



Giving Back

with the Battle River Community Foundation

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Responding to the changing needs of our communities

Every single aspect of life and community has been impacted by the unusual events of 2020. As a significant source of support to the east central Alberta area, the Battle River Community Foundation has wanted to ensure it could continue to be there for communities in this unprecedented time.

That's why we channeled discretionary funds – those not already allocated to a specific cause – toward a COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund that would help eligible recipients in local communities weather this unexpected storm.

Contributions from Ken Drever, the Estate of Dash Shoebottom, Garth Wehrfritz-Hanson and the BRCF Community Fund and Field of Interest Funds were made available. In addition, specific donations were made by Tom and Melanie Kuntz, Neil and Lilyon Lundy and Marian Williams, and matched by the Province of Alberta.

Combined, the proceeds and gifts from these generous-spirited contributions enabled the Foundation to make more than \$109,000 available. By the end of September, almost \$98,000 had been provided to organizations in our area.



BRCF has also acted as the local administrator for the federal Emergency Community Response Fund. A total of \$75,000 was available in the first round of grants from that. A further \$30,000 will be available for allocation between October 5 and 30. Organizations interested in applying to this fund should check the Community Foundations of Canada website, communityfoundations.ca, beginning October 5.

To find out more about some of the many important organizations and needs the Foundation has been able to support this fall, please see pages 2 and 3.

To learn more about how the operations and business of the Foundation itself has had to evolve during this time, please see page 4.

In accordance with the Alberta Charitable Fund-raising Act, we are pleased to provide the following information: "With this newsletter, the BRCF hopes to raise \$5,000 with costs of \$2,000."

It's been all about ensuring

The Battle River Community Foundation has allocated more than \$88,000 to sixteen different organizations in east central Alberta this year, through the newly-established Emergency Grant Fund.

Each of those organizations requested funds in order to support those they serve to stay safe and secure during this incredibly challenging time, as well as in some cases, to help ensure their own solvency.

Funds were made available for everything from mental health programming to the purchase of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to resources to help organizations move their training or services to online formats. Here are three examples of local organizations for whom the Emergency Grant Funds made a significant impact.

Helping seniors safely spend time with loved ones

As the COVID-19 case numbers spiked in the spring, seniors' facilities across Canada were forced to reduce their interactions with their communities and reduce interactions between residents and families, in order to keep some of Alberta's most vulnerable citizens safe.

From April to June, seniors' residences could only welcome visitors to outdoor areas. In the summer, they were allowed to have one "inside visitor" but all others were asked to remain outside. That's why The Bethany Group received a \$5,000 grant for the enhancement of outdoor spaces at nine different locations in east central Alberta.



These enhancements included items such as benches, umbrellas and outdoor dividers, which would make it possible for multiple building residents to make the most of their opportunities to enjoy visits from loved ones, while also

ensuring the spaces were inviting, appropriately distanced and also functional in terms of cleaning and durability.

"Our goal is always to provide the best resident experience we possibly can," says Stakeholder Relations Advisor Melanie Stol. "Outdoor spaces became really important to the wellbeing of those who live in our buildings and we wanted to ensure those spaces were the best they could be."

As summer fades into fall, The Bethany Group is hoping to add heaters to some of their new seating areas, to help extend the season of outdoor visits a little bit longer.

The need for big transitions didn't change the needs of these little cuties

The Camrose and Area Animal Shelter had to make some big changes when the COVID shutdown happened last spring. They were required to close their shelter to the public except by appointment and limit the number of volunteers who came and went from the facility, in order to ensure everyone's health and wellbeing. They also made the leap to doing most of their work online, through their website and social media.

But those big transitions didn't change a thing about the reality of caring for about 75 homeless animals each day. "We still had to feed and meet the needs of the animals in our care," says Board Chair Sherry Lafortune, who lists herself as being in charge of "poop scooping Saturdays", along with many other aspects of the Shelter's operation.

"We always get kittens brought in to us, but recently we have also had people who had lost their jobs or who were forced to move in order to obtain employment that surrendered their animals to us. It was a heartbreaking time for them and we've been happy to help re-home their precious pets."

Fundraising also became more challenging this



safety, security and solvency

year and Lafortune says it was “such a relief” to receive a \$4,000 grant from the BRCF to support everything from paying the heat, water and vet bills to providing equipment and resources for the increased focus on technology.

Putting food on the table

The Flagstaff Food Bank didn’t experience a noticeable change in usage last spring, but from June to August there has been a significant increase in the number of Flagstaff County families seeking food support. And they’re concerned that, with winter approaching, the CERB program ending and many businesses still operating at reduced levels, that increased need isn’t going to end anytime soon.

Flagstaff Food Bank President Debi Anderson says “it’s amazing” what the local organization has been able to do with the \$10,000 grant they received from the Foundation. “We’ve tried very hard to do as much as possible with what we’ve been given, to help take care of our local families,” she says. “The last couple of years have been tough in our area and we’re not sure what to expect as this year goes on. But we’re going to keep doing everything we can to continue to provide for those who need us.”



Recipient of Federal Emergency Community Response Fund Grant “so grateful”

When schools were closed last spring, along with access to many community facilities and venues, life became very different for all of us. But that change was especially tough for children who are vulnerable due to their physical and developmental challenges.

Thanks to a \$30,000 federal ECRF grant that was administered through the Foundation, the Camrose Association for Community Living was able to provide two special summer camps that made a world of difference to children and

youth, many of whom had not been able to see friends or be out and about in the community for months.

Kandu Camp ran two sessions in the Camrose area, serving a total of twenty-three different campers and providing a safe environment

that focused on activities that were fun and friendly, giving kids the chance to connect with others in positive ways and also provide a much-needed rest to caregivers.

The CAFCL’s Rural Outreach Kandu Camp took its show on the road, reaching out to families in rural areas who would not otherwise have been able to enjoy a camp experience. Families throughout Beaver County, Camrose County and Flagstaff County were able to have camp counsellors set up innovative and creative activities right in their own backyards. Nearly thirty children between one and fourteen years of age took part.

“Words cannot express our gratitude for what the Foundation helped us provide,” says CAFCL Executive director Robin Good. “We’re so fortunate to have this organization available to support us and our communities.”





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It's not quite 'business as usual'

So much is different for all of us this year that's it hard to keep track of everything that's changed. But here are four things that the Battle River Community Foundation has done very differently during 2020.

1. Our Annual Open House is online

Due the pandemic the Foundation's Annual Public Open House did not take place in its traditional format in the spring of 2020. But it did take place! You can find a video on our BRCF website (www.brcf.ca) that features highlights of our 2019 year.

2. We're offering flexibility for 2019 grant recipients

The Foundation Board elected to allow 2019 grant recipients to change the terms of their fund agreements, allowing extra time to spend the amount granted and / or to change the use of the funds granted to meet changed circumstances resulting from the pandemic. Five grant recipients asked for extensions and three recipients repurposed the grant they had received.

3. Community Builders Dinners are on hold 'til a later date.

Some of our most important functions each year involve celebrating and recognizing those who have made outstanding

contributions to the growth and development of their communities. This year, due to the restrictions on gatherings that are currently in place, we won't be getting together to celebrate those who have done so much to keep east central Alberta strong. This will significantly impact our fundraising for the year and we are looking forward to the day when we can all get together again. In the meantime, there are countless community builders who continue to support their communities and we salute them all!

4. Our office is only open by appointment

The Battle River Community Foundation team has remained hard at work over the last six months, even though the door to our office is locked. If you'd like to stop in and see us, we'd be happy to welcome you. Please call ahead, 780-679-0449, and we will be ready to greet you when you arrive.

One thing that hasn't changed is the reason that the Foundation exists. Our role continues to be supporting the people and organizations of this area. In this time of unprecedented struggle and need, we remain strong and, with the help of donors, are prepared to help others face the storm.



This issue of *Giving Back*

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With sincere thanks to the residents of Camrose and east-central Alberta for eighteen years of loyalty and support!