

The Outreach

September 2024

Thank You for your incredible generosity!

29

local organizations
will receive 2024 CWO Grants.
(See pages two and three for details.)

\$345,000 granted,
thanks to your incredible generosity.

81 percent

of 2024 Grants will fund
Educational, Health & Humanitarian Services.

22

conscientious women
conducted site visits, evaluated proposals,
and reviewed organization effectiveness
to determine the destination of our 2024 dollars.

112 incredibly generous
2024 donors made this possible.

99

wonderful dues-paying CWO members
supported our outreach mission.

Over \$3,145,000

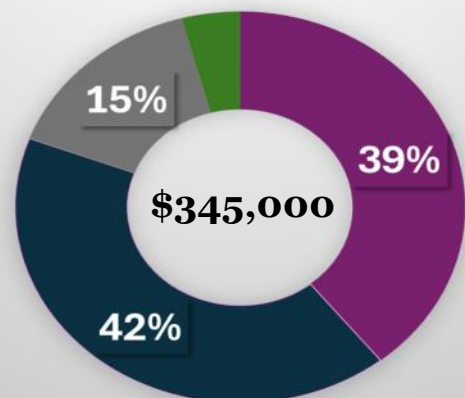
has been invested in Highlands-Cashiers
non-profits and charities
by CWO since its founding in 2006.

Member Art & Estate Affair

made a splash thanks to member contributions
of talent, treasures and time! (See page 5.)

*“It’s not just the magnitude
of your generosity
for which we are grateful,
it is the outpouring
of love and support
that you have shown.
Lifting lives
and easing burdens
of those who live and work
in our community,
is a gift beyond measure.
Thank you.”*

Cullasaja Women's Outreach
Impact of 2024 Grants



Health and Human Services

Educational Programs

Civic & Cultural Vitality

Other

2024 Grant Recipients

The Bascom \$15,000 to help fund scholarships for the Creative Community Initiative, which brings art-integrated learning to local in-school, after-school and senior programs, as well as a subsidized summer camp and a Community Day for local families.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters \$10,000 to support their Big-Little match programing administration. The organization provides one-on-one tutoring and social support for at-risk children of many single-parent households on the Highlands-Cashiers plateau.

Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau \$20,000 to help offset costs of an academic coordinator between their Cashiers facility and recently-opened Highlands location. The Club provides after-school care and activities every weekday, as well as a summer program for kindergarten-12th graders. Interactions are focused on mentoring, homework help, fitness activities, hiking, library visits and experiential field trips. Enrollment totaled 454 students from the local Blue Ridge, Summit and Highlands Schools.

Cashiers Highlands Humane Society \$12,000 to help defray costs for their no-cost, or low-cost local dog and cat spay and neuter program.

Cashiers Historical Society \$3,000 to provide ADA signage on its various properties and buildings.

Community Care Clinic Highlands-Cashiers \$28,900 to help provide lab and imaging tests for patients in need of diagnostics. Tests will be provided by doctor-referrals at the Clinic and paid at reduced rates for services provided by the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. The Clinic is manned by volunteer licensed physicians, who provide medical services for the poor in the community, focusing on diabetes and “behavioral health,” as well as OB/GYN Board-certified and orthopedic care. Patients are individuals with family incomes well below Federal poverty levels. Nearly 450 people were served in the past year in over 1,300 visits.

Counseling and Psychotherapy Center of Highlands \$20,000 to help subsidize therapists’ fees for individuals in need, able only to pay on a sliding scale based on means. In addition, funds will help cover cost of toy therapy items for cases involving young children. With no government subsidies and meager coverage for mental health care, the Center brings much-needed services to local families and individuals.

Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry \$10,000 to help supply, store and distribute free food to nearly 3,475 households-in-need at this volunteer-staffed facility in Cashiers, open Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the year. One-in-five people in Jackson County fall below the poverty level. In the past year, the Pantry supplied food for 11,600 people.

Friends of Panthertown \$5,000 to help fund and equip the small staff that promotes conservation education by organizing groups of volunteers to maintain hiking, cycling and equestrian trails in this 6,295-acre forestry treasure open to the public year-round.

Friends of Albert Carlton Library \$10,500 to assist in covering program costs for this well-used Cashiers community center, which provides e-resources, after-school experiences, and community internet access to the public. Funds will go toward children’s educational programs reinforcing S.T.E.A.M. (*science, technology, engineering, art, math*) initiatives—a program that brings creativity, literary works, and fun, all while enhancing literacy skills in both an afternoon and summer format.

Girls on the Run \$2,700 to provide scholarships for 15 girls at the Highlands School in the third through fifth grade, allowing them to participate in a ten-week afterschool program, focusing on building the girls’ self-confidence, healthy life skills and to increase their physical fitness activities—all in the company of good role models/certified coaches and mentors.

Hampton Pre-School and Early Learning Center \$10,000 to provide stop-gap help to cover operating expenses of this Cashiers-based childcare center that enrolls children aged six weeks to pre-K. The past three years a Covid program provided wage assistance for the teachers; it has now sunset, putting a strain on the Center to maintain competitive wages. The need for affordable childcare for working families is pressing. The Center currently has 37 children and a waiting list of 30. Forty-eight percent of the toddlers enrolled receive state subsidies for childcare.

Highlands Biological Foundation \$7,500 to help make summer nature camps accessible for children 4 to 12 years old teaching them about local ecology, wildlife, forestry and more—with the goal of instilling a deep appreciation for natural beauty of the Highlands Plateau. Ninety-percent of the children participating are from families that fall below the poverty level.

Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music \$10,000 to fund the 2025 Spring and Fall Residency program—in which a Julliard quartet provides concerts and interaction with children in each of our local schools (Blue Ridge, Summit and Highlands), as well as performances at the Fidelia Eckert retirement center and a free concert in Highlands open to the general public.

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust \$10,000 to support the work on a bridge, boardwalk and parking for the new 63-acre Edward Baker Preserve in Cashiers, a natural amenity for the community, as well as a venue for HCLT hikes and educational experiences which will help the community, especially local children, to connect with the land and HCLT’s important conservation mission.

Highlands-Cashiers Players \$3,000 to help this grassroots community theater group defray expenses related to their upcoming season productions.

Highlands Community Child Development Center \$10,000 to help defray the costs of replacing a flat roof at this high-quality daycare serving 96 local infants and toddlers of working parents in Highlands.

2024 Grant Recipients

Highlands Emergency Council \$23,900 to provide heating assistance for qualifying local families-in-need throughout the winter. The Council pays propane, oil, kerosene and wood bills directly to suppliers at special negotiated rates.

Highlands Hurricanes Swim team \$2,500 to assist in covering young swimmers expenses for this well-organized, volunteer-staffed swim and mentoring program.

Highlands Historical Society \$6,000 to provide QR-code enabled plaques that access audio tours of the Prince House and historical sites throughout the town through people's cellphones.

Hudson Library \$17,500 to fund the remodeling and creation of a conference room for the use of local and civic groups.

International Friendship Center (IFC) \$25,000 for food acquisition for the IFC Food Pantry. It serves as a critical resource for families and individuals facing economic hardship, providing free, nutritious food items to those in need. Community need has increased by 110% over the past two years as food costs have skyrocketed and availability from suppliers (MANNA), have declined dramatically. 1,400 individuals/400 families are served each month.

Junior Appalachian Musicians of Blue Ridge \$10,000 to help fund this afterschool program, operating out of the Blue Ridge School, which gives children grade 4 through 12, the opportunity to experience a sense of community and self-esteem through the joy of learning to play a musical instrument, singing traditional mountain music, and performing for the public.

Literacy Council of Highlands, Inc. \$25,000 to help fund after-school enrichment, individual tutoring, GED preparation, English-as-a-Second Language classes and the *Dolly Parton Imagination Library*. Through its various programs, the Council serves hundreds of local students of all ages free of charge.

Mountain Theater Company \$10,000 to underwrite a Student Ticket & Rush Ticket Program, which makes theater performances accessible to students (through grade 12) in Jackson, Macon, Rabun, and Transylvania counties free of charge. Last season, 413 local students utilized the program.

Peggy Crosby Center \$7,500 to partially fund the installation of new porch screening. The Center is a unique resource in the community in that it houses six non-profits (*including the International Friendship Center, the Highlands Psychotherapy & Counseling Center, the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, the Highlands Health Foundation, Pisgah Legal and the Center for Life Enrichment*), as well as many small start-up businesses.

Performing Arts Center (PAC) Educational Theater Project \$15,000 to help support weekly workshops (*from October through May*) for individuals age five and up, primarily from local schools, interested in all aspects of theatrical production from scripting to costuming, performance, building sets, staging, lighting and sound. The program builds reading, critical thinking, teamwork and confidence skills in an engaging format.

Pisgah Legal Services \$5,000 to further the works of this recently established Plateau Poverty Law Initiative, which provides access to pro bono legal services for low-income people in Jackson and Macon Counties.

Summit Charter School \$10,000 for training and certification of 15 teachers (Kindergarten to 5th Grade) in the Orton Gillingham approach to literacy instruction in an extensive 30-hour program. Implementing this approach in the 2025 school year, will help ensure students are provided with a solid foundation in reading, spelling, and writing to address the problem of poor literacy, thereby empowering students' confidence and skills across all subject areas, as well as throughout their lives.

2024 Grants Committee

STANDING: *Betsy Wigington, Kyle Ball, Esther Stokes, Evanda Moore, Cherry Tyde, Deborah Thompson, Jan Pavlis, Anne Schaeffer, Marianne Lassiter, Jackie Martino, Donna Wolen, Maureen Browne, Sonya Honea and Bonnie Evans.*

SEATED: Treasurer *Jane Adams*, Grants Co-Chair *Jo Hill*, Executive Director *Margaret Eichman*, Grants Co-Chair *Lindy Colson Harrison* and Grants Co-Chair *Dawn Van Fleet.*

NOT PICTURED: *Linda Brannan, Nancy Harrison, Margaret Lauletta, Dorianne Norwood and Lisbeth Wilson.*





*Our fabulous gallery of eclectic items,
combined with an incredible array of creative craftsmanship
and an intoxicating game of roulette, helped us to create...*

Yet another *Affair* to Remember!

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Member *Art & Estate Affair*, especially our CWO members who donated their treasures to make this year's silent auction a smashing success! Chairs Pam Burge, Margi Eichman and Laura Kohler, along with the helpful hands of Sammy Smith, and Sonya and Jerry Honea, were thrilled to transform the Sweetwater Room into an enticing and eye-catching gallery.

Merçi beaucoup to contributing artists and artisans: Alice Quinif, Christa Chain, Jeff Elzemeyer, Jo Hill, Jill Huston, Marianne Lassiter and Herb Walter, who shared their fabulous creative talents, time and proceeds to our great delight.

Special thanks to Dean Briggs and Bruce Van Fleet, croupiers extraordinaire, who manned our Wine Roulette with a flourish...and to all who donated the supply of vintage winnings. Applause to our conscientious accounting team: Dawn and Bruce Van Fleet and our treasured Treasurer Jane Adams, helped by Mary Alice Collins, Mary Evelyn Feibelman, Tom Cooper and Beth Hobbs. And, a standing ovation to our gallery docents: Julianne Clowdus, Nan Ferrara, Angie Hill, Linda Keefe, Jill Marshall, Sammy Smith and Betsy Wigington, you were priceless!

“Gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”

A quote could not more fittingly describe our amazement at your incredible generosity. Be assured, every dollar you have given has allowed us to strengthen the fabric of our Highlands-Cashiers community. This year, we reached another milestone. The total of CWO grants invested since 2006 surpassed the three-million-dollar mark. This speaks, not only to *your* incredible generosity, but also stands as testament to your belief in the good works of local non-profit staffs who work tirelessly to enhance, preserve and elevate our community.

Twenty-nine local charitable, educational and community organizations will receive CWO grants this year, totaling a record-breaking \$345,000. Your dollars will go a long way to lighten the burdens of local families by providing safety-net services, food-security, and health and counseling care to the less fortunate. Moreover, your funds will support afterschool and in-school programs that encourage local children to reach their fullest potential.

Working together, *Cullasaja Women's Outreach* has become a well-recognized advocate of local philanthropy. We have shown that a simple grassroots organization can play a meaningful part in uplifting and nurturing a caring community. None of this would be possible without each and every one of you standing behind the work that we do. Thank you.

Margi Eichman Lindy Colson Harrison Jo Hill Dawn Van Fleet Jane Adams