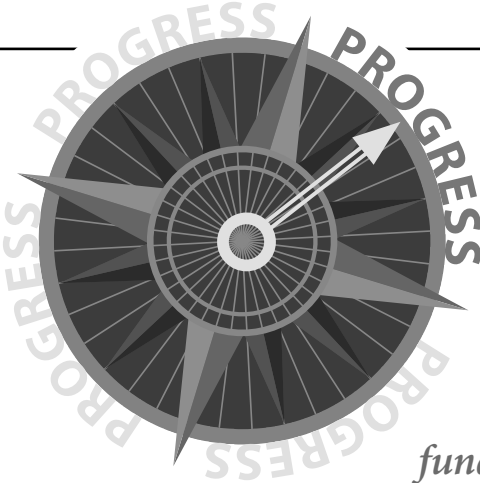




Dedicating funds for the betterment of our community

Western Lane Community Foundation manages 82 funds with \$8 million in assets

BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw Region is full of volunteers, givers and community makers. Western Lane Community Foundation, established in 1974, is a nonprofit community trust dedicated to helping residents set aside money to do good in the Siuslaw region and benefit the greater community.

According to Executive Director Gayle Vinchesi, the foundation manages 82 funds which are invested with Oregon Community Foundation. Each year, the foundation awards grants to local nonprofit organizations for projects and programs in the target area of western Lane County.

“We have funds dedicated to specific agencies, donor advised funds and scholarship funds,” Vinchesi said. “These investments provide annual distributions to local nonprofits and scholarship funds, as well as fund our grant program. This year we disbursed over \$340,000 within our local community.”

In March, Western Lane Community Foundation President Jim Grano and Grant Program Chair Rick Klessig announced that 32 local nonprofits received grant awards totaling more than \$87,090 in the 2020 grant cycle. Grants are awarded in the areas of education, medicine and science, the arts and social and civic services.

Vinchesi said the grants were awarded in February, just prior to when societal ramifications from the COVID-19 pandemic became clear.

“Many of the projects have been impacted by COVID-19,” she said. “Our board has worked with our grant recipients to adjust timelines and modify grant parameters to lessen the impact of COVID -19 on their organizations.”

The 32 organizations are prime examples of projects which “contribute to the cultural, economic, educational or social betterment of our community,” according to the foundation.

“This year we funded opportunities for youth including the Air Academy, support for local theater, playground upgrades, artist-in-residence programs, support for youth sport participation, educational equipment including graphing calculators and reader boards, classroom opportunities like Camp-Learn-A-Lot, author studies and more,” Vinchesi said. “In the community there will be improved emergency communications, assistance with vouchers, training opportunities and additional equipment and repairs completed at or in various nonprofit venues.”

Western Lane Community Foundation seeks to attract, administer and distribute private charitable resources for the benefit of residents of Western Lane County. Only the income

generated by invested foundation assets is awarded as grants each year.

Current assets are more than \$8 million, and thus more than \$260,000 will be awarded this year for designated giving, scholarships and discretionary grants.

So what is it about this community that inspires so many people to create funds to give back?

“That is the 8-million-dollar question,” Vinchesi said. “We believe that the people who live here are invested members of our community. They have volunteered or received services from our local non-profits and know what a difference we make in each other’s lives. We believe that they look to Western Lane Community Foundation to leave their legacy in part because our mission is to improve life in western Lane County through effective philanthropy. Our volunteer board has proven that they are good stewards — not only of our donor’s dollars but also ensuring that our donor’s wishes are honored.”

For more information on Western Lane Community Foundation, including how to leave a legacy or contribute to an existing fund, contact Vinchesi by phone at 541-997-1274, by mail at PO Box 1589 Florence OR 97439 and by email at wlcfof@wlcfof.org.

Western Lane Community Foundation can also be reached at www.wlcfof.org.

Keeping the shelves full

Florence Food Share and local partners work to feed the Florence community amidst COVID-19 pandemic

BY JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

“I think we’ve been very fortunate, both with the food and money donations that have come in,” said Florence Food Share Executive Director Janet Engel. “Nobody saw this coming, but we have such an amazing group of volunteers and clientele. We like to think it’s a good experience coming here, but the community makes it possible by keeping the shelves full.”

As the nationwide shutdowns due to the pandemic of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 has strained local food banks, Florence Food Share has survived the first part of the storm through the generosity of the community and a network of organizations dedicated to helping each other.

“We’re all in that emergency mode,” Operations Manager Colin Morgan said. “We’re taking it as it comes because we don’t really know what the future brings. We’re just trying to make sure that our programs can continue right now.”

When the first week of partial shutdowns began, the food share saw a massive increase of clientele as people prepared for the shutdown. But when the second week came and the layoffs began, the numbers surged again.

“They were either recently unemployed, or people that were fearful they were going to be unemployed, which turned out to be

true,” Morgan said. “There were a lot of families, a lot of hardworking, middle America individuals who frequently needed our help.”

As the people poured in, donations began to dry up. Regular food donations from local grocers stopped because their shelves were bare. Cash donations began to dry up as well, as people were either too financially strapped to give, or didn’t have the opportunity due to

The issue of fundraising is something that will be an issue for Florence Food Share, and all nonprofits, as the year goes on.

“Fundraisers won’t look the same,” Engel said. “We were getting ready to do a big collaborative fundraiser with five different nonprofits to do something a bit different. But now, maybe next year.”

From Empty Bowls each winter to the annual Crab Crack, Florence Food Share has depended on fundraisers to stay afloat.

“Crab Crack was right at the beginning of everything happening,” Engel said. “It could have been a disaster. Next year, people may think that it’s an elbow touching, big fundraiser. We just have to look at what’s going on in the world.”

Partnerships with organizations will be key in the coming months. Food Share has already worked with a variety of different organizations, from Rotary Club of Florence, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center and Siuslaw Outreach Services. Food runs have been shared between organizations, with Florence Food Share also picking up deliveries for Helping Hands.

“The big thing will be working together as a community of nonprofits so we can share whatever ideas we come up with,” Engel said. “It’s really neat that people are working together to do the same thing.”

For more info, go to www.florencefoodshare.org.



Western Lane Community Foundation

With over \$8,000,000 in managed funds, WLCF helps the people of western Lane County give to the non-profit entities of their choice.

If you are interested in creating a community legacy, visit us at wlcfof.org or email us at wlcfof@wlcfof.org

Community Grants



Charitable Gifts & Remainder Trusts



Scholarship Funds

Endowments

Western Lane Community Foundation, founded in 1974, is a community trust, private non-profit organization. The Foundation’s mission is to improve life throughout Western Lane County by encouraging and maintaining philanthropic activity.

WLCF focuses its giving in four major areas: culture, medicine and science, education, and social and civic services.

WLCF also manages funds designated for use by other nonprofit organizations.

To learn more please contact us.

Call: our office # 997-1274 Write: P.O. Box 1589 Florence, OR 97439

email: wlcfof@wlcfof.org

Community People Helping Community



Grace and gratitude share the same origin and that is so demonstrated here at the Florence Food Share. Gifts flow so generously in the forms of time and money and food items it is immeasurable. The pantry serves over 3000+ individuals and families every month. The grace that is shown is so great that gratitude does not cover it. The pantry distributes over 50,000 pounds of food each month. Some we received from Food for Lane County for pennies on pound. A single dollar stretches a long way. Staff is very bare bones, but the pantry is always a hustling hub of eager volunteers.

Gratitude does not stop with a “Thank you” and a content family. It is also amazing how often last month’s recipient becomes this month’s donor or volunteer.

Need is a personal thing. Family needs are different than travelers’ needs. There are youth that are displaced by family issues or recently lost their job. Most needed are peanut butter, canned meat and soup (pull top cans make these easy for travelers.) Things like canned vegetables and tomatoes, mac and cheese, flour, oats, potatoes, onions, milk and eggs are greatly appreciated by folks with homes and stoves.

While we are very grateful for the recent outpouring of generosity, please clip this “Thank you” and place in on your refrigerator and think of us year around, because the need is not seasonal.

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