



Today, in my final weeks as Interim President and CEO of the Community Foundation, I cannot begin to share all that I have learned about our community, this organization and the “power of philanthropy.” Having served on the Community Foundation board for almost three years, and having worked with the organization for several years through the Foundation for Educational Excellence and Turtle Trackers, I felt I had a good understanding of the organization and the people involved. I wasn’t sure I fully understood all the intricacies of the work, but I was certain in handling my organizational tasks through this interim period, the Community Foundation would continue to fulfill its mission of “strengthening community by connecting people, resources and needs,” even in the midst of a pandemic. Little did I know all that I would have the opportunity to experience first-hand.

From our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund (which quickly grew to over \$560,000, and resulted in more than \$556,000 in grants awarded to nonprofits across our four-county service area), to our work as the granting organization for the Town of Hilton Head Island’s HUD (CDBG) funds (that granted \$745,000 to Hilton Head nonprofits supporting COVID-related insecurities for low-and moderate-income residents), I have seen many examples of the “power of philanthropy” on a daily basis.

Recently this power was once again demonstrated. As a longtime public school educator, I watched with great respect and admiration as the faculty, staff and leadership of the Beaufort County School District successfully opened and operated school, complete with virtual, face-to-face and hybrid instructional options, while addressing all necessary COVID-related precautions. To support this challenge, the Student Tech Connect Fund was established at the Community Foundation in August, when several local groups, faith-based organizations and concerned citizens became interested in supporting the needs of students returning to school with limited technology support. When these needs were identified, the donations came forward. By October the fund grew to over \$69,000, representing four CFL donor advised funds and 65 other donations. These funds have supported Hilton Head Island High School students and

families who were without internet connections, webcams for Hilton Head Island High School teachers, and the Creative Curriculum Digital Curriculum for 64 pre-K and early childhood special education classrooms across the county. The fund continues to grow as needs are identified. This is another example of the community, Community Foundation of the Lowcountry and the “power of philanthropy” again coming together to meet the needs of so many.

It's that simple. It's that powerful. And to me, it's that rewarding... and then some.

So in these final weeks, I first want to say “thank you” to all who are a part of this powerful work. I also want to challenge the rest of us to become a part of this powerful work.

It's simply that powerful, and to me, it's that rewarding... and then some.

Jackie Rosswurm is the departing Interim President and CEO of the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.