

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: January 19, 2021

Contact Information

Organization Name: Royer-Greaves School for Blind
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Website: royer-greaves.org
Year Incorporated: 1943
FEIN: 23-1401567

ED/CEO Name: Vicky Mayer
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Board Chair Name: Daniel Green
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Tasha Hillery
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare **X Education**
 Health **X Human Services** Religion

Mission: The mission of Royer-Greaves School for Blind is to provide a supportive education, training environment, and home for children and adults who are visually impaired and who have profound developmental and/or physical disabilities. In this supportive environment clients learn to function to their fullest potential and enjoy a quality of life not otherwise available to them.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Main campus is in Paoli, Chester County. We have group homes in Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Royer-Greaves serves children and adults, ages 4-65, who are visually impaired and who are also profoundly physically and/or developmentally disabled. Most of our clients are from the greater, five-county Philadelphia area, and are economically disadvantaged. We currently serve 34 people, 14 students and 30 adults.

Annual Budget: \$5,713,869 _____ 67 _____ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
_____ 87 _____ % of budget for program expenses _____ 7 _____ # of Board Volunteers
_____ 12 _____ % of budget for administrative expenses _____ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
_____ 1 _____ % of budget for fundraising expenses _n/a 2020_ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Local/State/Federal Government, Foundations, Private Donations

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building _____ or **General Operating X ?**

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

_____ Mission, Vision & Strategy _____ Governance & Leadership _____ Partnerships & Collaborations
_____ Fundraising, Development & Marketing _____ Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$5,000

Proposal Summary: Royer-Greaves requests general funds to assist with unexpected and ongoing expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Part 1 – Organization Information

Dr. Jessie Royer-Greaves founded Royer-Greaves School for Blind in 1921 to provide education and support to visually impaired children. Over time, the student body's attributes and needs evolved as more children with disabilities were mainstreamed into public schools. Thus, Royer-Greaves expanded its focus to visually impaired students who also have developmental and/or physical disabilities, which require more intensive, individualized attention and education. We also recognized that our students needed a continuum of services as they entered adulthood. In 1990 our Adult Training Facility day program was licensed. In 2015, we instituted our off-campus Adult Residential Program, which now has four homes in the community. In 2018, we began a LifeSharing program for adults with special needs who cannot live alone. Finally, we are in the process of expanding our educational program to include disabled students who also exhibit severe behavioral challenges. Currently, we provide education, training and support services to day students and to day and residential adult clients who are visually impaired with profound physical and/or developmental disabilities.

Our goal is to provide constant daily programming to help each student and adult client become as independent and self-sufficient as possible. Whether it is through our school, adult residential program, or adult training facility day program, we support our clients' education, training, and daily lives. At Royer-Greaves, our students and clients learn to function to their fullest potential and enjoy a quality of life not otherwise available to them.

Distinctiveness: As a small non-profit, Royer-Greaves serves a particularly vulnerable and often "missed" group of adults and children. There are few institutions that are specifically designed in terms of facilities and programming to meet the unique needs of the population we serve: those who are visually impaired, who also have profound physical and/or developmental disabilities.

Royer-Greaves provides direct care for all of our programs, via Special Education teachers, instructors, 1:1 aides, nurses, food services, and maintenance/custodial workers. Our staff includes program directors, an educator supervisor, nurses, psychologists, therapists (speech, occupational, physical, and orientation and mobility), and specialized teachers for music and physical education.

We operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to support our goal of providing constant daily programming to help each student and adult client become as independent and self-sufficient as possible.

Achievements: 2020 certainly was a unique year! Royer-Greaves is proud to have risen to the challenge that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, figuring out new ways to provide education and training to our clients while ensuring the health and safety of them and our faculty and staff.

For part of the year, our students learned from home and our adults stayed at home. Teachers developed new ways of teaching. Our adults could not come to the on-campus Adult Training Facility, so our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) went to their group homes instead, working with them so their growth continued.

This fall, thanks to the incredible amount of work and planning from teachers, therapists, DSPs, nurses, and staff members, we welcomed students back to our classrooms and the adults who live in our residential program back to our on-campus Adult Training Facility program. The planning included wiring additional spaces for internet connectivity, creating a new music studio with video capabilities, and finding ways to keep students and adults within isolated groups on campus. Students and adults eat lunch in their classrooms, which frees up the cafeteria for additional classroom space. Music class is now delivered to each classroom via a video feed. Students and adults who continue to learn off campus can participate in classrooms and therapy rooms activities in real time via Zoom.

Several new students are in the process of enrolling in our school, as there is great demand for in-person classes that accommodate children with multiple disabilities.

Part 2 - Funding Request

Description of key initiatives: At Royer-Greaves, our students and clients learn to function to their fullest potential and enjoy a quality of life not otherwise available to them. Currently, Royer-Greaves provides three programs:

- **Education:** The Pennsylvania Department of Education has licensed Royer-Greaves as an Approved Private Academic School and as an Approved Private School for Special Education, and our program complies with state and federal standards of education for an un-graded school curriculum. Our education program serves students ages 4-21. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are designed for each student and may include instruction and training in activities of daily living, socialization skills, orientation and mobility, speech and language therapy, music therapy, physical education and aquatics, vocational skills development, specialized academics (including Braille/preBraille), occupational therapy, physical therapy, assistive technology, and psychological services.
- **Adult Training Facility (ATF):** This program is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and focuses on developing individual goals and objectives for each client's Individualized Habilitation Plan (IHP). Goals are designed to help each client develop maximum independence in activities of daily living, vocational skills, communication, and socialization. Skills that were learned during the client's student years (at Royer-Greaves or another school) are revisited and reinforced to ensure mastery. Individuals over the age of 21 and diagnosed with mental retardation are eligible for placement in the ATF. Both sighted and visually impaired individuals may participate. Individuals enrolled in the ATF participate in activities such as music therapy, physical education, aquatics, vocational skills development, cooking, horticulture programs, activities of daily living, field trips into the community and communications development.
- **Adult Residential Program:** Our residential homes go by the term Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) and allow our clients to enjoy the type of life many of us take for granted. Comprised of four homes in the community, this program allows our clients to live in a supportive learning environment 24 hours per day/365 days per year. The program is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, and the objective is to maximize each client's independence as defined by his/her Individualized Habilitation Plan (IHP). Goals are designed to help individuals develop maximum independence in daily living, self-help and self-care skills, vocational skills, communication, socialization and going out into the community. Skills that were learned during the individual's student years (at Royer-Greaves or another school) are revisited and reinforced to ensure mastery. These clients are also enrolled in our on-campus Adult Training Facility, where their IHPs inform and guide their participation in music therapy, physical education, aquatics, vocational skills development, cooking, activities of daily living, communications development, and field trips into the community, like shopping or going to the movies.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed: Royer-Greaves respectfully requests funds to support the unforeseen and ongoing expenses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have successfully and safely continued to serve our students and adults throughout the pandemic. Doing so has resulted in more than \$150,000 of unexpected expenses for pandemic related items, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies; additional educational materials for students learning at home and for students learning in campus so that they do not incur the risks associated with sharing; plexiglass partitions; and technology, including additional devices for at-home use and adding internet access to more spaces on campus. As we move forward, maintaining our residential program and continuing to offer on campus programming, the cost of providing PPE to faculty, staff, student, and adults remains an extremely high expense.

In addition, we are working to bring adults who do not live in our group homes back to the Adult Training Facility (ATF). Prior to the pandemic, the ATF served 30 adults. In the first phase of our reopening this fall, we only brought back to campus the 14 adults who live in our residential program's group homes. The ATF is located in our on-campus building Perry Hall, which has three distinct training rooms. However, due to present facility and space limitations, Perry Hall cannot provide the additional space requirements needed to maintain the 6-foot social distancing guidelines for all 30 adults and their support staff.

To meet this space requirement, Royer-Greaves has developed a plan to repurpose Lion Hall, an existing, dormant building on campus. Although it has not recently been used for programming purposes, it has been regularly maintained. We will use the upper level of Lion Hall (3,620 sq. ft) to meet the ATF's additional space needs. Specific support items required to facilitate this transition include purchasing individual worktables/stations for the adults and fabricating plexiglass respiratory shields for each table/station. With the ability to access the potential program space in Lion Hall, Royer-Greaves will be able to continue to offer a safe and healthful program environment for the 30 adults usually served, while also meeting regulatory requirements and guidelines.

Why it is important to fund this now: Providing personal protective equipment, other health safety equipment, and sufficient room for social distancing is imperative for the health and safety of everyone on our campus. Faculty and staff work in extremely close proximity to our students and adults as they provide education, therapy, physical assistance and care. In 2020, Royer-Greaves incurred an on-going, large, and unanticipated operating expenses meeting all additional needs related to the pandemic. We will continue to incur COVID-related expenses for the foreseeable future. As a small non-profit, we do not have the financial "breathing room" to absorb and continue to expend large amounts on PPE and other pandemic-related expenses.

How impact & results will be demonstrated: Impact and results will be demonstrated by our continued ability to provide PPE and additional program space to ensure the safety of the people on our campus.