



TOWN OF WELLESLEY
525 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02482
781-431-1019



COMMUNITY FUND FOR WELLESLEY
3 Eliot Street
Natick, MA 01760
508-647-2260



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Generous Donations to COVID-19 Relief Fund to Help Families, Youth and Senior Citizens into the Fall

September 21, 2020 (Wellesley, MA) – After taking a few weeks off from grantmaking to focus on fundraising and reinvigorating, the Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund is announcing new grant awards totaling \$10,300. Generous donations to the Relief Fund ensure key programs for our community will be sustained this fall, as we continue to navigate the uncertainty of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, and act as a resource for our Wellesley neighbors in need. The new grant awards will provide weekly hot meals for families experiencing food insecurity, create safe activities and additional jobs for local teens, and protect our senior citizens and medically vulnerable residents.

The Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund was established just six months ago and has granted nearly \$112,000 to date to local non-profits and Town of Wellesley Departments to develop programs and activities to meet unprecedented needs in our community caused by COVID-19. Relief funds have been used to:

- Provide PPE for frontline and health care workers;
- Support public and mental health initiatives for residents;
- Purchase iPads and PocketTalkers to connect families with loved ones at long-term care facilities;
- Purchase mask-making supplies and sanitizing stations to promote safe back-to-business and back-to-school programs in our community;
- Create jobs for local teens including park rangers, sports camp counselors, and movie monitors;
- And much more.

While the Fund is proud of the support it has provided to residents thus far, there is still more work to be done.

"The Community Fund for Wellesley and the Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund are proud to continue our support for several long-standing programs designed to alleviate critical needs for at-risk populations in Wellesley," said Jamie Ebersole, Chair of the Community Fund for Wellesley. "We continue to see great need in the community due to the pandemic and we are thankful for everyone who is supporting our community-wide efforts."

In week 20 of the COVID-19 Relief Fund, grants totaling \$10,300 were awarded to support:

- **Youth employment for COVID-19 related jobs:** The town's Green Shirts program will continue this fall, as the Recreation Department received money to continue to fund jobs for nearly 50 local high school and college students who are assisting with election mailings, monitoring library entrances, staffing online recreation programs, and delivering hot meals to families and senior citizens. Many of the teens depend on these jobs to offset school costs.
- **Halloween mobile movie night:** The Youth Commission and Recreation Department received money to extend the Town's successful Mobile Movie night program, funding the set-up and operation of a

special Halloween-themed youth movie night to be held on Tuesday, October 27, and an additional movie night that was held in early September.

- **Hot meals program for families facing food insecurity:** The Health Department received funds to continue the weekly hot meals program for local families, one of the original initiatives of the Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund. Families are identified by health, school or social services officials at risk for food insecurity. 125 hot meals prepared by local restaurants will be delivered to families once a week for the next month to help support them as they adjust to back-to-school/remote learning challenges.
- **Masks for high-risk residents:** The Fire Department received money to purchase an additional 900 KN95 masks for senior citizens and medically vulnerable residents to wear when outside of homes for doctor appointments, grocery store trips, and other high-risk activities. This brings the total number of KN95 masks purchased to 1,800, since the onset of the pandemic.

These programs have resulted in creative, collaborative opportunities for Town officials, businesses, restaurants, and volunteers who are focused on ways to make the pandemic situation a little easier for all residents. “Relief Fund grants are offering safe entertainment for parents and kids when so many usual fall activities are cancelled, creating jobs for teens to help them feel valued as they navigate remote and hybrid school, and providing families struggling with financial and food insecurity a hot meal they can count on every week,” said Joyce Saret, Health Department community social worker. “At a time when stress is high and mental health is a grave concern, residents are so grateful for these efforts. They brighten days and bring hope.”

Please Show Your Support

The Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund is unique to our community and separate from other local fundraising initiatives. In early April, the Relief Fund was created with seed money from the Community Fund for Wellesley and was sustained through support from private donations. To reinvigorate the Relief Fund for the coming fall months, the Community Fund for Wellesley made an additional \$15,000 donation, acknowledging the ongoing and critical need in the community.

The Relief Fund is a partnership between the Community Fund for Wellesley, an endowed fund of the Foundation for MetroWest, a tax exempt 501(c) 3 organization, and the Wellesley Board of Selectmen. One hundred percent of donations are returned to the community and directly benefit all residents. Continued financial support for these programs and many others is critical to keep Wellesley residents safe as fall and winter months approach with no end to the pandemic in sight. To give to the Wellesley COVID-19 Relief Fund or learn more, please visit: www.CFFW-COVID.org

Up-to-date information on the COVID-19 Relief Fund and photos of the grant recipients and programs are regularly shared on the Town of Wellesley website and on the Community Fund for Wellesley’s Facebook page [@CFFWellesley](https://www.facebook.com/CFFWellesley).

About the Community Fund for Wellesley

The mission of the Community Fund for Wellesley is to promote the common good and to benefit all residents of our Town. The Fund serves as a permanent source of funding to foster innovation and collaboration in support of community needs and opportunities. The Community Fund for Wellesley was established in 2008 in celebration of Wellesley’s 125th birthday. A dedicated group of Town residents had a vision to create a fund that would exist to benefit members of the Wellesley community for generations to come. In the past 11 years, the Fund has made grants of over \$500,000 to more than 30 local non-profits and Town of Wellesley departments.

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