



Impact Report 2022-2023 Funded Programs

Summary:

- FY 2022-2023 fundraising generated approximately \$210,000 from all sources. 86% of our revenues came from individual member cash donations and the proceeds from the auction of items generously donated by our Corporate Partners and members; with the balance of our revenues coming Corporate Partner cash donations.
- During the 2022-2023 school year, Keowee Falls CRO approved \$73,000 in spending for our three schools: Tamassee Salem Elementary (TSE), Walhalla Middle School and Walhalla High School. Approximately 24% of students in these schools live below the poverty level and more than half of the students are eligible for free or reduced cost meals through a federal program that provides free meals to students in high poverty areas. Funds were used to purchase books and instructional software, math and reading kits, safety equipment, kindergarten snacks, attendance incentives, school supplies, outdoor education equipment and environmental science programs supplies.
- An additional \$61,000 in funding was approved for two major programs which support many of the same children through Graces Closet, which provides a closet at each of these schools; and the Tamassee DAR (TDAR) which provides the closest Afterschool and Summer Program for elementary school-aged children.
- \$85,000 of designated funds were directed toward two Fund-the-Need Initiatives: \$60,000 for the TSE Challenge to be Great Scholarship which is in place as an earned incentive for 2030 graduates; and \$25,000 to sponsor the TDAR Starlight Cottage for children with moms overcoming addiction.
- Total Administrative and Fundraising costs continued to be less than 5%: and over 50 residents continued to actively volunteer our behalf in the programs listed below or in support of Keowee Falls CRO.

General Fund School Programs

Tamassee Salem Elementary (TSE) - \$27,000

Academic Resources – In addition to math, writing and reading kits, funding for speech curriculum, supplemental school supplies and technology gap funding; we also fund snacks for PreK and Kindergarteners, field trip scholarships, summer reading books and child abuse/drug prevention kits.

Mentoring – Over 25 residents continue to volunteer for the weekly 5th grade programs, the girls “Stargirls” and boys “Chew the Fat Friday” programs, which engage students on topics ranging from bullying to social skills. Upon their 5th grade graduation, these students were made eligible to earn a TSE Challenge to be Great Scholarship in 2029 -- a \$1,000 scholarship upon successful graduation from High School for post-secondary education and/or career certification.

“TSE is thankful to CRO for truly being our partner in education and for your funding assistance. You make every day a great day to be a TSE Cougar!

- *Funding for our beginning of year school supplies made that investment much less daunting for our families.*
- *Funding for the late morning/late afternoon snacks for all PreK and Kindergarten students is so important for children who don't eat lunch until noon; and for the PreK students after their late afternoon rest time.*
- *Your funding enhanced our Guidance Counselor's ability to teach students about the dangers of drugs and other types of abuse.*
- *Our summer reading has been an incredible success because your support allowed us to give our students choices that inspired them to read.”*

-- Bobby Norizsan, Principal TSE

Walhalla Middle School (WMS) - \$5,000

Transition to Middle School – At the request of the Elementary and Middle School Principals, Keowee Falls CRO funded new programs to help 6th graders successfully transition to Middle School (post-COVID) and incentivize attendance; and we supported the 8th graders' transition to high school.

“WMS greatly appreciates the CRO's support which helped create a smooth transition for incoming 6th graders as well as outgoing 8th graders: the 6th grade Razer Rally had a 90% attendance rate by students and parents; T-shirts promoted unity and school pride; and our 8th grade celebration in May provided students with their last class gathering before transitioning to high school.”

--Scott Dixon, WMS Principal

Walhalla High School (WHS) - \$41,000

Environmental Science – Funding enabled purchase of outdoor education supplies needed for a Jocassee Outdoor Education experience, the on-campus Pollinator Garden and hiking trail hands-on learning projects.

“CRO funds for the Walhalla Monarch program afforded us innovative tools to start a school-wide campaign aimed at raising awareness about the Monarch butterfly's fascinating migration to South America and declining population. Upper-level Spanish classes learn the basics of botany; the Environmental Science students track the fall migration, the prevalence of parasites, and participate in citizen science monitoring; and the Cross Country Team engages the school in following their mileage progress along the migration route.”

--Amanda Gladly, Science Department Chair

WHS Student Success Program – Funding provided incentives for attendance and behavior for 150 students deemed “at-risk” for not graduating.

“This program helps the administrative team and Graduation Coaches build relationships with “at risk” students, motivate and encourage them to attend school and work toward success in the classroom. It supports the school’s goal of achieving a graduation rate of at least 87% by the end of the 2024 school year.”

--Jennifer Crawford, Principal WHS

Major Programs

Grace’s Closet - \$31,000

With an inviting presence in all three of the local schools we support, Grace’s Closet helps students build self-confidence by providing basic resources. Their boutique-like rooms are conveniently located in the schools and provide students with free access to the items they need. Because so many of these students also need access to food beyond the free breakfast and lunch they get at school during the school day, a growing number of weekend food backpacks are provided to many of these students.

“The CRO has assisted over 70 students on a weekly basis by providing needed resources such as clothes, shoes, school and hygiene supplies at Tamassee Salem Elementary, Walhalla Middle and Walhalla High and aided in weekly nutritional support to over 30 students by providing food for the weekends.”

-- Julie-ann Shannon, Director of Grace’s Closet

Tamassee DAR (TDAR) - \$30,000

Afterschool and Summer Program – Our funding covers Bridge Scholarships for one-fourth of the children who attend (students from families who are living in poverty). TDAR serves approximately 50 elementary and middle school students from the nearby community. Enrollment continues to increase as more parents learn about this incredible program focused on supporting students to reach and stay on grade level, instilling citizenship values, cultivating resiliency skills to overcome trauma through Conscious Discipline, and exploring enrichment activities such as STEM, health and wellness, arts and crafts, and music, theater, and dance.

“With support from donors like you 81% of afterschool students improved in reading, 84% improved in math, 78% completed three or more citizenship projects, and 100% participated in STEM. The average improvement has been more than a full grade level!”

– Jon Holland, Tamassee DAR School CEO

Restricted Funds -- Fund the Need Initiatives Supported (2023-2024 Initiatives shown on Att 1)

TSE Challenge to be Great Scholarship - \$60,000 (years 2 and 3)

Building on the initiative established in 2021 -- to provide an incentive to TSE 5th graders to successfully graduate from WHS and pursue accredited higher education/job-readiness training—the scholarship was funded for 2022-2023. In addition, due to the generosity of our members, we were also able to fully fund the scholarship for 5th grade graduates for the 2023-2024 school year. We now have a total of \$85,000 invested with Foothills Community Foundation which manages the scholarship investment and will administer disbursement of the scholarships beginning with the high school graduating class of 2029. The key component of this scholarship is the interaction that will result with the *TSE Challenge to be Great* Committee which will meet with students at the completion of each semester to discuss attendance, academic growth, the growth of the scholarship fund and the importance of education. These interactions are key for many students who may not otherwise be challenged to believe that they can, and should, plan to graduate and pursue college or job-readiness certification.

To learn more: <https://foothillscommunityfoundation.org/commuity-impact/>

Starlight at TDAR – \$25,000 (year 1 of 3 years)

Starlight strengthens families by providing recovery and education programs that empower mothers and their children to find lasting wholeness. They offer children and their mothers in recovery a faith-infused, family-centered, therapeutic community with holistic, evidenced-based, trauma-informed services. The campus provides a safe and loving home to families during the two- year residential program. In 2022 your generous support allowed Keowee Falls CRO to fund the 1st year of support for a cottage that houses 3-4 families enrolled in this program. Your support, plus some reserved funds, allowed us to earmark an additional \$50,000 to be allocated in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 for this purpose.

To learn more: <https://starlight.tdarschool.org>

Other Noteworthy General Fund Programs Supported:

Oconee First Steps/Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) - \$5,000

Partnering through Oconee First Steps, our funding enables parents with children ages 0-5years old to receive an age-appropriate book every month through the DPIL, an award winning internationally acclaimed initiative. Because the Dolly Parton Foundation covers the overhead and administrative costs, 100% of our funding goes directly to purchasing and mailing books to children in the nearby Salem & Tamassee zip code area.

Oconee County Public Library - \$2,200

Summer Reading – Our funding is targeted toward the Read to Succeed Success Camp. Book Bags are given to the 3rd graders who have been identified as reading below grade level (by one of the 10 Public Elementary Schools in the District), and whose parents opt-in to participate in the 96 instruction hours of camp; and funds the 4-part Summer Reading Program at the Salem Branch for Elementary School-aged children.

Oconee County Sheriff's Girls' Empowerment Camp - \$1,500

Summer camp - This 5-day camp in early June targets 20 teen girls (7th grade and up), selected primarily through the sheriff's department victims advocate and school resource officers, identified to be at-risk youths. The goal is to build confidence and life skills through opportunities that would otherwise not be accessible to these kids, including: an outdoor adventure; boat tour of the lake on OCSD boats; mental health and self-care; self-defense; a service project and education re: trafficking awareness and abuse reporting/resources.

About Cliffs Residents Outreach, Inc. (CRO) – Through the 5 SC Community CROs we provide resources and funding for student-centered projects designed to support lifelong success for 13,000 local Upstate children, many of whom are economically and socially challenged. Funded by Cliffs property owners and Corporate Partners and managed by residents who volunteer to serve on the Board, CRO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Collective funding typically goes to the following categories: General Education, Technology Education, Nutrition, Reading Initiatives, School Supplies, Human Services and Early Childhood Development.

www.crocommunities.com

Each Cliffs community has its own Advisory Council which operates independently. Keowee Falls CRO Advisory Council supports 3 local schools in Oconee County and their 2,200 students by funding programs discussed in this overview. This is made possible by the active involvement of more than 50 resident volunteers who are engaged in fundraising, mentoring or working on our behalf with these organizations.

<https://crocommunities.com/keowee-falls/>

New 2023-2024 Fund-the-Need Programs -- Supported with Restricted Funds

Thanks to your generous support at our Annual Appeal Dinner, the highlighted programs below have been funded and are now impacting children in our area. Follow their progress through the links below:

Grace's Closet (GC) Weekend Food Initiative – \$15,300 for year 1

Keowee Falls CRO has long sponsored GC's mission of helping students build self-confidence by providing basic resources (clothing, personal hygiene items and school supplies) in 3 nearby Oconee County schools. Their boutique-like rooms are conveniently located in the schools and provide students with free access to the items they need. Because 66% of these students also need access to food beyond the free breakfast and lunch they get at school during the school day, GC initiated a Weekend Food Initiative. Your support in 2023 will ensure that over 100 students who wouldn't otherwise have enough food to sustain them will now have access to these weekend food bags.

Learn more about GC and this initiative at: <https://gracescloset.org>

STEM Learning – \$13,000 for year 1

The need for more access by Oconee County students to Science, Technology, Math & Engineering (STEM) opportunities led Keowee Falls CRO to partner with BRIEF (Blue Ridge Innovation & Entrepreneurial Foundation). In 2023 your support funded BRIEF's introduction of FIRST Robotics training nearby at the Tamassee DAR Campus for 40 underserved kids, grades 1-6. Five Falls residents stepped up to volunteer with BRIEF. Additional programs will be announced soon.

Sign up to receive BRIEF's Newsletters: <https://briefnonprofit.org>

Walhalla United Initiative - Pollinator Garden Expansion – \$8,500 for year 1

In 2023 your support funded the *Walhalla United Initiative* to allow the WHS to bring hands-on learning related to the Monarch Butterfly Pollinator Gardens to nearby schools as part of Green Steps Schools. As background, Green Step Schools, established as part of SC's "Resource Conservation Challenge" encourage K-12 schools to take annual steps toward establishing and maintaining model quality sustainability projects. Schools qualify for awards when they work with mentors and submit videos or pictures with detailed captions showing their students learning, "doing" and teaching others about their projects. In 2019 when Keowee Falls CRO began funding this program at WHS, WHS earned certification for this program, and in 2022 WHS was selected as the Overall School of the year, in part because of their Pollinator Garden project!

Sign up for their Instagram account to follow progress: <https://whs.sdoc.org/resources/green-steps>