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.
Date: March 25th, 2020

**Contact Information**

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In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:

1. **What geographic area is served?**
   
   Camp Dreamcatcher offers the only therapeutic camp program for HIV/AIDS impacted youth on the east coast. We serve children and families from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and New York. We provide therapeutic support, programs and advocacy to all of the regions of Chester County throughout the year, are currently providing support to thirty-two vulnerable children in Chester County. *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)*

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

   Children attending our programs are HIV/AIDS infected themselves, have an HIV/AIDS infected family member, or have lost a family member to AIDS. Our programs address the complex physical and emotional challenges faced by the families served by Camp Dreamcatcher. In addition to HIV/AIDS, 70% of the children served have experienced some form of abuse, 50% have lost one or both parents, and 25% have a mental health condition. 98% of the youth served live in low-income households and only 13% have access to therapeutic support in their own communities. 98% of the youth served are BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color).

   We serve 130 children and their families throughout the year. Our programs include the following:
   
   - Two weeks of Virtual Therapeutic and Educational Camp Programming held August 10th – 21st, 2020. We provided 70 therapeutic and educational programs, and 45 recreational programs.
   - Weekend Teen Leadership Retreats
   - Mentoring Programs
   - College Scholarship Program
   - Holiday Adopt-a-Family Program
   - HIV/AIDS Training, Education and Community Outreach
   - Family Support and Advocacy

**The Impact of COVID-19:**

The (COVID-19) coronavirus has had a financial impact on our organization, increased the stressors experienced by families coping with HIV/AIDS, and impacted our ability to provide in person programming. The Strategic Planning Board Retreat scheduled in May was moved to an online format, as was the Teen Leadership Weekend Retreat, and our annual Catching Dreams for Kids Fundraising Event. Our Counselor Training and program planning meetings were moved to online training modules. Seventy-eight children received Camp Packages prior to their scheduled camp sessions, which included art/craft supplies, snacks, blankets, clothing, BOMBAS socks, toiletries, water bottles, supplies for games and devices, if needed. A local family foundation supported the purchase of thirty-one Dell laptop computers, which were distributed to children without devices, so they could log on to the Zoom Camp Sessions. We were able to shift our programming thanks to the 125 volunteers who provided over 650 hours of service throughout the two sessions of camp.
The families served by Camp Dreamcatcher are already faced with the challenge of isolation due to the stigma they experience due to HIV/AIDS, and they are reaching out to us for support. Many are experiencing understandable fears about their compromised immune systems, and increased vulnerability to contracting COVID-19. Through our recent contact with families we have learned that the support systems they rely on, like home healthcare aides, are not able to provide services during this crisis. Families are scared, and their emotional and physical resources of support are limited or restricted during this time. Many have lost their jobs, or their benefits have been impacted by COVID-19. Access to emotional and physical healthcare, public transportation to healthcare or to grocery stores or other essential businesses has been restricted.

How Camp Dreamcatcher is Responding to the Crisis:
We have been providing free therapeutic programs to children coping with HIV/AIDS for almost twenty-five years, and recently there has been an increase in the number of families at risk of losing their homes and/or healthcare benefits, and also an increase in the number of children experiencing serious mental health issues and trauma. Often conditions like anxiety, suicidal ideation, family or community violence, addiction, abuse, eating disorders, depression, and self-harm are first identified through our programs.

We know that the stress of COVID-19 may impact individual and family dysregulation, increase anxiety and depression, increase unhealthy coping mechanisms like the use of drugs or alcohol, abuse and family violence. We are immediately responding to each request for support by offering counseling and support over the phone, and by creating action plans for families. Our main goal is to continue to provide emergency support and crisis intervention services to the children and families served by Camp Dreamcatcher. Our staff and volunteers have shipped food, clothing and supplies to families in dire need of these items. We have also purchased gift cards to the grocery stores located closest to the families and have sent them to the families. Our volunteers and staff have also provided support with homework and school projects.

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?
Camp Dreamcatcher respectfully requests $5,000 to support our emergency response services to the families served by our programs. The 2020 organizational budget is $290,000 and we have already lost over $50,000 in funding this year due to the pandemic. The funding need is urgent and the funds will be used immediately.

These services include the following:

- An Emergency Fund for Families was established to purchase $100 grocery gift cards for the families. Gift cards were sent to 53 families in April, and another round of $100 gift cards were sent to the families in August – serving 195 people each time.
- Our staff and volunteers will reach out to each family to obtain a list of their physical and emotional needs. Crisis counseling will be provided by the Camp Dreamcatcher Therapeutic Team, and referrals will be made to local food pantries, social service agencies and healthcare providers.
- Camp Dreamcatcher will assist families in updating and/or applying for Medicaid, CHIP, unemployment and other services during this crisis.
- Creating an online private and confidential platform and resource for the children and volunteers to stay in touch with each other during this time. The success of the virtual therapeutic camp session programming confirmed the positive impact of our services. Our goal is to offer bi-weekly support groups, movies, game nights and get togethers for the children and families during the pandemic. For many of the children, our volunteers have been the most consistent support system in their lives, and providing a confidential and private space for support is extremely important during this difficult time.
Please email grants@chesocf.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@chesocf.org.

Beth, Steph, Cierra or Kevin will answer you.