



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Marissa Christie, United Way of Bucks County**

**Phone: 267.795.7833**

**Email: [marissac@uwbucks.org](mailto:marissac@uwbucks.org)**

## **Bucks County COVID-19 Recovery Fund Supports Remote Learning for Homeless Students**

*Recent Grants Provide Teaching Assistants and Technology at Shelters*

**FAIRLESS HILLS, Pa., August 31, 2020** – Bucks County COVID-19 Recovery Fund, established in March by United Way of Bucks County with additional funding from Penn Community Bank, continues to provide grants for COVID-19 related needs.

In late August, Valley Youth House and Family Service Association of Bucks County – both of which serve school-aged young people experiencing homelessness – were awarded grants to help navigate remote learning, made necessary by COVID-19. Both will use the funding to hire new teaching assistants and ensure students have what they need to continue their education online.

Valley Youth House shelters young people ages 12-17 on an emergency basis when they are not able to remain at home. They were awarded \$9,450 to hire one Educational Specialist to monitor and assist students with schoolwork and to ensure they are able to stay on track academically. Kathi Krablin, Director of Grants and Foundations at Valley Youth House describes the role saying, “The Educational Specialist will be responsible for ensuring that youth have proper connectivity, assistance with homework, and the materials they need. Essentially this individual will provide the guidance that parents would ordinarily be required to offer if the student were living at home.”

Family Service Association houses homeless individuals and families, many with school-age children. They were awarded \$10,000, to set up a “learning lab,” including two teaching assistants and additional learning technology supports.

Most of the students living in the shelters attend districts that have opted to operate remotely, and shelters are not generally equipped to provide educational support. Marlene Piasecki of Family Service Association notes, “Schools are delaying in-person instruction and counting on parents to provide a quiet, safe learning environment with the support from a caring adult to effectively participate in virtual learning. This is very difficult for families living in shelters. The Learning Lab project is designed to reduce or remove the barriers to education that students living in the shelter will encounter.”

In addition to the grants awarded to Valley Youth House and Family Service Association, 4 additional grants went to Bucks County organizations assisting residents impacted by COVID-19. YMCA of Bucks County received funding to purchase a portable sink for their early education site at Chandler Hall. The Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania received funding to expand the hours of their drug and alcohol information line and recovery



support chatroom. Ivins Outreach Center was awarded two grants to deliver meals and groceries to vulnerable individuals and seniors in Lower Bucks.

Since its inception, the COVID-19 Recovery fund has provided 52 grants, totaling roughly \$280,000, to dozens of local nonprofits serving people impacted by COVID-19. All grants focus on life-sustaining and essential human services. To learn more about the programs and services provided by these agencies, visit our website at [www.uwbucks.org/covidgrantswork](http://www.uwbucks.org/covidgrantswork).

United Way of Bucks County Member Agencies will continue to submit grant applications on a rolling basis. Applications are reviewed by a panel of business and nonprofit leaders. Payments are released immediately to ensure that people who experience a financial crisis due to COVID-19 get help quickly.

In addition to more than 800 individual, local donors, Penn Community Bank, Dow, BB&T now Truist, Janssen, PECO, Foundations Community Partnership, Bucks County Foundation, Simon and Jane Hallett, Barra Foundation, Grundy Foundation, Fegley Law Firm, Shoprite of Hunterdon County, Vistra Energy, Wells Fargo, Bucks County Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., 100+ Women Who Care Bucks County, Residents of Ann's Choice , PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., The Albert W Bader Foundation, Inc. and the Newtown Business Association support the fund.

Donations can be made at [uwbucks.org/COVIDrecovery](http://uwbucks.org/COVIDrecovery) or by mailing a check to United Way of Bucks County, 413 Hood Boulevard, Fairless Hills, PA 19030, with COVID recovery in the memo line.

**About United Way of Bucks County:** Since 1952, UW Bucks has been improving lives in Bucks County by uniting donors, advocates, and volunteers around the common good. United Way programs focus on the building blocks for a good life: a quality education, a stable income, and good health. For more information, call 215.949.1660 or visit [www.uwbucks.org](http://www.uwbucks.org).

###