

# Foundation News

Newsletter  
Fall/Winter 2024

The Community Foundation of  
the Rappahannock River Region

cfrrr.org  
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## Lasting Impact

**“Some individuals are the stones that create the ripples.” While there are numerous variations of quotes and attributions about it, Reverend Lawrence A. and Mrs. Janice P. Davies personified this ripple effect in their everyday lives and thoughtful interactions with members of the Fredericksburg area community. They both passed away in 2024, and family and friends recently created the Lawrence and Janice Davies Family Fund through The Community Foundation to honor their legacy of service.**



Lawrence and Janice Davies

“Lawrence was a gentleman and a scholar and had a way of seeing a need, creating an action plan and gaining consensus to meet that need,” says former Fredericksburg Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw. “Janice was a beautiful and brilliant teacher, caregiver and activist who handwrote lovely notes to recognize or encourage others. Together, they set a standard for leadership by using their numerous talents and gifts to assist others.”

The pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) for 50 years, Lawrence was also noted for becoming the first Black man elected to City Council and the first Black mayor in Fredericksburg. In total, he served 30 years in elected city office. In 2019, Mary Katherine presented Lawrence with a proclamation from the city to commemorate his service and to declare him “Mayor for Life.”

Janice received accolades, as well, for her decades of service as an inspirational educator and for her leadership and compassion through numerous church ministries, the American Cancer Society, and the Fredericksburg Area Sickle Cell Association.

“I knew Reverend and Mrs. Davies my whole life and saw firsthand their service to the community,” says Susan Spears, President and CEO of the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce. “It was truly special to see them in action, the way they carried themselves and the differences they made in people’s lives. Everyone was special to them. They didn’t just give a hand out, they offered a hand up.”

Mary Washington Healthcare Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer Xavier Richardson says Reverend Davies was an icon and a mentor. “I lived in Mayfield and had a front-row seat to his

political career and all of his successes. It meant a lot to me as a young Black man, and it gave me hope for a better future,” says Xavier. “I also saw Reverend and Mrs. Davies experience the heartbreak of Sickle Cell Disease in their immediate family. Rather than cursing the darkness, however, they chose to light a candle to find ways to improve the lives of others in Fredericksburg and even at Mary Washington Healthcare. While humble in their faith, they truly had a profound impact on healthcare, transportation, politics, and servant leadership in our community.”

Donations to the endowment at The Community Foundation will honor Lawrence and Janice’s dedication to service while allowing others to support the causes they held dear. Grants from the fund will be awarded to highly volunteer-driven and supported nonprofit organizations who

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## Intentional and Inspirational Support

William (Bill) and Susanna (Sue) Botts have a special place in their hearts for immigrant children struggling to earn an education in the United States. A few years ago, they donated personal funds to the Community Foundation to create a scholarship for two immigrant students each year.

"The foundation staff made it easy to establish the fund, and they facilitate the awarding of the scholarships each year," says Bill. "This summer, we met our recipients at the Community Foundation's Scholarship Reception, and we were so impressed with the Oti brothers. Both were high academic achievers in high school, as well as active leaders in community service."

Born in Ghana, the two brothers immigrated to the U.S. as young children and graduated from Stafford High School. Kennedy Oti is in his second year at Virginia Tech and plans to

study aerospace engineering. Richard Oti is majoring in data science at MIT and hopes to research ways computer automation can improve food accessibility.

The Botts have dedicated their lives to helping others through their careers, mission trips and volunteer service. After graduating from George Washington Law School, Bill spent more than 40 years representing immigrants in civil matters as a Legal Aid attorney, and another eight years as an immigration attorney. Sue attended college in Missouri and then joined Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), coming to the D.C. area, where she met and married Bill. Sue was a preschool, elementary and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for more than 30 years.

"We've seen firsthand the struggles people face in the countries they are born, and we know the many obstacles they face when they immigrate to the U.S.," says Sue.

"Our Community Foundation fund helps fill an important need, and our scholarship students have become the grandkids we never had."

**For the 2023-2024 academic year, the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region distributed over \$200,000 in scholarships to more than 50 local students. These scholarships are available through the thoughtful intentions of our generous donors. Contact us today to learn how you can contribute to an existing scholarship fund. We can also guide you through the steps to create your own fund that serves a specific need meaningful to you.**

**[scholarships@cfrrr.org](mailto:scholarships@cfrrr.org)**



Left to Right: Sue Botts, Bill Botts, Kennedy Oti and Richard Oti

# A Strategic Gift

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Left to right: Stu Ashton, Lisa Bieber, Drew Gladwell, Secretary, Margie Stevens and Andy Lacatell

Defining goals and setting strategies are difficult in our personal lives, and even more complex for nonprofit organizations and their staff and board members. Earlier this year, The Community Foundation invested in a special program to provide guidance and support for nonprofits seeking to create or update their strategic plans.

Collaborating with the Center for Nonprofit Excellence, The Spark Mill and Germanna Community College, The Community Foundation selected members of its first cohort from a competitive pool of applicants for a four-session strategic planning workshop held in early 2024. Six different organizations will be selected this fall to participate in the second cohort, with sessions beginning in January 2025.

Chris Bennett, Senior Consultant at The Spark Mill in Richmond, says he has seen benefits and great outcomes in helping organizations plan their work. "Many nonprofits don't have the expertise or the funds to do a full-blown strategic plan," he says. "We help them focus and

brainstorm while guiding them through the process during four monthly sessions. We get to see the 'Aha' moments and hear about the challenges they face, but they do all the work during and in between sessions to set objectives, define measurable goals, and create a custom plan."

Lisa Bieber, Executive Director of the Northern Neck Land Conservancy in Warsaw, attended the sessions as part of the first cohort, along with representatives of the Conservancy's staff and board. "Creating a strategic plan can be an arduous ordeal, especially when you need it for an upcoming accreditation renewal. The Spark Mill staff made it simple and efficient, and we left this process with a strong framework to help us move forward," says Lisa. "We appreciate the no-cost opportunity provided by The Community Foundation, and we were surprised and delighted to also receive a grant that we can use to complete or implement our strategic plan."

Chris adds that strategic planning is good for defining a mission, but it also serves to support fundraising. "It says a lot that

The Community Foundation has the foresight and vision to invest in nonprofits to provide access to tools and direction to build capacity," he says. "When nonprofit organizations succeed in their planning, it helps the grants they receive go even further for greater impact on the people and areas they serve."

**The 2025 Group Strategic Planning Sessions will be held at Germanna in Fredericksburg from January to April 2025. This experience for small to medium-sized nonprofits will be a blend of personalized attention and cohort support. Applications are open through November 3. For more information or to apply, visit <https://www.cfr.org/nonprofit-strategic-planning-cohort/>**

# Honoring Those Who Came Before

**The Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund was created in 2009 through a bequest to the Community Foundation. Grants are made each year to organizations that meet specific criteria for causes most important to Mr. Green, including those advancing local historic/cultural preservation like the Oliver Cemetery Project. You too can create a perpetual fund to support the people and organizations most important to you. Contact the Community Foundation to learn about the options and simple steps you can take today to include a bequest in your estate plans.**

A walk in the woods in 2022 to investigate a centuries-old cemetery led parishioners of St. Mary of the Annunciation and Caroline County community members to seek guidance and funding to protect what has become known as Oliver Cemetery. Honoring what they now consider to be a sacred and moral trust, they formed the Caroline County Cemetery Group and recruited leaders with legal, finance and grant-writing expertise, as well as those

with experience in archeology and history, communications and outreach, cemetery preservation and grounds management.

In 2023, the group applied for and received a grant from the Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund facilitated through the Community Foundation. Since that time, the 10-member committee has made remarkable progress in directing the clearing of groundcover and fallen trees, the use of ground penetrating radar to locate unmarked burial sites, and the collection of oral histories about the people buried in Oliver Cemetery – many of whom were once enslaved.

Committee Chair Joan Cormier and Jean Cuthbertson note that Oliver Cemetery is on the grounds of a former plantation, land acquired by St. Mary in 1992 to build a new church. “We’ve discovered 216 burial sites, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources officially registered the plot as a historic cemetery,” they add.

Catherine Grimes explains the project’s funding and scope of the remaining work. “Our project is fully funded by private and

corporate donations and grants, such as the one from the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region,” she says. “In the next year, we will identify the exact boundaries of the cemetery, add a buffer with erosion control, and install fencing, pathways and signage.”

In addition to the physical work, Denise Crothers says the committee will continue to conduct research and outreach to fully document and publish the findings of the project and its historical significance to the community and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Final plans for Oliver Cemetery will include input from descendants of those buried within. “The intent of our work is to honor the men, women, and children who once lived and toiled in Caroline County and were buried on that plot of land throughout the ages,” says Anna Porter. “We want to acknowledge that their lives mattered, and we hope their descendants can use our work to discover more about their ancestors.”



Joan Cormier



cemetery grounds

# Grant Helps Enhance Technology and Connectivity

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For nearly four decades, the Fredericksburg PC Users Group offered opportunities for area residents to learn essential skills as computers became fixtures in the workplace and filtered into our homes. The nonprofit group held fundraisers and offered classes and grants to support local organizations, but recently made the tough decision to dissolve its nonprofit status and donate all charitable funds to The Community Foundation.

“The Foundation has a solid reputation in this region for its expertise,” says Frank Fota, Secretary and Newsletter Editor for the PC Users Group. “They know how to communicate with local nonprofit organizations and how to assess their needs. As equipment, programs, and uses continue to evolve, we’re confident our mission of helping nonprofits with technological needs will be served by the Foundation well into perpetuity.”

This summer, organizations applied for grants from the newly established Fredericksburg PC Users Group Fund; recipients were announced in September. The response and demand for technology assistance was so great, The Community Foundation awarded two grants from the Fredericksburg PC Users Group Fund and an additional three grants from The Community Foundation’s unrestricted fund.

Loisann’s Hope House applied for and received one of the grants to provide reliable and secure internet access for families residing on its six-home campus in Fredericksburg. “This is an absolute game-changer for us,” says Executive Director Cait Woodward. “The internet today is a necessity when it comes to applying for jobs or public assistance, accessing medical services, and even doing homework.”

Hope House is the oldest and largest family homeless shelter in the region. “Our mission is to break the cycle of homelessness one

family at a time and to make sure every child has a safe place to sleep at night,” says Cait. “Since January we have served 100 people, including 56 children. This new grant will have a huge impact in maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of our families’ digital information, and children will be able to use the internet to study in a safe, monitored environment.”

In addition to Loisann’s Hope House, the following nonprofit organizations also received grants in support of their technological needs:

- Rappahannock Area Office on Youth – New, updated desktop computers to enhance classroom learning.
- Rappahannock CASA, Inc. – New printer and ink to facilitate printing of volunteer training materials and written court reports.
- Downtown Greens, Inc. – New desktop computer, software, and staff support to map and create a digital log of 60-acres of urban greenspace to better facilitate education and service programs.
- Legal Aid Works – Scanner, copier, projector, and software to facilitate staff and volunteer training and applicant-screening for legal assistance.

**It can be complicated and time-consuming to request and verify grant applications for awarding charitable support. The Community Foundation has processes in place and can ensure the people and organizations with the greatest need are selected to receive appropriate funding. Contact us today to create your own fund or to learn more about donating to a fund already established.**

## Connecting Donor Interest and Intent to Nonprofit Need



**Staff members at The Community Foundation take pride in simplifying the giving process. We can help you offer essential support to nonprofit organizations in a manner that is effective and efficient. Contact us to learn more about the various types of funds you can create and name for yourself or a loved one, or how you can contribute to an existing fund now.**

Since 1997, The Community Foundation has been connecting donors to nonprofit organizations in the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline, and King George. Currently, The Community Foundation manages more than 170 funds and facilitates awards of numerous grants and named scholarships.

Casey Hu, Director of Donor Services, explains that each fund has a specific purpose and defined criteria for its

distribution. Some funds require nonprofit organizations to apply and actually compete for available grants. "Our overall goal is to get funding to everyone who needs it, but this undertaking can be intensive," says Casey. "In my role, I'm kind of like an air traffic controller. I manage all grants that go out the door and ensure the donor's intent matches with each charitable contribution to an appropriate organization. Sometimes we award the full grant to an organization as requested, other times we offer partial grants, and sometimes we have to say 'not now,' or 'not this grant.'"

While The Community Foundation Board of Governors is legally responsible for approving grants, Donor-Advised funds enable donors to actively participate in the grant-making process. "Many of our donors prefer to recommend charitable projects or organizations they want to support, so we help make that happen," says Casey. "Other times, we may receive a Letter of Introduction (LOI) from an organization expressing a timely or essential need. We share those LOIs with donors whose

interests may align with a particular organization, and let them decide if they wish to offer support. All in all, we do everything we can to make the award process efficient and effective for all our donors."

The community foundation awarded \$2.7 million to support the needs of local nonprofit organizations and students with over 500 grants in fy2024. Casey says some grants each year are for basic supplies, such as food or a new printer and ink, while other grant requests are for essential infrastructure or programmatic support.

"I recall a grant we made to Safe Harbor, a fantastic organization that coordinates team interviews at their facility to reduce stress and trauma on abuse victims," says Casey. "They didn't receive the state funding they requested and were faced with cutting essential services. We arranged a grant from our unrestricted Community Fund to help them maintain their operation until the next budget cycle."

Another part of Casey's job is communicating impact and reporting results. "We share thank you letters with our donors, whether they are from scholarship recipients or individuals receiving aid from one of our grantees. We also prepare and send regular reports to show updates and how their funds are being used. We want our donors to know the good work they are doing and that we appreciate their trust in choosing The Community Foundation to be the conduit for their philanthropic giving."

A graduate of Mary Washington College (now UMW), Casey has been with The Community Foundation for more than 12 years. She regularly participates in coalitions with nonprofits and local leaders to discuss and address issues such as food access or affordable housing. "I love this community, my job and being in the know," says Casey. "It's truly satisfying to help our nonprofits while honoring the wishes of our donors."

# Scholarships 2024

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*Lasting Impact Continued from page 1*

meet specific criteria for addressing social inequities within the community, while empowering individuals and families to realize their fullest potential.

“The effects of what they accomplished in the community is still being felt today,” says Mary Katherine. “Our goal was to create something real and intentional to offer perpetual assistance to the causes they supported. This new endowment will do just that.”

“Reverend Davies served on The Community Foundation’s first full board in the late 1990s,” says Susan. “We know this Foundation and its mission mattered to them, so it’s a perfect match to have the fund named in their honor managed by such a well-established organization.”

“Together, Reverend and Mrs. Davies touched so many lives,” adds Xavier. “This is a humble way to honor and recognize their selflessness while representing well the ideals of their respective legacies.”

**Creating a fund through The Community Foundation is a simple and convenient way to honor family and friends by ensuring their legacy of service and generosity continues to benefit organizations and people important to them. For more information, visit [www.cfrrr.org/establish-a-fund](http://www.cfrrr.org/establish-a-fund) or contact [info@cfrrr.org](mailto:info@cfrrr.org) today.**



# Ring in The Holidays A Toast to the Future

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**Wednesday, December 4, 2024**  
**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**  
**The Community Foundation**  
**Mill Race North II**  
**725 Jackson Street**  
**Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401**

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