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## **HIGHLANDS CASHIERS HEALTH FOUNDATION AWARDS \$2.5 MILLION TO AREA NONPROFITS IN ITS 2019 FOUNDING YEAR**

*Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation Awards \$1,024,124 to Improve the Health and Wellbeing Across the Six Westernmost Counties of WNC.*

Living up to its stated intention, Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation awards more than \$2.5 million dollars to area charities since its founding on February 1, 2019. The Foundation was reconstituted from the assets of the Highlands Cashiers Hospital Foundation when Mission Health, a non-profit organization was sold to Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), a for profit organization last year.

“When Mission Health sold the hospital to HCA last year, we had no alternative but to reorganize our Foundation since we could no longer use our funds to support a for profit hospital. The Board decided to continue the long legacy of donor support of investment in health and vibrant communities.” said Dr. Walter Clark, chairman of the Foundation Board.

The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (HCHF), in its inaugural year, funded 23 organizations \$1,024,124 to increase access to healthcare. The funded programs and initiatives included increasing access to mental health, dental and primary care providers, outfitting emergency transport vehicles with state-of-the-art equipment, and provide sustainability measures to successful and longstanding health programs.

One example of an awarded grant was for an emergency all-terrain vehicle critically needed during dangerous emergency patient retrieval operations. “The grant from Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is allowing us the ability to purchase is a new 6x6 ATV,” says Chip Sherrill, Captain of the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad. “This vehicle plays a vital role in almost every rescue performed in wilderness or remote areas as rescuers are able to move more personnel and gear into places where other vehicles cannot access. It also allows them to expedite the removal of injured patients from remote locations where often personnel are required to physically carry them out long distances in patient litters to reach vehicles capable of transport to medical facilities. We are sincerely grateful to the Foundation.”

Other emergency transport projects the Foundation were proud to support included air pack replacements for our local firefighters, and state-of-the-art ambulance equipment – including automated CPR devices and power lift stretchers to EMS Squads.

Alongside improving emergency transport vehicles, the HCHF funded initiatives that are successfully creating new and innovative ways to reach populations that would otherwise not have access to medical care and

behavioral health services.

Marianne Martinez with Vecinos states “Migrant farmworkers typically live in crowded rooms with limited privacy or security. Having a private, third space to seek health care is critical to farmworkers' well-being. Our current mobile clinic is one room, open to the elements, and not completely private, which limits the physical exams and mental health interventions we can complete. A new mobile clinic will allow us to serve farmworkers in their homes, after the work day, breaking down barriers to accessing health care as well as cultural barriers to seeking mental health care. It will incorporate 3 separate rooms for confidential physical and mental health screenings for migrant farmworkers in WNC.”

Other initiatives funded by the Foundation involved increasing access to primary care, as well as access to diagnostic imaging and lab services for low income and uninsured patients, and a program that will house medical residents in Jackson County who will serve patients throughout our six-county region through clinical rotations.

A critically important aspect of health that is unfortunately overlooked is oral health. Melanie Jones with Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic says “The funds received from the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation are being used to strengthen dental health services for low-income and uninsured patients in our region. And we wasted no time in expanding outreach. In October, we did more in one month than in any previous month in our 14 years as an organization: 246 dentist hours, 237 patient visits and 629 procedures including 143 restorations and 35 cleanings.”

With increased dental care being a necessity in our region, the Foundation also granted funds to begin a mobile dental clinic program – reaching the most remote areas of our six-county region, and a program that will bring the smiles back to 21 veterans.

Through the eye-opening experience of its first year, the Foundation learned about the growing substance abuse crisis and behavioral health provider shortage our area is facing. Tracy Stribling and Melanie Norman with the Counseling and Psychotherapy Center of Highlands know just how desperately needed these services are “In a rural community, many people are unaware of the need of mental health counseling. Your neighbor may have lost a beloved pet and is suffering in silence, a family member may be struggling with substance abuse but is afraid of receiving help due to stigma.” Says Tracy Stribling. Melanie Norman states “This is where the grant from Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation will make so much difference. Through their funding, we have been able to increase our capacity and expand our reach to include a population that otherwise would not be able to afford counseling services.”

To further address the mental health service shortage and increase access to substance abuse prevention programs, HCHF funded organizations, programs and projects that provide a full spectrum of services; therapy programs to help veterans struggling with PTSD, and women and children who have been victims of domestic violence, and programs that administer naloxone. All funded projects had a similar goal: to increase the accessibility to safe spaces that provide services that address mental health and substance abuse.

In 2019, the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is proud to award over \$2.5 Million dollars to 53 organizations spanning the six-county region of WNC. Through the journey of conducting Listening Sessions, Community Outreach Meetings, and committing over 2000 hours to grant review, the Programs and Grants Committee and the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation Board of Directors has gleaned extensive information about unique strengths, challenges and opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our Highlands, Cashiers and surrounding communities.

“This year has been a landmark year for the Foundation; an outstanding year for progress and positive growth for our community. I am honored to serve alongside fellow Board Members and dedicated Community Advisors. We all look forward to continuing this momentum and building upon our purpose to create lasting impact for generations to come.” Dr. Walter Clark, Chair of the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation.

says Robin Tindall, Executive Director and CEO of the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation.

### **About the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation**

The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation was established on February 1, 2019 as a 501 (c) 3 public charity with a purpose to improve the health and wellbeing of Highlands, Cashiers, and surrounding communities. As the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital conversion foundation we are committed to continuing a several-decade legacy of generosity and vision to ensure vibrant and healthy living for our year-round, seasonal and visiting families and individuals. Through partnerships with organizations, key stakeholders and caring donors, The Foundation aims to make positive and lasting change through investing in projects and programs that advance innovative solutions and improvements in peoples’ health and wellbeing. The Foundation follows best practices in administering and evaluating grants and projects as well as measuring and reporting outcomes. The Foundation also includes collaborative partnerships that serve the health and wellbeing of all people in western North Carolina, with particular emphasis on Macon, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Clay and Cherokee Counties and the Qualla Boundary. For more information please visit the website: [www.hchealthfnd.org](http://www.hchealthfnd.org) or call 828-482-6510.

**Supporting Photographs on Page 4**

**Funded Organizations on Page 5**



**Photo Caption:**

Glenville Cashiers Rescue Squad EMS Volunteers bring an injured hiker at out at Whitewater Falls. The 6x6 ATV that was purchased with funds from the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation will alleviate the need for EMS Volunteers to physically hike in and out of remote, dangerous locations to rescue injured patients.

**Photo Caption:**

Volunteers with Vecinos stand in front of the Mobile Clinic purchased in 2005. The New Mobile Clinic will be much larger and will be outfitted to serve as a primary care clinic, a laboratory, and a behavioral health clinic. The New Mobile Clinic is slated to be completed by the Summer of 2020.



**Photo Caption:**

A patient receives a preventative cleaning at Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic. With funds from the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation the Clinic was able to increase the number of patients who receive preventative and restorative care!



# HIGHLANDS CASHIERS HEALTH FOUNDATION – ORGANIZATIONS 2019

## **Health and Healthcare: \$1,024,124**

### **Access to Healthcare: \$817,064**

- AWAKE, Inc.
- Blue Ridge Free Dental
- Cashiers Glenville Fire Department
- Clay County Governing Board
- Clay County Public Health Department
- Community Care Clinic of Franklin
- Community Care Clinic of Highlands
- Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad, Inc.
- Hospice House Foundation of WNC
- KIDS Place
- Macon County EMS
- Mountain Area Health Education Center
- Mountain Area Pro Bono Health Services
- Smoky Mountains Outreach Foundation
- Southwestern Community College
- Vecino's Farmworker Health Program

### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse: \$207,060**

- Clay County Department of Social Services
- Counseling and Psychotherapy Center of Highlands
- Meridian Behavioral Health Services
- REACH of Macon County
- Swain County Health Department
- Warrior Survival School

## **Education and Youth Initiatives: \$847,022**

### **Educational Improvement: \$603,000**

- Advance Highlands Education Committee
- Blue Ridge School Education Foundation
- Cashiers Valley Preschool
- Clay County Board of Education
- Hampton Preschool and Early Learning Center
- Highlands Community Child Development Center
- Southwestern Child Development Commission
- Summit Charter School
- The Literacy Council
- Western Region Education Service Alliance

### **Youth Development: \$244,022**

- Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau
- Cashiers Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Eliada Homes, Inc.
- Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
- HIGHTS, Inc.
- The Bascom
- The Still Place

## **Community Vitality & Economic Stability: \$513,000**

### **Poverty Reduction: \$260,000**

- Circles Cashiers
- HERE in Jackson County, Inc.
- Life Challenge of WNC
- Mountain Projects, Inc.
- Pisgah Legal Services
- Restoration House WNC
- International Friendship Center
- Macon County Care Network
- MANNA Food Bank

### **Combatting Food Insecurity: \$198,000**

- Clay County Food Pantry
- Fishes and Loaves
- The Community Table

### **Community Enrichment: \$55,000**

- Peggy Crosby Center
- Vision Cashiers