

# THE FUND

# ADVISOR

The Southeast Virginia Community Foundation

FALL/WINTER 2020

FAITH IN CHESAPEAKE:

## 26 CHURCHES COME TOGETHER TO LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

For Taylor Grissom, a local Chesapeake real estate developer, signing up as a volunteer tutor for at-risk Oscar Smith High School students was just another way to serve his community.

Early on, Grissom was paired with a teenager who had recently lost both of his parents. The teen was homeless, living out of a car and flunking school. "It took awhile for the walls to come down," says Grissom, but the pair developed a strong bond. When the troubled teen got into some trouble and was expelled from school, under Grissom's wing, the student eventually graduated from high school.

Upon learning about the amount of at-risk students at Oscar Smith High School, "I realized there was a huge need to form a tutor and mentoring program. I turned to my fellow River Oak members to help." Prior to March 2020, Grissom and his church were helping 130 students per semester at OSHS.

Amid Coronavirus school shutdowns, the staff at Oscar Smith reached out to Grissom and his church group to continue their help virtually and to help make sure their students' needs were met. It was an "all hands on deck" call-to-action, so he reached out to six additional Chesapeake churches to form Faith in Chesapeake (FIC).

"Churches aren't used to working with one another," Grissom says. "At the time, the school system was doing 6 different sites for free meals, up to 3 days per week. So our churches set up tables at each site to assist with the families. After they got their meals, they would continue on down the line and get items they needed, like toilet paper, groceries, toiletries and more."

By summer, Chesapeake Public Schools (CPS) was distributing nearly 17,000 meals per week at 16 different locations. As word spread about Faith in Chesapeake, the number of churches banding together grew to 26. They were able to combine their collective resources to help entire families in need at the distribution sites.

In addition to donated goods, Faith in Chesapeake raised nearly \$90,000, which has assisted over a dozen families with immediate needs specified by CPS, such as rent, mortgage, utility bills, groceries and computers for virtual learners.

Chesapeake Public Schools Foundation Administrator Andrea Vail serves as the school system's point of contact for Grissom.



"The partnership between Faith in Chesapeake and Chesapeake Public Schools created a powerful alliance in providing support to our Chesapeake families during the COVID-19 pandemic," says Vail. "Our church partners showed up weekly to pick up much needed non-perishables, toiletries, and school supplies and delivered them to our families at our school division meal distribution sites. It was a beautiful example of our community coming together for the greater good of our neighbors."

Working together for the community is a SEVACF specialty, so when Faith in Chesapeake needed help getting set up as a nonprofit, Grissom turned to his good friend and SEVACF CEO, Steve Best. "SEVACF was instrumental in stepping into the administrative role of Faith in Chesapeake, making sure everything we did and do as a 501c3 is valid and above board. When SEVACF got involved, I felt like I had a huge weight lifted from my shoulders. As busy as I am with my real job, SEVACF is just a blessing," says Grissom.

Having SEVACF as a resource allows Grissom to be freed up to do FIC's real mission, and that's to bring people together. "Churches have a responsibility to our community. That's who we are," says Grissom.

To donate to Faith in Chesapeake, visit [www.sevacf.org](http://www.sevacf.org), click on "Donate" and choose "Faith United Fund." For more information, visit [www.FaithinChesapeake.com](http://www.FaithinChesapeake.com).

## Dear Friends,

As the holiday season approaches, we reflect on the Foundation's success throughout the year. Members of our board and staff worked diligently to accomplish our mission to connect people who care with causes large and small. This year has been particularly challenging due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the economy, our citizens and, nonprofits. Throughout this time, we have endeavored to provide much-needed support to those directly impacted by the pandemic. As a result, we are pleased to report that many heartfelt donations were successfully directed to the non-profits that have worked diligently to address the most pressing needs in our community.

Since 1965, SEVACF has helped people who share a common goal of improving life for all in our community and building a legacy through philanthropic giving. Our Board of Directors consists of leading citizens and professionals who know our community's needs. We go beyond simply making grants that advance charitable activities; we also identify current and emerging issues, stimulate resources to address those needs, and help Southeast Virginia prepare for the future. The types of nonprofit organizations we support vary in size, mission, and vision; however, they all are working toward a common goal of creating a better, livable Southeast Virginia.

A gift to SEVACF is an investment in the future of our region. The funds go to work immediately supporting vital services, while also providing sustained support for years to come. Rather than looking towards the next election or business cycle, community foundations always focus on the next generation.

Please join us in recognizing the collective impact and difference we can make together. Call the Foundation to make a tax-deductible contribution by year's end.

Best wishes for a safe and joyful holiday season!

*Sincerely yours,*



WILLIAM H. OAST III  
President, Board of Directors



R. STEPHEN BEST, SR.  
Chief Executive Officer



## OUR *AMAZING* 2020 GRANTEES



*SEVACF awarded \$154,450 in total grant funding to 32 organizations during the 2020 spring and fall grant cycles.*

These grants supported vital services in education, health and human services, the environment, arts and culture, and civic and economic development. We would like to thank the donors who made this possible. To give to the non-profits that participate in our bi-annual grants program, go to [www.sevacf.org/give/donate/](http://www.sevacf.org/give/donate/) and select "The Community Needs Fund". You may also call our office directly at 757-397-5424. Congratulations to our amazing 2020 grantees!

### SPRING 2020

- Alzheimer's Association
- American Red Cross
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Business Consortium for Arts
- Chesapeake Humane Society
- Community Outreach Coalition
- ForKids
- Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast
- Healthy Chesapeake
- Hoffer Creek Wildlife Foundation
- Holiday House

- Honor & Remember
- Joy Ministries
- Moms on a Mission
- Montero Medical Missions
- Norfolk State University
- Reach Out & Read
- Ronald McDonald House of Norfolk
- RX Partnership
- Tidewater Arts Outreach
- Virginia Symphony Orchestra
- Virginia Museum of Contemporary Arts

### FALL 2020

- Children's Harbor
- CHIP\_Covid-19
- Communities In Schools of Hampton Roads
- Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Foundation
- Meals on Wheels of Chesapeake Inc.
- New Vision Youth Services, Inc. (NVYS)
- Samaritan House
- St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children
- Tidewater Friends of Foster Care
- Virginia Supportive Housing

# RELATIONSHIPS MEAN EVERYTHING FOR COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF HAMPTON ROADS

It's been one heck of a year for Communities In Schools of Hampton Roads (CISofHR).

The nonprofit provides 15 in-school site coordinators for 19 public schools in Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. Its mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. This is done by assessing students' needs, coordinating resources and ensuring their success in the classroom and beyond.

"We partner with local businesses, social service agencies, healthcare providers and volunteers for resources necessary to overcome students' barriers," says Communities In Schools of Hampton Roads' Executive Director, Dr. Hope Sinclair. "We see potential in every student, and we make it a priority to build relationships with students, schools and families."

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, says Sinclair, especially during a pandemic. "Prior to COVID, our site coordinators were doing a lot of behavioral intervention and college/career prep."

So what happens when schools close and the underserved students they help are dealing with a whole new set of challenges? "They rely on relationships with a trusted adult, better known as their site coordinator."

"We've focused on family engagement and meeting basic needs of our students since COVID began," says Sinclair. "For instance, we have a site coordinator who will mask up and social distance on the front porch with a student to decorate masks while also connecting with the family. Or we have some students with difficulty logging in and staying awake for class. Our site coordinators will put on full PPE, go in and power on the computer so the kids can work."

Parents who have lost jobs or been furloughed are put in touch with employment resources. CISofHR coordinates online game nights to connect families. They bring in local companies to educate families about health insurance or financial literacy. In addition, CISofHR also connects students with community-based



therapy and family counseling.

Whatever the need, the nonprofit is using its relationships and resources to make life better for kids. Thanks to a \$7,500 grant from SEVACF, which helps fund site coordination, "we are able to remain that solid community resource that our students, schools and communities have become used to," says Sinclair.

What's the best way to help further CISofHR's mission? "The biggest thing for us is donations and advocacy. Just mentioning Communities In Schools of Hampton Roads can open doors and opportunities in other districts," says Sinclair. "What we provide is not what the school can provide, and we're not bound by the same limitations. School buildings in the communities we serve may be closed, but we are not."

## SUPPORT SEVACF'S *HERITAGE FUND*



SEVACF's new Heritage Fund was opened in 2017 to help sustain the Foundation into the future. The Heritage Fund provides a means for friends of the Foundation to support its long-term mission by making tax-deductible contributions on an annual basis, or remembering the Foundation in their wills by way of a bequest. Gifts to the Heritage Fund will provide much needed annual operating revenue to help sustain the Foundation's continuing work of promoting philanthropy in Southeast Virginia. We invite you to join efforts! Contact [info@sevacf.org](mailto:info@sevacf.org) or call 757-397-5424 to discuss this exciting new giving opportunity or to make your gift to the Heritage Fund today!



1435 CROSSWAYS BLVD, SUITE 300  
CHESAPEAKE, VA 23320



## MEET THE SEVACF TEAM

### SOUTHEAST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

1435 CROSSWAYS BLVD, SUITE 300  
CHESAPEAKE, VA 23320

OFFICE: 757-397-5424  
FAX: 757-397-7948

[WWW.SEVACF.ORG](http://WWW.SEVACF.ORG)

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