

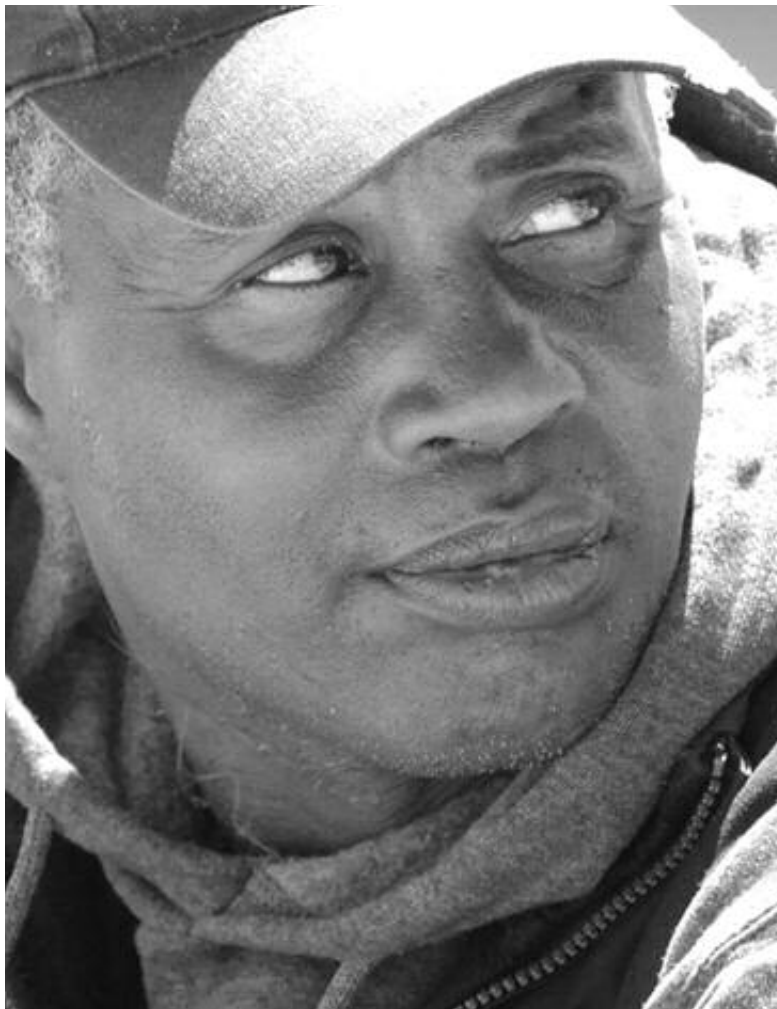
JESSIE BALL DUPONT FUND

notes from the field



PATCHING THE SAFETY NET

Number 20 - Spring 2009



**ABOUT THE COVER:** *The family featured on the cover, and all of the individuals featured throughout this book, were residents or guests of homeless shelters in Northeast Florida in March 2009. Photographs by Mike Erdelyi.*

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## i n t r o d u c t i o n

As the equity markets began to plummet in the fall of 2008, eroding endowments and stifling charitable giving, we made some strategic decisions to help community-based nonprofits provide essential services to the growing population of citizens in need.

Through investments in Wilmington, Delaware; Richmond, Virginia; and Jacksonville, Florida, the Fund partnered with its eligible organizations and community funders to support those nonprofit organizations that provide food, shelter and emergency financial assistance for housing and utilities.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund was not unique in this effort. Across the country, private foundations, community foundations, corporate foundations and other large-scale funders responded generously to the needs of communities and the nonprofit organizations that serve as the safety net for our fellow citizens. The list on page 5 shows just a sampling of the philanthropic response to this crisis in recent months.

In this issue of *Notes from the Field*, we report on the activities of the three safety net initiatives in Wilmington, Richmond and Jacksonville, each of which has used a slightly different approach to address immediate need as well as longer-term strategic challenges.

While we take pride in our ability to help these communities, and we applaud the

good work that has been done, we remain concerned that rising unemployment and reduced charitable giving will erode community-based emergency human services designed to maintain a decent standard of living for our most vulnerable citizens.

By the end of 2008, U.S. stocks, as measured by the Standard & Poor's index of 500 stocks, had lost 37% of their value, and other investments, from commodities to real estate investment trusts and international equities had suffered similar losses. As a result, private charitable foundations, including the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, saw the value of their endowments drop sharply during 2008.

How much did U.S. foundations lose? The Foundation Center estimates that U.S. foundation assets declined 22%, resulting in the loss of nearly \$150 billion in charitable resources in 2008.

The full impact of those losses – and the subsequent losses felt during the first quarter of 2009 – is yet to be felt.

Charitable giving by the 75,000-plus grantmaking foundations in the country was essentially flat during 2008, reflecting the fact that the steep losses to endowment values did not occur until late in the year. The Foundation Center reports that 2008 foundation giving rose 2.8% over 2007, but when adjusted for inflation (fueled by record oil and commodity prices), foundation giving was down 1%.

Private, non-operating foundations such as the Jessie Ball duPont Fund are required to pay out 5% of the value of their endowment annually in charitable distributions in order to retain their tax-exempt status. For private grantmaking foundations, the endowment value is calculated on a three-year rolling average, meaning that the impact of the late-2008 and early-2009 declines will be more acute in the coming 36 months. In other words, in 2009, 2010 and 2011, foundation giving levels by existing foundations are likely to be sharply lower.

It is no surprise that 68% of private foundations surveyed told The Foundation Center that they expect to reduce their giving in 2009.

"Even if a solid economic recovery begins in 2010, foundations that establish their grants budgets based on a rolling average of asset values...will be forced to factor in dismal 2008 performance," reports The Foundation Center in its annual Foundation Growth and Giving Estimate. "Of course, given the continuing deterioration of the market in early 2009, foundation assets could potentially be down more by year's end. In either case, it appears reasonable to expect that foundation giving will decline further in 2010."

The trustees of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, along with many of their colleagues at other foundations, have chosen to increase the Fund's payout in 2009 in order to maintain stability in our grantmaking budget. But that is a one-year decision.

Given the staggering need that citizens in our communities face, and the great uncertainty about the charitable resources that will be available in coming years, it is imperative that communities take a hard look at the manner in which they organize and fund delivery of basic services – food and shelter – to people in need. Government, business, nonprofits and philanthropy need to be deeply engaged in this conversation.

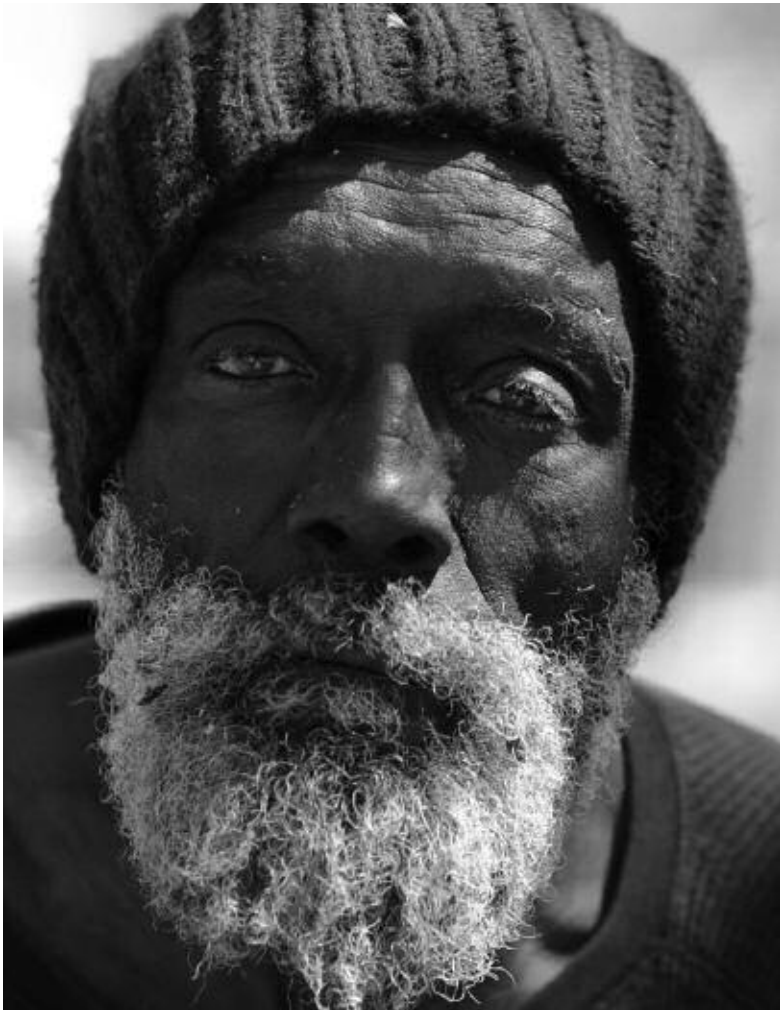
We recognize that among some, our decision to help nonprofit social safety net providers plug holes caused, in part, by government cutbacks is controversial. We continue to argue that funding a viable social safety net for vulnerable peoples is a core function of government.

The trustees and staff of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund are committed to helping those in need in the states and communities that were important to Mrs. duPont. But we cannot do it alone. We must find ways to work together, operate with creativity and efficiency, and advocate with government at all levels for the front-end investments that we know can mitigate need down the road.

A friend often says to me, "This is not the world we grew up in." She is right. It is a different world and it requires different thinking. And we applaud all of those who are trying to find a more humane way.



Sherry P. Magill  
President



## How Philanthropy Has Responded To The Economic Crisis

**A**cross the country, nonprofit organizations are struggling under the strain of the recession, which has eroded endowments, stymied fundraising and caused demand for services to skyrocket. The Nonprofit Finance Fund surveyed 986 nonprofits, including many "lifeline" organizations that financially needy people depend on for basics such as food and shelter. Only 16 percent of those surveyed said they expect to cover their operating expenses this year, while 52 percent anticipate the economic recession will have a long-term or permanent negative effect on their organizations.

In many communities, private funders – themselves struggling from significant financial losses – have stepped forward to help fill the gaps. Below is a sampling of initiatives that have been launched in the last 12 months.

### **Silicon Valley Community Foundation**

Mountain View, California

Safety Net Fund to support safety net organizations in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, California. Total raised from endowment, donors and fund advisors: \$5 million.

### **Otto Bremer Foundation**

St. Paul, Minnesota

Bremer Emergency Fund to provide emergency financial assistance for food, housing, health care and transportation in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Total funding: \$4.2 million.

### **California Community Foundation**

Los Angeles, California

Supports basic food and shelter needs in Los Angeles and provides capacity building resources for Los Angeles nonprofits. Total funding: \$1.7 million (December 2008)

### **Marin Community Foundation**

Novato, California

Support of local food banks and food pantries, housing and emergency assistance programs. Total funding: \$1 million (December 2008).

### **San Francisco Foundation**

San Francisco, California

California Home Owner Preservation Project to support

community-based nonprofit housing counseling agencies providing foreclosure intervention counseling. Total funding: \$5 million.

### **Boston Foundation**

Boston, Massachusetts

Support of regional organizations that help local residents in distress. Total funding: \$750,000. (October 2008)

### **Hartford Foundation**

Hartford, Connecticut

Support of nonprofits combating hunger and homelessness. Total funding: \$1 million. (February 2009)

### **The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta**

Atlanta, Georgia

Support of nonprofits providing relief focused on emergency assistance and the foreclosure crisis. Total funding: \$200,000.

### **Seattle Foundation**

Seattle, Washington

Building Resilience Fund, to help organizations working with families hard hit by the economic downturn. Total funding: \$800,000. (February 2009)

### **Meyer Memorial Trust**

Portland, Oregon

Support of food banks and support the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force. Total funding: \$550,000. (January 2009)

### **The Greater Milwaukee Foundation**

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Basic Needs Fund, helping local nonprofits support individuals and families in need of food and shelter. Total funding: \$371,000.

### **United Way of Central Maryland**

Baltimore, Maryland

Emergency Response Fund to help charities meet the demand for food, shelter and utility assistance in Baltimore area. Goal: \$1 million.

### **The Dallas Foundation**

Dallas, Texas

Safety Net Fund to support local nonprofits. Funding: \$1.4 million (December 2008)

### **The Community Foundation of the National Capital Region**

Washington, D.C.

Neighbors In Need Fund to support nonprofits in greater Washington, D.C. that provide safety net services such as food, clothing and shelter. Funding: \$800,000, goal \$1 million.

*All totals are as of March 2009, unless otherwise noted.*



## The Community Safety Net Fund

*Jacksonville, Florida*

In the fall of 2008, the staff of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund made some quiet inquiries at key Jacksonville nonprofit organizations to understand how they were faring in the worsening economy. The answers they received were disturbing:

Community feeding programs had reduced the number of days meals were served. Soup kitchens were in danger of closing. Urban food pantries were almost bare and those in some middle class suburbs had been swamped with customers.

Charities reported seeing waves of "first-time" needy. At homeless shelters, a new class of customer had emerged – the "drive-in:" – individuals and families who still had homes and cars but drove to the centers for meals, saving money needed to pay the rent or utility bill.

In short, the economic downtown had left thousands of people needing emergency assistance and the organizations that provide that assistance – the nonprofit "safety net" – were strained almost to the breaking point.

In other communities, the economic meltdown of 2008 would be marked by plant closings, corporate failures or massive layoffs. But in Florida in general and Jacksonville in particular, the economic recession started much earlier and had a more insidious impact.

Florida's real estate market, which had

been overheated for almost five years, began cooling in 2005 and by summer 2007 the state was, unofficially, in a recession, with state government facing revenue shortfalls in the billions of dollars. Public dollar funding – from state and local governments – for emergency services for the needy began to dry up at the same time need began to grow. By late 2008, the slap of the national downturn was just the latest in a series of blows to the state's economy and its vulnerable citizens.

The trustees and staff of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund were keenly interested in finding ways to assist struggling social safety net organizations. But there were challenges.

"We knew we had an immediate crisis on our hands," said Sherry Magill, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. "Some of these organizations were facing serious financial challenges and the services to the clients were at risk. But we also knew that an immediate infusion of cash, while helpful, would not necessarily change things over the long run. We needed longer-term strategies to help the safety net function more effectively."

In November, Magill conferred with Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton and apprised him of the emerging crisis among the community's safety net nonprofits. Just before Thanksgiving, Peyton, his staff, and representatives of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and The Community Foundation in Jacksonville

met at the I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless to understand more about the growing crisis. A week later, the two foundations convened representatives of more than a dozen key nonprofits that provide significant emergency relief services to gather data and assess the situation.

The partnership with The Community Foundation was logical and strategic. Mrs. duPont's will restricts the trustees to supporting only those organizations to which Mrs. duPont contributed during the early 1960s. Many critical safety-net organizations are not eligible for support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. The Community Foundation is an eligible organization and, thus, can provide additional philanthropic channels within the community.

In late November, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund trustees established a field of interest fund at The Community Foundation, creating The Community Safety Net Fund, which would provide short-term, emergency financial support to safety net organizations in the area. The fund was capitalized with \$500,000 and an additional \$500,000 in matching dollars was pledged.

The fund was first announced publicly in early December, during a meeting of the Donors Forum of Northeast Florida. By the end of the meeting, more than \$285,000 had been raised toward the match. By the end of January, matching gifts were up to \$480,000 and the full match was met in March. Additionally,

the City of Jacksonville contributed \$100,000 to the fund during the first quarter of 2009. In total, more than two dozen donors in addition to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and The Community Foundation contributed to the fund.

The fund was a shot-in-the-arm for the community and the agencies.

Just as the contributions were quick in coming, the staff of both foundations were committed to expediting the grants to organizations. The first grants were made in December 2008, and by April 15, \$1.24 million had been awarded to 13 organizations.

Grants ranged from \$14,000 to a faith-based urban food pantry to grants of more than \$100,000 each to the community's major homeless shelter, the major food pantry, Catholic Charities and Salvation Army. In addition, the fund awarded a major grant to the agency that coordinates emergency services for the elderly in the region.

In many respects, the fundraising and grantmaking were the easy parts. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund staff, and their Community Foundation partners, recognized the need for activities that would have a more lasting effect on the community.

To that end, staff reconvened the group of nonprofit organizations in January to explore more strategic approaches. What emerged from that session were

two working groups – one focused on food pantries and feeding programs, the other focused on shelter issues.

These “SWAT teams,” as they were called, were tasked with identifying quick and doable tasks that would positively impact the distribution of food and availability and affordability of safe housing among the needy in Jacksonville.

The Shelter SWAT Team connected with representatives of the local electric utility, the Jacksonville Electric Authority, which shared with the group a unique pilot project it had completed to improve weatherization of low-income housing. Using its data collection and analysis tools, the JEA was able to identify pockets in the community where high home electric usage suggested the need for improved weatherization. Through the pilot project, the JEA had demonstrated that a \$750 or less investment in attic insulation could dramatically lower electric bills for these homeowners, freeing up resources needed for food, medical care and transportation.

Armed with this knowledge, the SWAT Team is now working with the City of Jacksonville and other agencies to access federal funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, enabling expansion of the weatherization project across Northeast Florida.

The Food SWAT Team, meanwhile, convened the chefs, procurement officers and food pantry managers at homeless shelters, soup kitchens and food pantries across the city to explore ways that collaboration could lower costs and improve efficiencies.

By April, the group had agreed to consolidate purchasing of paper and cleaning supplies, channeling the orders through the area’s major food pantry, which has warehouse storage capacity and distribution systems. This bulk-buying approach is expected to lower costs for each participating agency. If this approach is successful, the group plans to look at bulk purchase of staple food products.

“One of our greatest lessons, in this and other work, has been the power of people to solve their own problems,” said Magill. “The challenge, more often than not, is the absence of social networks and relationships, the lack of communication and the inability to come together.”

“At the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, we believe that our work bringing people together and providing space and support for networks and collaborations to form is every bit as valuable as the dollars we invest. Communities need both, of course, but citizens, when given opportunity and support, have a wonderful capacity to address community challenges.”



## The Safety Net Fund

*Richmond, Virginia*

The safety net of organizations that serves those in need in Richmond and Central Virginia is sagging and, in some places, starting to break down. Major employers are closing or downsizing, laying off workers and thrusting more people into the lines at food banks, homeless shelters and other agencies that form the emergency assistance infrastructure.

Unemployment in February 2009 was 6.6%, almost double the 3.5% of last year, and is expected to reach 7% to 9% with the loss of major employers such as retailer Circuit City, insurer LandAmerica, and Qimonda, a semiconductor manufacturer, all of which have closed their doors. The closings have added many middle-class families to the clientele of emergency service agencies, which previously relied on them for donations.

Darcy Oman, president and chief executive officer of the Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia, knew when she saw the increasing demand and shrinking resources that Richmond's social safety net needed a safety net of its own.

In the fall of 2008, the Foundation board decided to retain its rate of spending, 4.25%, and set aside an additional \$1 million for a Safety Net Fund, even though the value of its own assets was down considerably. (The Foundation ended the year with the

market value of its portfolio down 21.3 %.)

After making its commitment, the Foundation began raising additional funds to plump up the Safety Net Fund.

"We never fund-raised in the traditional sense," Oman said. "United Way was doing its campaign, and we didn't want to hurt them."

Instead, the Foundation sent an email to its internal family of 650 donors and professional advisers requesting contributions to the fund.

In an impressive show of the efficacy of the Internet and the devotion of the foundation's donor base, \$800,000 was raised in four weeks, including \$50,000 from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund's donor advised fund at The Community Foundation in Jacksonville.

"The people who contributed to this round were motivated by the big picture. The core of this group comes from our 250 to 300 donor-advised funds," Oman said. "These people acted on their basis of experience with the foundation."

By early March, the Community Foundation had awarded \$608,600 in safety net grants, in addition to the \$350,000 in grants earmarked for basic human needs in the 2009 funding cycle.

"We have three strategies for the Safety Net Fund," Oman said.

- To help strengthen the ability of regional safety net organizations to respond to additional demands;
- To provide limited support for neighborhood-based organizations;
- To offer funding for emergency assistance to nonprofits in any field that can make a compelling case for the need to survive and have demonstrated that their organization has taken steps to put itself back on a path to financial stability.

For example, a \$97,000 safety net grant was awarded to Goodwill Industries of Central Virginia to enable it to reinstate three employment counselors. Goodwill operates five community employment centers and expects to assist 17,000 people this year, an increase of 4,000 (31%) from last year.

"We are hopeful they receive federal stimulus funds," Oman said.

Commonwealth Catholic Charities, another long-term service provider, was awarded a \$75,000 safety net grant for its HELP program, which teaches clients about budgeting, credit and financial management. In 2008, HELP assisted 558 clients, an increase of 10% over 2007. It expects to add another 100 clients this year. The grant also will shore up HELP's food pantry, which has seen demand increase 135% in the past year.

In this economy, nonprofits are learning the same hard lesson the business community is learning: Adapt or die.

The Central Virginia region, which Oman estimates has as many as 2,000 nonprofits with revenues of at least \$25,000, could lose between 140 and 165 nonprofits in the next year, she said.

The Community Foundation has been helping some nonprofits develop survival strategies – streamlining services, identifying new funders, facilitating partnerships and mergers – as well helping organizations strengthen board leadership.

The Instructional Visiting Nurses Association, for instance, provides home health care to low-income families. But it recently cut its staff by 50% and discontinued providing personal care services. The agency is looking for new ways to generate income and build a stronger referral network with hospitals.

Because the agency provides services unavailable anywhere else, the Foundation gave it a \$75,000 safety net grant to keep it in business.

In addition to grants, the Community Foundation is providing technical assistance and training to nonprofits on topics such as human resources, budgeting in troubled times, and collaborations and mergers.

Last fall, the Foundation surveyed nonprofits to learn how they were dealing with the economic downturn. They found that many nonprofits did not know how to respond. They were cutting things like travel and staff training from their budgets, but hadn't developed long-term financial strategies.

Richmond CASA, which assigns trained and supervised volunteers to work one-on-one with abused and neglected children who are involved in the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, was hobbled by multiple leadership changes, a loss of corporate donations and federal funding, and an increased demand for its services.

A \$15,000 safety net grant is enabling the agency to continue to provide services through 2009. In the meantime, CASA is sharing an executive director with Greater Richmond Stop Child Abuse Now and a merger is in the works.

Some nonprofits are forming partnerships in an effort to survive. Others are joining forces to build their capacity to respond to rising demands.

Last summer the Central Virginia Foodbank and Meals on Wheels Serving Central Virginia joined forces under the umbrella of FeedMore.

The merger grew out of a joint project to build a community kitchen, which both agencies needed. The Community Kitchen prepares thousands of meals

with food donated to the food bank for distribution through Meals on Wheels and other feeding programs that serve seniors and children. In a disaster, the kitchen can prepare 25,000 meals.

The merger has helped the agencies develop stronger leadership, broader fundraising and streamlined services, and begin planning for the future.

Applications for Meals on Wheels have risen 37 percent and calls to the food bank hotline are up 57 percent in the last year, said Pat Morris, vice president of philanthropy for FeedMore. One thing is certain: demand will increase, for multiple reasons.

"We know for instance that as the baby boomer generation ages, the demand for Meals on Wheels will triple in the coming years," Morris said.

But it's not just the elderly who have growing food needs. Voices for Virginia's Children, a statewide, non-profit research and advocacy group, estimates that when the unemployment rate reaches 8%, which could happen before year's end, the number of children living under the poverty level in Virginia will increase by 77,000, Morris said.

Demand for food increases during the summer when children no longer have access to subsidized school breakfasts and lunches, Morris said.

And a new problem has arisen that Morris said she hadn't anticipated. Food producers are reducing inventory. FeedMore recently received a grant to buy canned tuna but had to wait more than a month while the producer canned the fish.

"It's called 'build to order' and it is really causing a downfall in the donations of food," Morris said.

Natural disasters also impact the availability of food. In five of the last eight years, donations and food supplies have been diverted from regular programs to support the needs caused by major disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina.

FeedMore received a \$150,000 safety net grant to establish a fund to purchase food during lean times.

Safety net funds also have been used to help sustain a novel partnership with Virginia Hunters Who Care, a group of hunters who donate venison to feeding programs. Since its founding in 1991, Hunters Who Care has donated 3.3 million pounds of fresh meat to the food bank. A \$16,600 grant supported processing costs that had increased because of an extended hunting season.

A new partnership is being formed between FeedMore and the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. With a \$15,000 safety net grant, the botanical garden has agreed to grow fruit and vegetables for the food bank on a quarter acre of unused land.

The economic crisis also is changing the way the Community Foundation does business.

Traditionally, donors have given appreciated assets, but the dramatic decline in the stock market has reduced the value of investor portfolios.

Contributions to the Community Foundation were off 50% in 2008, and in the foreseeable future that is not expected to change, Oman said.

"In talking with our board, we see a shift in the next several years to an emphasis on deferred gifts rather than appreciated gifts," she said.

"The good news for Richmond is that this region is known as a pipeline of deferred and planned gifts. The Community Foundation is expecting to receive about \$300 million over time, although that hasn't been re-estimated lately," Oman said.

"We need to pay attention to and continue to cultivate donors who have left bequests or planned gifts so the community doesn't lose that future support."

The foundation also is hoping to capture charitable corporations that go out of business. The Foundation Center estimates that, nationwide, 100,000 of the 1.4 million charitable entities will go out of business by the end of the year.

"If we apply that theoretical model to our Richmond area, we are looking at between 80 and 120 going out of business in the next 12 months," Oman said. "Some will be very small and won't have remaining assets. But others will have assets, and we are thinking about how we can help to strategically deploy the remaining assets to another organization that is healthy or to an endowment that could help the community in the longer term."

Meanwhile, the stress on the safety net continues to grow. The uncertainty is the hardest part, Oman said.

"The great unknown is how will the economic stimulus dollars funnel or trickle down to us," she said. "No one seems to know how this is going to actually happen. There's a lot of confusion. We are using all our tools as strategically as we can but all the while we are looking over our shoulder."



## Delaware Does More

*Wilmington, Delaware*

To cope with the economic downturn, United Way of Delaware is prepared to glean the fields – literally. The agency that is synonymous with community fundraising is trying to think outside of the donation box, working to establish new connections throughout the state in such unconventional places as community gardens and agribusiness.

From January 2008 to January 2009, the Delaware economy shed 7,000 jobs, according to the state's Labor Department. Among them:

- 2,850 losses related to the decision by Chrysler LLC to close its Newark auto assembly plant;
- 800 lost when General Motors cut shifts at its Wilmington plant;
- 400 lost in layoffs at a fibers plant in southern Delaware;
- An unknown number lost in the DuPont Co.'s decision to cut 4,000 contract workers.

By February 2009, the state's unemployment rate was 7.4%, and the state reported 32,600 unemployed Delawareans compared with 17,600 in February 2008.

"Because Delaware is so small, everything that happens we feel quickly and everyone feels it at the same time," said Jim Donahue, vice president of marketing strategy and community impact for United Way.

In the nonprofit sector, the first signs of trouble appeared in summer 2008,

when the Food Bank of Delaware began running low on food and the number of people asking for help was up as much as 50 percent in some locations.

"This was only going to get worse," said Michelle Taylor, president and chief executive officer of United Way of Delaware.

Delaware has a population of 853,000 spread over three counties. Taylor's United Way agency serves the entire state, as does the Food Bank of Delaware, which is a member of Feeding America (formerly Second Harvest), a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks. A 2005 Hunger Study by the Food Bank found that almost 10 percent of Delaware's population annually received assistance from the 245 Delaware agencies that receive food from the Food Bank of Delaware.

As summer drifted into fall and the economy continued to deteriorate, nonprofit leaders noticed that some of the people who once made up the donor base for United Way, the Food Bank and other nonprofits had joined the client base.

In October, Taylor convened representatives of the 40 entities that provided or received funding from her agency. These included nonprofits and churches that offer services, as well as governmental agencies and corporations that form the funding base.

The task: identify 10 things the group

of organizations *could* do to address the immediate crisis, and then narrow that down to three things the organizations collectively *would* do.

The group assessed economic data, broke into small groups for discussions, and settled on three immediate tasks:

- Hold a statewide food drive to collect 300,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank of Delaware;

- Hold a statewide fund-raising drive to raise \$250,000 for utility and housing assistance.

- Begin a statewide initiative, seeded with \$50,000 from United Way, to develop a long-term strategy to address public policy that affects emergency assistance. For instance, Delaware is one of the few states that does not have a food recovery process, whereby restaurants can donate unused food to shelters.

The food- and fund-raising campaign was launched in November, under the banner of *Delaware Does More: Neighbors Helping Neighbors – All Winter Long.*

“We thought we would be more successful during the holidays but we were concerned about January, when people were overspent,” Taylor said. “We weren’t sure how we were going to keep the momentum going.”

The group found an ally in former state treasurer Jack Markell, who had recently been elected governor. Markell has a

history of interest in initiatives to support financially needy populations.

In January, during Markell’s inauguration festivities, the governor opted for a weekend of service in lieu of an inaugural ball. He incorporated *Delaware Does More* into that weekend of service.

The group found another valuable ally in Wilmington’s daily newspaper, *The Wilmington News Journal*, which agreed to publish the names of all donors in occasional, free full-page ads. The first ad listed 40 contributors; the second a month later listed 700.

“The *News Journal* kept highlighting people who were in need and people who were helping,” Taylor said. “They did an awesome job keeping it out there.”

At the same time that Taylor was overseeing *Delaware Does More*, she also was managing United Way of Delaware’s annual campaign, which had set a goal of \$22 million, the same as the previous year. Rather than conflicting with one another, the two campaigns co-existed comfortably. United Way’s annual campaign achieved its goal on schedule in January.

“What we found so amazing was how fast this caught on and the magnitude of the response,” Taylor said. “We didn’t have to explain it. Everyone was feeling it, and people were looking for a way to help.”

Food drives were conducted all over the state by churches, businesses of all sizes and civic groups. To help contributors focus on donating healthy food, some drives focused on specific products – pasta drives, or peanut-butter drives. In one community, four little girls collected 960 pounds of food using their red wagons.

By the end of February the four-month campaign had exceeded its first two goals, collecting 320,000 pounds of food and \$300,000 in monetary contributions, including \$50,000 from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.

The food went directly to the food bank and feeding centers.

The cash for utility and housing assistance was distributed to a dozen organizations, all but one United Way agencies.

An allocations committee comprising major donors, agencies and United Way staff decided how to allocate the cash contributions on a monthly basis. About 675 families received cash assistance for utilities and housing.

“Our criteria was to get it on the street as soon as possible,” Donahue said. “We didn’t want to create new programs or reinvent the wheel. We gravitated to agencies with long and good records of crisis alleviation.”

After the initial response, eyes turned to the longer-term challenges.

“Out of all our lessons learned, we saw that food is where people could do something,” Taylor said. “It almost overshadowed the shelter and utilities.

“We are working with utilities to find ways to keep utilities from being shut off,” she said. “The utility commission is doing an education campaign to show people how to conserve energy. And we are promoting the utility assistance fund.”

United Way and the Food Bank want to keep the momentum of *Delaware Does More* going but plan to take a different approach for summer.

“We don’t want people to feel overtaxed,” Taylor said. “The needs are going to be just as great. There are still thousands we couldn’t help.”

For summer, *Delaware Does More* will focus on fresh produce, working through the state agriculture department, the University of Delaware Agricultural Extension Service and the large farms in southern Delaware, Donahue said.

The new goal is to collect 1 million pounds of fresh produce and raise \$250,000 dollars between May 1 and October 1.

“This new approach is fraught with all kinds of logistical issues,” he said. The Food Bank of Delaware will be a key player because it already has warehouse space, refrigerated storage and trucks to collect and distribute produce.

Donahue said United Way hopes this campaign will draw in the back yard gardener, 4-H clubs and agribusiness. They will be asking home gardeners to plant an extra row of vegetables to donate to their local food bank or soup kitchen.

"This is an organizing concept," Donahue said. "We hope people will take it and make it their own, have contests about who can grow the biggest pumpkin or the most green beans."

Because the campaign deals with perishable food, people will be encouraged to take it to the nearest agency, rather than attempt to collect it in a central location.

"This will be the first time that United Way has worked with the agricultural industry," Donahue said. "It is a big industry in southern Delaware and this is going to be reason to interact."

Among other things, United Way hopes large farms will permit volunteers to come in and glean the fields for produce left after harvest.

United Way also plans to continue its collaboration with the *News Journal* to promote the issue and the campaign. And they hope Gov. Markell will put in a vegetable garden at the mansion and state capitol, Donahue said.

"We are the collaborator and point of focus," he said. "We don't control it. That's what was magical about the first phase. We do the marketing and PR, but after awhile it takes a life of its own."

**Credits:**

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