



beaches people. *meeting beaches needs.*

IMPACT REPORT

First Three Years of Grantmaking

In its first three years, the Beaches Community Fund has made 29 grants totaling \$673,060 to 18 organizations. What a tremendous force for good in the Beaches communities!

At a recent meeting, the Grants Committee had the opportunity to reflect on the Fund's grantmaking over its first three years and the difference it has made at the Beaches. The report below provides highlights from that conversation and a glimpse into the ways your investments have truly had a significant impact.

Transportation

In its first three years, the Beaches Community Fund made 4 grants totaling \$45,000 in the area of transportation, but the Fund's impact on Beaches families' access to transportation was much bigger than its grant dollars.

The Beaches Community Fund set out to improve transportation access, including into St. Johns County and to Downtown and the Southside (where jobs are concentrated), into West Atlantic Beach and Mayport (where the need for transportation access is most acute), and within the Beaches communities (where transportation is available, but routes and stops are limited).

Beaches Community Fund members led with advocacy, joining forces with the Beaches Action Team (a network of nonprofit, faith-based, government, and business leaders led by Baptist Health and focused on improving employment opportunities by boosting access to transportation) and Palms Presbyterian Church. Together, these partners gathered data, advocated with JTA, and worked together to develop viable solutions.

As a result, the new JTA Beaches Flyer will offer faster routes to Downtown and the Southside. A Beaches Community Fund grant helped Dial-A-Ride add a second vehicle to expand its service into St. Johns County and Mayport, and expand its eligibility to include employment-related transportation. Thanks to small grants from the Beaches Community Fund, BEAM and Sulzbacher Clinic were able to switch from cabs to a corporate Uber account to provide transportation for their clients when needed. A small grant to Mission House helped them provide their clients with more JTA passes for transportation to new jobs *and* to bring a JTA pass machine to Mission House's site, so valuable staff time isn't wasted traveling downtown to purchase passes for clients. Finally, with the Beaches Action Team, there is now a strong network of advocates working together to monitor progress in transportation access and continue to develop solutions. The Beaches Community Fund will continue to participate in this group and identify future opportunities to make a difference.

Early Childhood Learning

The Beaches Community Fund has made seven grants totaling \$183,750 to improve early childhood learning at the Beaches.

The Beaches Community Fund adopted three goals related to early childhood learning: (1) expanding the number of available, affordable seats in high-quality early learning centers; (2) boosting literacy skills at existing centers and home-care facilities; and (3) providing learning opportunities for children not enrolled at a center.

To meet the first goal, the Beaches Community Fund made two grants to help create the new Rhoda Martin Head Start Center in Jacksonville Beach – one grant to support building costs, and one to build a beautiful outdoor playground. The Beaches Community Fund worked with the Kids Hope Alliance (a branch of the City of Jacksonville that focuses on children’s services) to address goals 2 and 3. As a result, a new program was launched this year to help parents in the Mayport Road area promote development and learning at home with their young children – from birth onward. Trainers from the Kids Hope Alliance will also be working directly with Beaches-area child care centers and home-care centers to strengthen their literacy curricula.

The Beaches Community Fund and Kids Hope Alliance are also working together to build a network of advocates for early learning at the Beaches. The brand-new Early Learning Exchange, created with a Beaches Community Fund grant, will bring together child care centers, parents, local government leaders, school principals, law enforcement, and an array of stakeholders. This network will work collaboratively to address the shortage of early learning opportunities at the Beaches.

And, throughout the first three years, the Beaches Community Fund has invested in book fairs through Read USA and Scholastic that built a love of literacy. Through these fairs, the Beaches Community Fund has provided nearly 2,000 Beaches children the opportunity to pick out books of their own choosing.

The Grants Committee will monitor the progress of these investments, many of which are just beginning to take hold, and provide the support needed to help them succeed.

Strong Nonprofit Sector

The Beaches Community Fund’s first-ever grant was to the Nonprofit Center for Northeast Florida to launch the Eleanor Ashby Series. The series was a joint venture between the Nonprofit Center and the Beaches Community Fund, and was designed to provide opportunities for Beaches nonprofits to grow stronger, access training, build peer networks, and promote collaboration. In its first three years, the Beaches Community Fund made four separate grants totaling \$63,600 toward the series.

As a result, Beaches-area nonprofits have much greater access to Nonprofit Center trainings and peer networks. Dozens of Beaches nonprofits regularly take advantage of the programming, which the Nonprofit Center shapes based on members’ requests. Thanks to peer networks and events, Beaches-area nonprofits have built stronger relationships and report higher levels of communication and collaboration.

The creation of the Eleanor Ashby Series built a strong foundation. During the upcoming grant cycle, the Grants Committee will be considering “2.0” strategies for helping Beaches nonprofits grow stronger and more collaborative (including next-level trainings, one-on-one coaching or mentoring for nonprofit leaders, and/or organization-specific capacity building).

Affordability of Basic Needs

Though the Beaches are one of the more affluent areas of our region, many Beaches families and individuals struggle to afford life's basic needs. Beaches Community Fund made tremendous and transformative investments in organizations that help reduce hunger, provide health care for the working poor, offer behavioral health support for children and adults, and help families and individuals transition to housing. Altogether, the Fund made 10 grants totaling \$475,000 in this area.

As a result of the Beaches Community Fund's grant to provide refrigeration equipment at BEAM's new Community Food Bank, BEAM is now able to accept donations of produce and protein from grocery stores – exponentially increasing the amount of food they are able to reclaim as well as the nutritional value of the food. Thanks to a second grant from the Fund, BEAM is able to expand its mobile pantry operations, ensuring food from the Community Food Bank reaches the pockets of our community where it is most needed. Small grants to St. John the Baptist Church's Emergency Assistance Ministry allowed this small but mighty effort to offer more mobile pantries, more nutritious food, and hygiene kits for families struggling to afford cleaning and hygiene supplies.

The Beaches Community Fund made two grants to help Mission House transition to a "housing first" strategy – a more effective and cost-effective approach to serving homeless individuals, which prioritizes getting clients into stable housing while they shore up other aspects of their lives such as employment and behavioral health.

WeCare was able to expand a program that helps low-income individuals who present at the emergency room for routine medical problems make the transition into primary care with support from a nurse case manager, local nonprofits such as BEAM and Mission House, and – thanks to two Beaches Community Fund grants – follow-up home visits to ensure patients understand and are following medication and therapy instructions.

Behavioral health supports for low-income Beaches residents a few years ago were few and far between. The Beaches Community Fund made a one-time grant to help Child Guidance (a nonprofit, and the largest provider of mental health services for children in Duval County) open a Beaches office. Child Guidance is the only provider serving Medicaid-eligible children at the Beaches, and their office is now self-sustaining. The Fund also provided start-up funding for a mental health wellness center at 7 North, a one-stop service hub created by Beach Church.

These investments represent a significant leap forward in helping Beaches residents afford their most basic needs, and the Grants Committee will continue to look for opportunities to build on this foundation. All Fund members will have an opportunity to learn more about food insecurity at the Beaches at an upcoming educational event.

Student Supports and Enrichment

Before the Beaches Community Fund launched in 2015, our early research underscored the need for afterschool programs, leadership and enrichment programs, and in-school supports for students in grades K-12 at the Beaches. Though Fund members did not initially select this as a funding priority, the Fund received applications from, and ultimately awarded four grants totaling \$45,000 to, organizations working in this field.

As a result of these comparatively small grants, an array of programs have been created and strengthened. Thanks to two small grants from the Beaches Community Fund, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council was able to create community development troops that help dozens of girls build leadership skills at the Beaches Boys & Girls Club and at the Gail Baker Center off of Mayport Road. Beaches Habitat was able to upgrade its afterschool tutoring program with better training for tutors and enhanced

programming. And finally, Community in Schools was able to bring its successful model of case management and in-school supports for at-risk students to Mayport Middle School.

Because our first three years of grantmaking have underscored the dire need for these types of programs, the Grants Committee will look for opportunities in future years to make sound grants that will help build and enhance in-school supports, afterschool programs, and enrichment for K-12 students.

Other Themes

The membership of the Beaches Community Fund has been strategic – selecting a few areas to concentrate their grant dollars – yet has deliberately remained open to continued learning and evolution.

The Fund invested not just in particular programs or services, but in helping nonprofits grow and change the way they work. Through grants, the Fund helped four anchor nonprofits at the Beaches implement a major project, or transform a key aspect of their work. Meanwhile, six grants were made to replicate successful programs within the Beaches communities, making these best-practice programs available to Beaches residents for the first time.

As BEAM CEO Lori Richards told Beaches Community Fund members in 2018, “The Beaches have never lacked generosity; we have lacked infrastructure.” By investing in the nonprofits that meet critical needs at the Beaches – in their successful programs and efforts, and in their growth as organizations – the Beaches Community Fund is stepping up to help create that infrastructure, and it is making a tremendous difference.

We look forward to another three years of Beaches people *truly* meeting Beaches needs.

Submitted by: Tracy Tousey

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