

25 Years of Impact ... and Growing

CAMPAIGN

Thanks to the generosity of donors past and present, WCF awarded a record \$112,171 to 29 local nonprofits this fall—the largest single grantmaking round in our history. These grants, spanning our six priority areas, reflect our commitment to meet greater Williamsburg’s most pressing needs. *(For a full list of grants, visit our website.)*

This milestone wouldn’t be possible without your support of the 25th Anniversary Campaign, which aims to raise \$750,000 to ensure sustainable funding for nonprofits serving our community. Your generosity is creating a powerful collective impact for our neighbors in need.

Grateful for Our Matching Donors’ Impact

We are profoundly grateful for the Campaign’s matching donors—Hank and Dixie Wolf, Mike and Carolyn McNamara, John and Julia Curtis, Jim and Sally Thomas, and an anonymous donor—who are increasing each contribution by 50% through a 1:2

match. Their extraordinary support has strengthened the campaign’s impact, helping us reach further and do more for our community. “This is a powerful testament to the impact of collective philanthropy,” said Alison Lennarz, Chair of WCF’s Board of Trustees.

Reflecting on the Power of Community

An early supporter of the Campaign, Linda Baker reflected on the campaign’s momentum. “As a board member from 2000 to 2006, I witnessed the growth

Continued on page 3

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By succeeding, the Campaign will ensure that more causes that matter will have the resources to serve the community.

Linda T. Baker

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Grantees gathered at the Foundation’s Fall Grant Awards Luncheon on October 2. WCF is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a campaign to expand its grantmaking capacity by growing its Community Endowment.

Community of Faith Mission: A Safe Haven In the Coldest Months

In the greater Williamsburg area, homelessness remains a persistent challenge, affecting over 400 individuals each year. Many struggle to find refuge as temperatures drop. For the past 12 years, Community of Faith Mission (COFM) has stepped up to provide essential emergency shelter, serving as a critical resource for local law enforcement, hospitals, and agencies seeking shelter for those in need.

The Williamsburg Community Foundation has proudly supported COFM for many years, helping ensure that this vital service continues to provide a lifeline for those facing homelessness.

COFM's Emergency Shelter Program operates through a network of religious congregations and community partners who rotate hosting the shelter each week, ensuring a safe, warm space for guests throughout the winter months.

Open to all ages and backgrounds, COFM's low-barrier shelter has served over 100 individuals, providing a safe and warm place to stay for families and individuals facing job loss, mental illness, and domestic violence.

A second chance for "George"

George (not his real name) is one of many lives touched by COFM. Found on the side of the road by a kind-hearted citizen, George—a 37-year-old man with the developmental age of 8—had been kicked out of his family home. With the shelter schedule readily available throughout the Historic Triangle, that person was able to connect George to COFM. The shelter provided him with a warm place to sleep, meals, and crucial connections to local agencies. Thanks to this support, George has since secured housing, had his disability benefits reinstated, and is now thriving with his new bicycle.



Volunteers at New Zion Baptist Church lend a hand during COFM's 2023 shelter season.



COFM's complete shelter schedule for the 13th season can be found online at <https://cofm.info>

- January 5–12 Crosswalk Church
- January 12–19 Williamsburg Presbyterian Church
- January 19–26 King of Glory Lutheran Church
- Jan. 26–Feb. 2 Williamsburg Community Chapel
- February 2–9 Bruton Parish Episcopal Church
- February 9–16 St. Bede/Williamsburg House of Mercy
- February 16–23 Williamsburg United Methodist Church
- Feb. 23–March 2 ... Hickory Neck Episcopal Church
- March 2–9 James River Baptist Church
- March 9–16 Smith Memorial Baptist Church

Your Impact: WCF's Community Endowment and Field-of-Interest Funds

Your gifts to the Community Endowment and Health & Wellness Fund enable WCF to help organizations like COFM serve our most vulnerable neighbors. Contributions to the Children & Young Adults Fund create opportunities for kids to learn and grow—like the Natural Playground featured on page 3.

Connecting Kids with Nature: Williamsburg Regional Library's Natural Playground



A slide like this one, nestled into the landscape, is part of WRL's upcoming Natural Playground, supported by a grant from the Williamsburg Community Foundation.

Children today often lack outdoor playtime and access to nature, impacting their development and well-being. Research highlights the benefits of "Vitamin G" (green spaces) on mental health, stress resilience, and cognitive function.

Addressing this issue and building on the success of the Kiwanis Kids Idea Studio at the James City County Library, the Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) is building the second phase: a Natural Playground.

The Natural Playground is an innovative outdoor space that

invites children to experience the joy and benefits of nature-based play—climbing, digging, and imagining—right at the library. Inclusive play features ensure children of all abilities can participate, reflecting the library's commitment to fostering community connection and inclusion.

This free, public playground located at the James City County Library on Croaker Road offers a welcoming space for children of all ages. Located on a public bus route, the playground is accessible to children from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

Kiwanis, WCF Help Bring Nature to the Library's Backyard

The project is a partnership of WRL, the Friends of WRL Foundation, and the Colonial Capital, Toano, and Williamsburg Kiwanis Clubs. The Williamsburg Kiwanis Club endowment fund, which supports local projects to benefit kids, is held by WCF.

The Community Foundation was proud to provide additional support to this collaborative effort with a competitive grant earlier this year as part of its Children & Young Adults priority area.



Scan or visit WRL.org/WRL-playground



Scan for a virtual look at the playground

25 Years of Impact, continued

of the Foundation's endowment, which expanded the number of grants awarded to worthy applicants. That tenure was also a life lesson in connecting the people in our community who care deeply about our citizens' welfare with a way to help.

"As a donor to the Campaign, I know that I am part of a collective effort to reach the \$750,000 goal. By succeeding, the Campaign will ensure that more causes that matter will have the resources to serve the community."

Since 1999, we've awarded over \$13.5 million, thanks to gifts from donors like you. In our 25th Anniversary Campaign, we invite you to help us sustain and expand this work.

Every gift—big or small—fuels meaningful change for our neighbors.

Simplified Grant Application New for 2025

To simplify the grants process, WCF will now use **one grant application for our two competitive grant rounds**, regardless of the type of funding requested. Nonprofits applying for grants can now use a single application to be considered for multiple funding sources.

January 3 is our next competitive grant deadline. Visit our website for guidelines and criteria.



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with a **commitment** to
ensure that **everyone**
has the **opportunity**
to **thrive**.

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