programming intentionally provides a comprehensive wellness approach feeding the mind, body, and spirit. **Never has that been more important to continue than now!** Our talented and dedicated staff has adapted quickly and brought most of our programming and support online and the response has been overwhelming!

• Emails containing links to activities enable seniors to participate in exercise and other enjoyable programs. These emails give older adults something to look forward to that reduces their stress and isolation, providing a welcome distraction. “I have been so distressed about missing Surrey classes, especially exercise.” “It was so wonderful to open my email on Monday (from Surrey), complete a 20-minute exercise class then take the armchair trip to Ireland.” wrote Julie, who receives the activities email.

• Many classes like our award winning, very popular Classical Music Class and our Veterans programs are continuing each week virtually and just last week we had 79 new participants join the class. Anyone is welcome to sign up and join these classes now. [https://conta.cc/2vJhRFr](https://conta.cc/2vJhRFr)

• **Our grief support groups continue through Zoom which is critical for those who have lost a love one and are feeling even more isolated now from family and friends.** Additionally, book clubs are continuing over Zoom and via conference call to keep friends connected.

• Surrey has established a “virtual” Surrey center in a Facebook group where members and friends can check in, share information, play games, and keep connected. Check out **“The Surrey Session”** on Facebook.
• Isolated seniors often hear a friendly voice thanks to Surrey’s check-in calls program. *These calls help David, a 100-year-old gentleman who has been delayed in joining his wife at an assisted living community to feel less lonely and depressed.* We have seen a dramatic uptick in the numbers of calls our staff and trained volunteers are making as requests come in from seniors and family members who would like us to check-in on their loved ones.

• Seniors throughout our Surrey community have initiated numerous phone chains to check in on one another daily and weekly and, if need be, reach out to Surrey professionals for services, resources, and referrals for their friends.

**CONTINUATION OF SERVICES**

As this crisis continues to evolve, we continue to ramp up limiting access and monitoring precautions for anyone coming into a Surrey facility. The spread of the virus and known cases in Chester and Delaware counties are being studied every day, drilling down to the townships, with contingency plans to adjust what we are doing as needed. We continue to be concerned about food preparation and the welfare of staff and volunteers that support these efforts, as well as our members (For example on April 6th in Devon alone, we provided 120 drive-up grab ‘n go hot lunches as well as 150 MOW hot meals and lunches). We remain diligent with protocols and communication with our home care clients and care givers. And, as always, we are doing all we can to communicate with our members and all of our employees who have all adapted to a new normal.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF SHUTDOWN AND FUNDING NEEDS**

While our programs and services continue and all our staff is being paid, critical fundraising events have been cancelled, revenue from home care services and membership services is rapidly decreasing, while at the same time we are providing all our meals for free now, which is a necessary and compassionate change. As so many other nonprofits, we are anticipating a negative balance for our general operating budget revenue this fiscal year. Sadly, we have had to sideline most of the 1,400+ members of our volunteer army for their own safety. Their activities normally equate to 60,000 hours valued at $1.5 million in unrealized expense annually. Our dedicated staff has picked up those duties temporarily.

We are seeking a $2,500 grant from the Chester County Community Foundation for general operations. This represents only 1% of our current negative revenue balance to date, a negative balance we fully expect to increase. While our need for funding is much greater than our request, we understand the difficult financial times all non-profits are experiencing now, and the numerous requests you must be receiving for limited funds. We are all in this together! To that end, we certainly need and appreciate your support and hope to secure additional critically needed funds through other grants and donations.

We plan to use this funding to continue our essential services and programming and will do all that we can to continue to pay our staff until the end of our fiscal year or beyond, if this crisis is extended. There are a number of federal stimulus and aid packages related to sick time, family time, and ongoing employment, with a significant piece of legislation passed this past Friday, March 27, 2020.

With that, we are currently evaluating the details of this legislation and plan on taking advantage of any and all funds available which can both benefit our mission, our staff, and their ongoing employment. While we are working diligently and quickly to fully understand the details, at this time, we do not intend to have any downsizing or layoffs. We will do everything possible to maintain our current employment, and are hopeful, that in concert with governmental funding, we can achieve that goal.

Surrey is extremely grateful to those who make our services possible year-round, and who are reaching out to help and support Surrey during this turbulent and uncertain time. Our staff has adapted to a new normal, our volunteers are standing at the ready, and most importantly, older adults in our communities continue to benefit from Surrey programs and activities as they continue social distancing to remain healthy and safe during this public health crisis.