A Covid-19 Relief Fund Update from Liz LaRose

Dear Friends of MUW,

If I had to pick a theme for the last week it would be gratitude! The daily news can be fraught with anxiety, uncertainty, and sadness. But I am also hearing stories of hope, thankfulness, and community spirit.

I’d like to share an email I received from Roberta Royce, Director of the Winchester Learning Center (WLC):

"I just wanted to say that I can’t thank you and the United Way donors enough. We are going to reopen on Tuesday as an emergency childcare program. Because of the funds that we received from you we were able to purchase diapers for all of the children being enrolled. This will allow us to seriously limit items between home and school (one of our protocols). This will also give parents a much-needed financial relief. We are also using some of the funds to pay disaster stipends to the teachers that are coming back. Another use for the funds is that we have been able to send home packets each week to our children, keeping the family to home connection strong. Without United Way none of this would be possible. And I also just can’t thank you enough for knowing that you guys are there, knowing that you’re in our corner that I can reach out to any of you at any time."

The impact of your gifts to the Covid-19 Relief Fund could not be more beautifully articulated! We are, in turn, grateful for the work that Roberta, and all of our partner agencies, do to keep individual and families safe and healthy during this time of crisis.

A few other items to highlight this week:
- April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Child and domestic abuse hotlines have seen a
50% reduction in reports since the stay at home order. This is because the network of eyes and ears that normally reports issues has been effectively disabled. In response to this trend, we created a page with resources devoted to supporting children and families who may be experiencing abuse. All of these resources are helpful but I’d like to highlight one in particular from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Family Well-Being Guide Covid-19.

- The Cares Act has mostly been publicized as a way for small businesses, non-profits, and individuals to access the resources they need to ride out the Covid-19 crisis. However, it also includes some good news for potential donors: a one-year "universal deduction" that allows taxpayers who don’t itemize to get a deduction for up to $300 in charitable cash giving. The universal deduction was likely added to spur charitable giving during this time of great need.

We continue to be grateful for the support of our partners and community! I look forward to sharing more good news with you next week.

All the best!
Liz LaRose