

## Staying Positive and Staying Strong



Nicole Smolkovich,  
Executive Director

Holy moley! What a year it has been so far. The challenges have been tremendous; the hardships have been painful. But, through it all, your comm**YOU**unity foundation remains focused on the positive --- **YOU**! When faced with adversity and conflict, **YOU**, the constructive individuals and organizations of our comm**YOU**unity, have made a decisive difference in many lives. Thank **YOU**!

I have always believed that seeing the glass as half-full can be a lifesaver. A starting point of positivity lays the foundation for an inner confidence that helps see us through the most challenging times. Best of all, positivity inspires our ability to bestow joy, happiness, and uplifting energy to others.

By thinking positive and staying strong, here are just a few of the achievements **YOU** and your generosity have accomplished.

- CFKRV partnered with United Way to launch the **Kankakee and Iroquois Counties COVID-19 Response Fund**. Thanks to **YOU**, nearly \$600,000 has been distributed to organizations throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. That's the power of comm**YOU**unity!
  - Through our Communityworks Fund, CFKRV awarded \$100,000 to local nonprofits and programs. Even in the midst of the pandemic, our nonprofit partners have not backed away from their missions to improve the quality of life for everyone in our comm**YOU**unity.
  - As you'll see on the following pages, **our scholarship program** exploded this year! We partnered with Herscher High School to take on the administrative duties of all of their scholarships. And, to manage the influx of new scholarships, we invested in software that provides students with one universal application – saving time for them, evaluators, and administrative staff. Everyone wins!
  - **Project SUN** facilitated two community conversations with civic leaders and area residents to delve into systemic racism and its effect on mental health. It was eye opening for everyone. More conversations focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion will follow.
  - In March, we welcomed **Mia Parrilli** to CFKRV as our new office manager. What a stroke of positive energy she has been!
- All I can say is, that's the power of positivity. **YOU**, your hard work, your open minds, your creativity, and your generosity accentuate the positive. And, that's how we as a comm**YOU**unity stay strong – no matter what kinds of obstacles life throws in our way. Thank **YOU**!

*Nicole Smolkovich*

# COVID-19 Community Response Fund: An Incredible Impact

## KANKAKEE & IROQUOIS COUNTIES **COVID-19** **COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND**

In late March 2020, United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties and Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley launched the COVID-19 Community Response Fund.

The ongoing partnership provides essential resources to area health and human service organizations as they respond to surging needs for basic services from individuals and households who are most affected by the pandemic. The support includes these essential components.

- Financial assistance for emergency food and supplies
- Interim housing and shelter
- Primary healthcare services
- Utility and financial assistance
- Support for children and vulnerable populations
- Nonprofit safety and operations assistance

**“More than one-third of Kankakee and Iroquois County households could not afford basic needs prior to the pandemic. The need for additional services and support will persist for months to come as the number of cases rises and the ripple effects of the virus are felt throughout our economy and healthcare system,”**

*offers Kerstin Rust, executive director, United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties.*

“The local COVID-19 Response Fund offers one cohesive source for individuals, philanthropists, community leaders, corporations, and foundations to contribute,” said Nicole Smolkovich, executive director, CFKRV. “It is critical that our region’s health and human service organizations have the resources they need to operate at their highest capacities.”

Less than a month after the fund’s launch, the partnership raised more than \$70,000 from local donors and grantee partners *and* received a \$250,000 grant from the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund.

The initial group of grant recipients includes agencies that provide services for children, the homeless, and the elderly. “In our communities, these are the most vulnerable populations of the crisis – families who cannot withstand the shock of missing a paycheck,” Smolkovich noted.

- Agape Community Outreach Mission, Inc.
- Bourbonnais Elementary School District 53
- The Bread Basket
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet
- Compassionate Ministries Center of Hope
- Fortitude Community Outreach
- Harbor House
- Helen Wheeler Center
- Iroquois County Public Health Department
- Kankakee Area YMCA
- Kankakee County Community Services Inc.
- Kankakee School District 111
- Nexus Indian Oaks Family Healing
- Nexus Onarga Academy
- The Salvation Army
- Volunteer Services of Iroquois County

If you would like to donate to the local COVID-19 Response Fund with your credit or debit card, go to [www.myunitedway.org](http://www.myunitedway.org) or [www.cfkrv.org](http://www.cfkrv.org).

To donate by check, please mail your contribution to Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, 701 S. Harrison Avenue, Kankakee, IL 60901.



# *Grantees Used Their Gifts to Help Many*



*Kankakee Community Services, Inc. provided delivery of nutritious hot meals to senior citizens throughout the area.*



*A grant provided to Fortitude Community Outreach enabled many local residents to be tested for COVID-19 at no charge.*



*Volunteers offered hoodies and T-shirts to those in need, thanks to Fortitude Community Outreach.*



*The mobile services of Fortitude Community Outreach assisted the homeless of Kankakee County with meals, supplies, and clothing.*



*With its grant, Easter Seals used its teletherapy program to help children like Mirelle Elsey. She learned how to turn her head, use her arms to play, and roll from side to side. She is the daughter of Kipp Elsey and April Brouillet.*



# 2020 Grants Awarded: Communityworks and Rosie Fund

Last spring, Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley was pleased to award grants to many Communityworks and Rosie Fund recipients. "We are thrilled to support the organizations and projects that benefit the health and future of so many individuals in our communities," explains Nicole Smolkovich, executive director.

## Communityworks Fund Grants

Communityworks focuses on early childhood education, land use and protection, and workforce development. "Thanks to **YOU**, we awarded \$100,000 in Communityworks grants -- \$80,000 to local area nonprofits and \$20,000 to support CFKRV initiatives," Smolkovich said.

## Rosie Fund Grants

The Rosie Fund provides financial support to area social services agencies so that they can assist the unmet needs of women and children. "Through Rosie Fund grants, CFKRV awarded \$5,000 to five organizations," Smolkovich notes.

## Nonprofit Organizations

BBCHS IRONCLAD Robotics.....	\$ 4,000
Bishop McNamara Catholic School.....	2,000
Blessings in a Backpack .....	7,000
Bourbonnais Township Park District-.....	4,000
Exploration Station...a children's museum	
Bradley Public Library District .....	1,500
Central Citizens' Library District.....	5,000
Child Network .....	2,000
Harbor House/KCCADV.....	7,000
Herscher CUSD2 .....	2,000
Hospice of Kankakee Valley.....	3,500
Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation .....	5,000
Iroquois Mental Health Center.....	4,800
Kankakee Area Career Center.....	2,500
Kankakee Area YMCA .....	5,000
Kankakee Community College Baby Talk.....	2,500
Kankakee County Health Department .....	7,000
Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission ...	2,000
Love-A-Latte Treats and Sweet Eats .....	4,500
Prepared by Special People	
Pledge for Life Partnership .....	3,500
Potawatomi Paddlers Association.....	3,500
Tyjuan Hagler Foundation .....	1,700
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

## Communityworks Programs

Riverfront Trail .....	\$ 1,000
Success by 6 Iroquois .....	2,000
Success by 6 Kankakee .....	2,000
WorkKankakee.org.....	2,500
Wright in Kankakee .....	12,500
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

## Rosie Fund Grants

Harbor House.....	\$1,500
KC-CASA.....	1,500
Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center .....	500
Salvation Army.....	1,000
Teen Moms HOPE.....	500
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>



# Facilitators for Community Conversations

Prior to the Black Lives Matter movement, Project SUN (**S**trong and **U**nified **N**etwork) had planned to host a conversation with young adults to address and discuss racial disparity in access to mental, emotional, and behavioral health services.

However, after the violent deaths of several African American men and women and the increased national awareness of systemic racism in our country, this initiative blossomed into two Community Conversations: one for the public at large on July 28 (39 attendees) and one for young adults, ages 16-21, on August 5 (10 attendees).

Both conversations highlighted the history and modern-day impact of racism, followed by discussions that challenged participants to share how race has affected their life stories.



A panel of representatives from various organizations offered ways for adults and youth to get involved with local efforts to end racism. Connect Kankakee, City of Kankakee/Kankakee United, Kankakee School District's "STOP the Violence" project, the Kankakee County Hispanic Partnership, and the YWCA of Kankakee were discussed at the first Community Conversation. Black Lives Matter, Kankakee Anti-Racist Unity Movement (KARU), Connect Kankakee, Immigrant Justice, and the Momence Anti-Racist Coalition were shared at the second meeting.

Overall, both conversations yielded positive responses by attendees and requests to be included in Project SUN's follow-up conversations. The next event will address local barriers faced by youth of color in accessing mental, emotional, and behavioral health services.



If you would like to become a part of Project SUN's efforts to eliminate racial disparities in access to local mental health services, email [projectsun@cfkryv.org](mailto:projectsun@cfkryv.org).



# Scholarships for Education

Important scholarships entrusted to Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley help many students continue their education and advance to their careers. CFKRV wishes good luck to all of these students as they go back to school this fall.



## Erica Lynn Paulissen Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship honors the life of Erica Lynn Paulissen, a graduate of Herscher High School and Kankakee Community College. Two scholarships are awarded annually to graduating high school seniors in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. Erica dedicated her energy to a sense of pride and purpose that continues to inspire through her scholarship legacy.



KeMia Smith  
Kankakee High School



Mason Robinson  
Herscher High School

## Do It Stevie's Way Foundation Scholarship

Established by Proven IT, this scholarship assists area graduating students with the costs of pursuing their educations.



Allison Moore  
Peotone High School



Callie Vickery  
Momence High School



Hayley Sexton  
Milford High School



KeMia Smith  
Kankakee High School



Conner Settles  
Herscher High School



Reid Busick  
Clifton Central High School



Jude Pommier  
Bishop McNamara  
High School



Elizabeth Latino  
Manteno High School

## African American Civic Leaders Scholarship

Several African American graduates from Kankakee High School received this scholarship to continue their education at accredited colleges, universities, trade schools, and apprentice programs.





KeMia Smith



Curtis Smith Jr.



De'Asia Love



Janae Fleming



Joe Martin

### Herscher High School Scholarships

Established by Herscher School District #2, these scholarships provide financial support for the educational pursuits of graduating seniors from Herscher High School.



Kaylyn Bauer  
Albert A. and Elizabeth Wheeler Mau Scholarship  
Herscher High School Senior of the Month, November 2019; Herscher FFA Alumni Foundation; and Randy Lehnus Vocational Scholarship



Zach Hall  
Bonfield Lions Award



Lydia Huizenga  
Caitlin Poppie Memorial Scholarship



Kyler Masching  
Herscher FFA Alumni Foundation Scholarship



Madyson Rogers  
Herscher Athletic Boosters Club Award and U2CT - Unit 2 Classroom Teachers & Staff Scholarships



Jack Holohan  
Herscher Athletic Boosters Club Award



Bianca Berns  
Herscher High School Alumni Association Scholarship



Makayla Perry  
Herscher High School Alumni Association Scholarship





# More Herscher Scholarship Recipients...



Lillian Nelson  
Herscher High School Music  
Boosters Scholarship



Benjamin Koranda  
Herscher Sports Fan  
Scholarship



Zoie Hastings  
Herscher Sports Fan  
Scholarship



Joshua Kersten  
Rich Jensen Award



Audrey Hopper  
Herscher High School Music  
Boosters Scholarship



Mason Robinson  
Herscher Sports Fan  
Scholarship



Jacob Schultz  
Kent Weakley Creative  
Scholarship



Cynthia Perez  
Stacy and Chris Skarstad  
Memorial Scholarship and  
U2CT - Unit 2 Classroom  
Teachers & Staff Scholarships



Grace Keller  
Herscher High School Music  
Boosters Scholarship



Emily Hubert  
Herscher Sports Fan  
Scholarship and U2CT - Unit  
2 Classroom Teachers & Staff  
Scholarships



Morgan Schnurr  
Marlow Zehr Memorial  
Scholarship



Caleb Fleischauer  
Tim Orwig Scholarship





Anna Cotter  
Tim Orwig Scholarship



Sarah Warren  
U2CT - Unit 2 Classroom  
Teachers & Staff Scholarships



Ethan Egerton  
Randy Lehnus Vocational  
Scholarship



Elliot Engelman  
Randy Lehnus Vocational  
Scholarship and The  
Riley Family Vocational  
Scholarship



Emma Koerner  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *September  
2019*



Luke Whalen  
Herscher High School  
Senior of the Month,  
*October 2019*; Herscher  
Lions Club Award; U2CT -  
Unit 2 Classroom Teachers  
& Staff Scholarships; and  
Dr. Lawrence T. Jacobson  
Leadership Memorial  
Scholarship



Olivia Ruder  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *December  
2019*; Diane and Dr. Jeff Long  
Health Related Scholarship;  
and Herscher Lions Club  
Award



LeighAnn McCasland  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *January 2020*



Payton Cordes  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *February 2020*



Olivia DeLong  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *March 2020*  
and U2CT - Unit 2 Teachers  
Memorial Scholarship



Grant Goytia  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *April 2020* and  
Robert and Thelma Webber  
Scholarship



Delanie Fay  
Herscher High School Senior  
of the Month, *May 2020* and  
U2CT - Unit 2 Classroom  
Teachers & Staff Scholarships

*Online and in Your Emailbox*

Our newsletters are now available at [www.cfkrv.org](http://www.cfkrv.org).  
If you would like to receive it via email, please sign up  
at [www.cfkrv.org](http://www.cfkrv.org).



*Mia Parrilli*  
*Office Manager*

## Meet Mia!

Please join us in welcoming Mia Parrilli to Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley. She brings a strong educational and professional background to her new position as our office manager.

Mia graduated from Purdue University Northwest with a bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism management. While there, she gained invaluable experience as a supplemental student instructor, community tutor for elementary students, and captain of their cheer team.

Mia lives in Manteno with her husband, Wayne, and their two children. Her personal passions are early childhood education, animal rights, mental health, and health and nutrition for all.

### Board of Directors for 2020

Nick Allen  
Arlene Bartolini  
Nina Epstein  
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Beverly Hood  
Jake Lee, *Secretary*  
James Tungate  
Jeff Williamson, *Chair Elect*  
Lisa Wogan  
Kersten Rust

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Yolanda Rahman  
Lindsay Parkhurst

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Dennis Hess  
Scott Franco  
Nick Bufford  
Kerstin Rust  
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## Thank you!

Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley thanks these outgoing board and committee members for their service and support.

Elizabeth Kubal  
Larry Mahoney  
Kari Nugent  
Lindsay Parkhurst

## Welcome!

We are pleased to welcome Kersten Rust to our board of directors and committees.

### FOR GOOD. FOREVER.

Please consider including CFKRV in your will and estate planning. It is a wonderful way to continue your legacy in our communities. For information, call Nicole at 815-939-1611.



701 S. Harrison Avenue  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
**815-939-1611**  
[www.cfkrv.org](http://www.cfkrv.org)



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