



Celebrating 25 Years

Community Foundation of the Dan River Region

*Story by Katherine Milam
Photo by Ralph Adams Photography*

Twenty-five years is a significant milestone in the life of The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region, which serves the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County to South Boston/Halifax County, Va., and Caswell County, N.C. To commemorate, the foundation celebrated with an Open House on Friday, Sept. 10, 2021 at its 541 Loyal Street office. Fifty-eight guests attended, including past and present board members, donors, grantees, and staff.

Established in 1996, The Community Foundation continues to develop and thrive. Continued growth increases the foundation's capacity to return funds to our region through grants and scholarships. The foundation recently achieved a goal of attaining over \$51 million in assets.

The VISION that fostered expansion early on for the foundation holds fast today and is propelling the foundation into the future. The foundation's vision is to recognize needs and provide resources to improve the quality of life in our community and to serve the wishes of our donors.

The foundation's staff and board are dedicated to its MISSION to improve and enrich the lives of people in our community by encouraging the generosity of donors; by receiving, managing, and distributing important resources, and by meeting a variety of charitable purposes in our community.

Staff work closely with donors to help them achieve their unique charitable goals. Donors have always been and will continue to be the backbone of

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the foundation. They are a major part of the foundation's success. Thanks to its donors, the foundation now houses 152 different endowed funds, 59 of which are endowed scholarships.

Part of what makes The Community Foundation special is that its assets consist of gifts from a very diverse group of people who care about the future of this region and its citizens. Continuously striving to enhance this diversity and ensure the foundation is accessible to all in the community who desire to leave a legacy that will improve quality of life here is an important goal. The foundation's motto is GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE!

Donations to the foundation make an impact in a multitude of different ways. The foundation's outreach through grants and scholarships is far reaching, with emphasis in the following eight areas: Emergency Preparedness; Scholarships; Community Development; Health and Wellness; Human Services; Education and Youth Development; Animal Services, and Arts and Culture.

Last year, the foundation awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$1.4 million. Over the past 25 years, the foundation has awarded more than \$26.9 million in grants and scholarships.

We have a small staff of three full-time employees and one part-time employee. Krystal Davis serves as Grant and Scholarship administrator. Cullen Libby is our Donor Services manager. Kendra Floyd is our part-time accountant and I, Katherine Milam, serve as executive director.

The foundation's success is largely due to steady and solid leadership over the past 25 years. Whitt Clement, estate planning attorney, was the founding father, with great support from Charles Womack, a local entrepreneur. Sammy Saunders was involved at the beginning as founding treasurer. Bob Wiles was the first part-time executive director before Debra Dodson became the first full-time executive director in 1999. Debra retired in 2019.

A printed timeline of the Foundation's first 25 years is available at the Loyal Street Office and online at www.cfdr.org.

The celebration of that quarter century included Words of Gratitude and Impact from Richard Camp, vice president; Rodney Reynolds, immediate past president; Ruby Hovatter, educator and donor; Peter Howard, past president and Legacy Society member; and Pat Daniels, executive director of Big Brothers,

Big Sisters, as well as myself. Several other guests expressed their appreciation for support from, and partnership with, the foundation. Additionally, a few donors shared the personal stories that inspired their giving.

As a special way of saying thank you, the foundation held a surprise drawing to give one nonprofit organization in the region the unexpected boost of a \$2,500 grant. This is an important part of the 25th Anniversary celebration, in recognition of nonprofit organizations that are so vital in helping the foundation connect donors to the resources and causes important to them and the community. Congratulations to the Virginia Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, serving Danville-Pittsylvania County, which won the \$2,500 grant.

The foundation is currently running a 25th Anniversary fundraising campaign, with a goal of raising \$25,000 before Dec. 31, 2021. To date, \$27,125 in gifts have been received. Giving materials are available at the 541 Loyal Street office, or contributions can be made online at www.cfdr.org. Anyone in the community can contribute to help build momentum for the foundation's mission.

To learn more, see the "About" page on The Community Foundation's website, www.cfdr.org/the-foundation/about/.



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An advertisement for Animal Park at the Conservators Center. The background is purple. On the right side, there is a close-up photograph of a lemur's face. The text on the left side reads: "Animal Park at the Conservators Center. A world to explore, right next door. Private Experiences: Build your own package! Summer Camps, Virtual and In-Person Experiences, Family Events, Tours. COMING THIS SPRING: Enjoy our NO reservation Saturdays!" At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, followed by the text "Follow us on social media @AnimalParkNC" and "VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE: WWW.ANIMALPARKNC.ORG".