Envisioning Recovery and Supporting the Arts

We began our initial response to the COVID-19 crisis in mid-March with the announcement of the LVCF COVID-19 Response Fund, focused primarily on supporting organizations providing safety net services to vulnerable populations. People needed access to food, shelter, healthcare, income supports and other services, and they still do. We continue with our response efforts and distributions from our LVCF COVID-19 Response Fund to address these needs. But, we also now look to the future and what a “recovery” might look like, including a “reimagination” of our sector.

With that view, we are proud to announce and share information with you about the Lehigh Valley Arts & Culture Relief Fund at LVCF. During this very challenging time arts organizations and artists everywhere are suffering from loss of revenue, redirected grants, and other significant revenue loss. The Arts & Culture Relief Fund will provide critical support to Lehigh Valley nonprofits focused on such an integral element of our region’s identity and economy. These organizations are woven into the fabric of our region’s life, and we need them to be here when our “new normal” begins.

We thank the Cultural Coalition of Allentown for taking the important first step of raising awareness of, and financial resources for, this Fund. They continued to be our partner in these efforts. The Community Foundation will lead the administration of the Fund including the grantmaking process and decisions. We have organized an advisory committee who will provide insight into needs and gaps. This approach will provide oversight in ensuring that dollars are distributed using an equitable approach, with diversity in organization type, geography, and other factors.

As you consider your philanthropic choices, especially as we move into a recovery period for our region, we hope that you consider a contribution to this fund. Or, we ask that you provide direct support to the theater, festival, museum, choir, band, or other element of the arts that means so much to you. Please contact Erika Riddle Petrozelli to learn more about these giving options and how we can help: erika@lvcfoundation.org.
LVCF’s COVID-19 Response Fund provided $50,000 of support to “Phase 1 grants” from the Greater Lehigh Valley COVID-19 Community Response Fund (“GLV CV19”). Under the leadership of LVCF and United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, the GLV CV19 Fund is a partnership of almost 20 funders who meet regularly to discuss philanthropy’s response to the crisis; funding synergies; and recovery visions. Grants from the GLV CV19 Fund are directed by a diverse, multi-disciplinary team that includes LVCF’s Megan Briggs.

In April the GLV CV19 Fund released $320,000 in emergency funding to 43 nonprofit agencies serving the residents of Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon counties (see the announcement). The one-time, operational grants range from $500 to $20,000 and aim to strengthen safety-net services throughout the tri-county area.

The initial phase of funding included:

- Services providing food access
- Services for unsheltered residents and those at risk of homelessness
- Supports for those who are economically vulnerable to mitigate the effects of reduced hours or lost jobs

Additional grants from LVCF’s COVID-19 Response Fund will be announced shortly, and we will share this news with you. Please contact Erika Riddle Petrozelli erika@lvcfoundation.org with any questions about both funds and the importance of this response effort in our region.

“COVID-19 crisis is detrimental to the nonprofit sector, but we are seeing innovation, passion, commitment and strength; even as organizations face insurmountable barriers. A coordinated response that is cross-sector is required and private philanthropy has a specific role to play.”

Megan Briggs, LVCF Director of Community Investments