Asheville, whose economy is heavily dependent on tourism and leisure activities, had an unemployment rate of 16.1 percent in May—5 percentage points higher than the national average, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For me, I am experiencing both feelings of relief and concern, knowing in a few months we will be welcoming a new year. I am sure I don't have to remind you of the struggles, challenges, loss, and anxiety, so many of us felt for much of 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. And while there is still uncertainty in what may come in the months ahead, I am reminded daily how fortunate I am to be part of such a caring region.

As a Foundation focused on our communities’ health and wellness, WNC Bridge Foundation worked hard to find solutions to address the unprecedented and dire needs that sprang up across the 18 counties of WNC. More importantly, we realized how incredibly dedicated and passionate the non-profits in our region truly are and how they remained a constant source of strength, survival, and hope for so many.

STEADFAST SPIRIT

Thanks to our non-profit community’s steadfast spirit, WNC Bridge Foundation remained on schedule with our 2020 Impact Grant process. In this issue, you will learn what organizations received funding. You will also learn about specific actions WNC Bridge Foundation took through our Community Outreach Grant process to address urgent needs that arose during the pandemic for many of our non-profit leaders.

These past few months have also given a whole new meaning to the word “virtual” as you will discover in our Drums & Dragons update. Our You’re Special Fund continues to fill a critical need, and I look forward to sharing Zoe’s story with you.

In this season of thanks, I am especially grateful for your partnership. Together, we are providing resources to work for a healthier and safer WNC.

Sincerely,

SCOTT W. BUCHANAN
President & CEO, WNC Bridge Foundation
Congratulations to the 85 local non-profits that are this year’s Impact Grant recipients. Total grant funding from WNC Bridge was over $3.9M. Aligning with the Foundation’s goal of being a catalyst for positive change throughout the 18 counties of Western North Carolina, the three focus areas for 2020 Impact Grants included Elder Care, Wellness Support, and Youth Development. The following organizations were approved to receive a 2020 Impact Grant by the Foundation’s Board at its October board meeting. For more information, visit WNCbridge.org.

**Elder Care**

With a growing number of older adults in WNC, we support local non-profits that address health, social, and physical needs through medical services and social interaction. We prioritize funding that address social determinants of health for older adults to increase quality of life, well-being, and sense of community.

Local volunteers and CHC staff help build a new porch, stairs, and ramp for safe entry and departure for an elderly disabled couple.

**ELDER CARE GRANT RECIPIENTS**

- Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
- Carolina Caring
- Community Housing Coalition of Madison County
- Haywood County Meals on Wheels
- Jewish Family Services of WNC
- Land of Sky Senior Companion Program
- Meals on Wheels of Asheville and Buncombe County
- MemoryCare
- Mountain Housing Opportunities
- Mountain Projects
- Pisgah Legal Services
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MAHEC)
- Transylvania Christian Ministry: Sharing House
- United Community Development of North Carolina
- Western Carolina Community Action
- YMCA Of Western North Carolina

**PORTFOLIO GOALS**

- Increasing access to essential needs such as food, shelter, and utilities.
- Minimizing barriers to accessing quality healthcare services.
- Providing opportunities for older adults to be socially active in their communities.

**COMMUNITY HOUSING COALITION**

Helping the elderly stay healthy through their Holistic Health Program will be the focus of Community Housing Coalition of Madison County’s 2020 Impact Grant.
Wellness Support

WNC Bridge invests in programs that respond to urgent needs and connect individuals to the care they need to improve overall health outcomes, well-being, and quality of life. By collaborating with the following local non-profit partners, we provide funding for emergency assistance, allowing people to thrive in their daily lives.

WELLNESS SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS

- ABCCM
- All Souls Counseling Center
- American Red Cross
- Arc Of Buncombe County
- Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement
- Babies Need Bottoms
- Beacon of Hope Services
- Black Mountain Counseling Center
- Blue Ridge Mountains Health Project
- DBA Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic
- Bounty & Soul
- Buncombe County Health and Human Services: Clinical Services
- Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court
- Burke United Christian Ministries
- Eblen Charities
- Good Samaritan Clinic
- Haywood Pathways Center
- Haywood Street Congregation
- Homeward Bound of Western North Carolina
- Interfaith Assistance Ministry
- JM PRO TV
- MANNA Food Bank
- Ministry Seven
- DBA Hendersonville Rescue Mission
- Mount Zion Community Development
- Mountain Child Advocacy Center
- New Hope of McDowell
- Olive Hill Community Economic Development Corporation
- Only Hope WNC
- Pisgah Legal Services
- REACH of Macon County
- Sixth Avenue Psychiatric Rehabilitation Partners
- DBA Thrive
- Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry
- The Center for Rural Health Innovation
- The Community Table
- The Giving Spoon
- The Housing Assistance Corporation
- TRACTOR Food and Farms
- United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County
- Vecinos Farmworker Health Program
- W4H Asheville
- DBA Working Wheels
- Western Carolina Medical Society Foundation
- Western Carolina Rescue Ministries
- Western North Carolina AIDS Project
- Yokefellow Service Center
- YWCA of Asheville and WNC

PORTFOLIO GOALS

- Provide emergency assistance for safe housing, food, utilities, reliable transportation, medical care and equipment, and clothing to improve resilience for individuals and families facing unexpected hardships.
- Connect individuals and families facing unexpected hardships to other community resources.

COMMUNITY TABLE

The Community Table in Jackson County will use their 2020 Impact grant to support operational needs, allowing them to continue to provide the healthiest, freshest foods possible to their clients while also providing economic support to local growers and food producers.
Youth Development

By being a catalyst for change in WNC, we support children and youth initiatives that have a long-term impact on our communities’ health. We fund non-profit organizations working to remove barriers that prevent youth from reaching their full potential. By centering our portfolio on improving youth outcomes, we will be making a difference today and investing in a better tomorrow for all of WNC.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

| 30 Judicial District | Eliada Homes |
| Domestic Violence | Henderson County |
| Sexual Assault Alliance | Education Foundation |
| Big Brothers | Hights |
| Big Sisters of WNC | Irene Wortham Center |
| Boys & Girls Club | Literacy Council of |
| Of Henderson County | Buncombe County |
| Buncombe County Schools: | Neighbors in Ministry: |
| Graduation Initiative Program | Rise & Shine |
| Burke Partnership for | Open Doors of Asheville |
| Economic Development | Partners Aligned |
| Children & Family | Toward Health |
| Resource Center | Read To Succeed |
| Children First: | Asheville-Buncombe |
| Communities in Schools | Rock Hill Missionary |
| of Buncombe County | Baptist Church |

PORTFOLIO GOALS

- Improve literacy for youth ages Pre-K through 8th grade by seeing a measurable increase in reading ability.
- Improve socio-emotional outcomes for youth through mentoring.
- Improve academic outcomes for youth by providing additional academic supports and enrichment programs.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Children and Family Resource Center will use its Impact Grant to support their Preschoolers Reaching Educational Potential (PREP) program to provide free developmental, hearing and vision screenings and remedial support services for children ages 3-5 in Henderson County.
Zoe is a toddler who loves to play. Born with spina bifida, which occurs when the spine and spinal cord do not form properly; it is hard for Zoe to move around freely. Thanks to a referral from her physical therapist, WNC Bridge Foundation purchased a ZipZac® for this fun-loving girl. The chair’s low-level design makes it much easier for Zoe to explore and interact with her world. WNC Bridge Foundation’s You’re Special Fund was specifically created to help individuals in need pay for critical items, such as the ZipZac®.

Like most of us, Zoe and her family have been spending a lot of time at home. During a rare evening at a friend’s house, Zoe delighted in participating with the other 18-month-old children in their play—the other kids on their bikes and Zoe in her ZipZac®. She has developed her “driving” skills and can now play on an equal level with the other children.

“Since getting her new wheels, Zoe has learned to propel it forward and backward, and she navigates many obstacles in her home without difficulty,” her physical therapist Sandy Davis reports. “She loves racing and playing chase games with her three older brothers.”

In sending her thanks to the Foundation, Zoe’s mother, Tonya Smith told us, “The ZipZac® has opened up exciting and new play opportunities for my daughter.” Tonya also shared Zoe is thriving and is becoming familiar with her first manual wheelchair.

“I am so thankful for the role WNC Bridge Foundation has played in helping Zoe be mobile and live life to the fullest!”

As of November, You’re Special has benefited 697 people with purchases totaling over $54,000.

To donate to the You’re Special Fund and help purchase needed equipment for clients, use the enclosed envelope or visit WNCbridge.org and click GIVE.
Answering the Call

**GRANTS PROVIDE QUICK RESPONSE**

Food boxes. Mental health subsidies. Back to school supplies. These are just a few examples of what our Community Outreach Grants have supported so far in 2020. WNC Bridge Foundation recognizes there are many non-profit organizations across Western North Carolina.

Since April, 112 donors have made gifts to WNC Greatest Needs Fund.

North Carolina whose good works have limited options to turn to for quick funding decisions. Community Outreach Grants were created to address this gap in our region. The application process is low stress and simple, with a quick turnaround time for the decision.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, our Community Outreach Grants became even more critical in helping local non-profits in the 18 counties of Western North Carolina fulfill their mission. As of November, WNC Bridge Foundation has awarded $509,253 to 119 organizations in Community Outreach Grant funding. Due to the increase of requests related to COVID-19, we were fortunate to utilize our WNC Greatest Needs Fund to help keep up with the demand for funding.

WNC Bridge Foundation also joined other community efforts to support non-profits during the pandemic. WNC Bridge donated $125,000 to The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina's Emergency and Disaster Response Fund. This fund strategically disbursed dollars to address COVID-19 pandemic and relief efforts in the 18 counties of Western North Carolina, including the Qualla Boundary.

WNC Bridge Foundation also received a generous grant of $40,000 from Dogwood Health Trust (DHT) to assist people and places disproportionately impacted by the novel Coronavirus, including people of color and rural communities. WNC Bridge Foundation matched DHT’s funding and made one-time general operating grants to ten organizations to address disparities created or worsened by the pandemic.

**“Answering the call to respond quickly and thoughtfully to support the diverse needs in our area, is what makes our Community Outreach Grants so special,” said Natalie Clark.**

To learn more about Community Outreach Grants visit WNCbridge.org/ACTIONS/COMMUNITY-OUTREACH-GRANT

The ten organizations include Asheville Writers in The Schools & Communities, Bountiful Cities, East End Valley Street Neighborhood Association, Shiloh Community Association, Vecinos, Delta House, and Communication Officer for WNC Bridge Foundation. “We want to make sure our community knows these grants are available to support all non-profits in WNC.”

Sharing House in Transylvania County serves 450 households per month with food, including seniors, single parents, children, people living without shelter, and those with disabilities. They used their Community Outreach Grant to acquire critical resources, including fresh produce, meat, and protein drinks.
Providing Mental Care During a Pandemic

GRANT PROVIDES MUCH NEEDED ASSISTANCE

The global pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus has impacted both the economic well-being and the mental health of many across our region. As part of WNC Bridge Foundation’s Community Outreach Grant response, the Foundation awarded a $5,000 grant to CareNet Counseling of Marion.

The grant provided much-needed funding to CareNet’s scholarship fund, which allows CareNet to provide mental-health services regardless of patients’ ability to pay. Since quarantine restrictions were implemented in mid-March, CareNet experienced nearly a doubling of funds spent to provide subsidized care due to patient financial hardship. Over the past seven months (March–September) of COVID-19, approximately 1,723 hours of behavioral health counseling was provided to individuals, couples, and families, regardless of their ability to pay. 100% of grant dollars provided by WNC Bridge were applied to CareNet’s patient scholarships.

“\textit{I didn’t think at 64 I’d be raising my two young grandchildren. CareNet helped my husband and I return to full-time parenting through family and individual counseling services. When COVID-19 hit, we seamlessly transitioned to virtual therapy sessions. When I lost my job and health insurance, CareNet was there once again providing reduced and free care funding to assist with our treatment. CareNet even helped us with our internet costs to ensure telehealth sessions could continue during our tough economic time.}”

—CARENET PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

The need for mental health services in WNC has increased significantly compared to 2019.

\[ \text{Graph provided by CareNet.} \]
Congratulations to MountainCare for winning the “Top Fundraising Team” award for the 2nd year in a row!

During this year’s event, which ran from September 21–October 19, participants enjoyed weekly wellness challenges from home, enabling them to stay active and involved in their community during the pandemic.

How do you keep a dragon boat race fundraiser afloat during a pandemic? Staying safely distanced would not have been possible in a boat of 20 paddlers and a drummer, so we went where few dragon boat races have gone before—Online! To ensure Drums & Dragons continued its mission of supporting area non-profits, we decided to pivot to a virtual format in 2020.

Drums & Dragons 2020 stayed the course as it had in years past, by raising funds to support six local non-profits in Western North Carolina. This year’s Drums & Dragons raised over $13,000 from donations and Silent Auction. Funds raised during this year’s virtual event will enable Blue Ridge Health to improve medical treatment options for low-income families, help The Community Table prevent families in Jackson County from going to bed hungry, and allow developmentally challenged adults to thrive with the help of the caring staff of Irene Wortham Center.

“Thanks to the WNC Bridge Foundation for reimagining their community outreach and support during these crazy times.”

—ANONYMOUS DRUMS & DRAGONS $500 DONOR

Hendersonville Troop 606 hiked 15+ miles in Pisgah National Forest, a perfect way to accept Drums & Dragons Week 3 Challenge, “Nature is the Best Medicine!”
Without our supporters, this event wouldn’t be possible! Thank you to our Platinum Dragon Sponsor, Vannoy Construction, for their generous donation toward this year’s fundraiser!

Our donors’ generosity will also help St. Gerard House improve their capacity to serve children with autism and allow caregivers respite. MountainCare provides Adult Day Services and operates the Rathbun House, the only hospitality house in the region, for non-Buncombe area residents whose families are undergoing medical treatment in nearby hospitals.

LOCAL NON-PROFITS BENEFITTING FROM DRUMS & DRAGONS INCLUDE:

■ Blue Ridge Health
■ Irene Wortham Center
■ MemoryCare
■ MountainCare
■ St. Gerard House
■ The Community Table

Kris Bryant submitted this photo for Week Two’s Challenge Paying it Forward, showing how she and her horses have helped our WNC seniors remain active and engaged during the pandemic through horse-therapy.
Thrift Stores and Estate Sales Reopen

STAFF, VOLUNTEER & CUSTOMER SAFETY ARE TOP PRIORITY

While it isn’t exactly business as usual, WNC Bridge Foundation’s thrift stores and estate sales were able to reopen in May. To get to that point, working areas and sales floors had to be reconfigured, shopping and checkout procedures reimagined, and new protocols put in place to foster staff, volunteer, and customer safety.

For many customers, shopping at the Foundation’s stores was the first—and, for some, the only—thrift-shopping they have done since COVID. They tell us they feel safe and appreciate the things we do to protect their safety.

As before, estate sales customers still line up as early as 8 am on sale days even though they understand the wait time is longer to get inside as we only admit 30 shoppers at a time on the sales floor. Rather than complaints, there is a general level of excitement that comes from scoring fabulous, quality household furnishings.

Recently, estate sale previews have returned, this time by making an appointment online to peruse items the Wednesday before each sale.

Volunteers have been returning as they feel comfortable. The stores wholeheartedly respect those who

“Staff, volunteers, and customers have expressed gratitude for the safety measures we’ve taken. Our goal is to create a safe, caring, and supportive environment.”

—SKIP WADE, DIRECTOR OF RETAIL OPERATIONS

TOP OF COLUMN During pack-ups, staff and volunteers wear masks while working in client’s homes.

CENTER Greeters disinfect carts and remind customers of mask and distancing requirements.

LEFT Workspaces have been separated and storage areas marked in six-foot segments to protect volunteers and staff.
CONSIDERING AN ESTATE SALE?

Are you downsizing, moving, or relocating? Executor of an estate to be settled? Or perhaps you want to eliminate clutter and streamline your life? WNC Bridge Foundation's Estate Sales & Services can simplify such transitions and eliminate stress.

We have implemented COVID-19 precautions such as requiring masks, physical distancing, and wearing gloves when inside a client’s property.

Call 828.575.2509 to arrange a free in-home or contact-free consultation.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

WNC Bridge Thrift Stores and Estate Sales are upbeat, positive places to volunteer. COVID-19 safety measures are in place and enforced to protect volunteers, staff, and customers. If you are interested in volunteering and want to know more, call 828-575-2509 or click on the VOLUNTEER link under SHOP at WNCBridge.org.

Our need for volunteers is tremendous!

THRIFT STORE HOURS

75 Fairview Road in Biltmore
Monday-Saturday | 10am–4pm

285 North Main Street in Weaverville
Tuesday-Saturday | 10am–4pm

Go to WNCBridge.org for estate sale dates and updates on our annual holiday sale!

With a dazzling supply of props on-hand, Linda Frankl recruits fellow staff members to participate in estate sale teaser photos posted online.

Sign up on our website, like us on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram to get sneak peaks at estate sale treasures.

are high risk or otherwise not quite ready to return to public areas. Thrift store staff have made the volunteers’ work areas safe by clearly identifying the departmental areas and keeping workstations distanced. Volunteers work in shifts to avoid contact and restock early in the mornings before stores are open to the public.

Skip Wade, Director of Retail Operations, says he’s pleasantly surprised by the tremendous flow of donations the stores are seeing, adding that keeping up with the volume is sometimes challenging with fewer volunteers. Still, the devoted staff and volunteers are up to the task.

Safety precautions include isolating donated items in a designated area 72 hours before handling, limiting the number of shoppers in stores at one time, directional arrows to control the traffic flow, bagging one’s own items, and eliminating dressing rooms. Of course, the now-familiar rules of wearing a mask, maintaining distance, and sanitizing apply as well. A full list of guidelines is posted on our website.

CONTACT US

WNC BRIDGE FOUNDATION

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Arden, North Carolina 28704
Main number 828.277.4815
Web WNCbridge.org
Email info@wncbridge.org

TO GIVE TO WNC BRIDGE FOUNDATION
make a secure donation at WNCbridge.org or call 828.277.4815

WNC Bridge Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Financial information about WNC Bridge Foundation is available upon request. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us.

THRIFT STORES

Biltmore Village
75 Fairview Road
Asheville, North Carolina 28803

Weaverville
285 North Main Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28787

Thrift store and donation information 828.575.2509

ESTATE SALES & SERVICES

Information 828.575.2509
In-home consultations extension 100
Email shop@WNCbridge.org

Volunteer with Estate Sales and Thrift Stores
Get information at WNCbridge.org or call 828.274.8206

WNC Bridge Thrift Stores and Estate Sales support the mission of WNC Bridge Foundation.

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ANNOUNCING OUR
2020 IMPACT GRANT RECIPIENTS