



## 2021-2022 Annual Report

May, 2022

Dear Friend of CRO,

While the school year is coming to end, it won't be long before the next one begins. This coming school year will start on August 3rd with teachers returning on July 28th. As a result, we are shifting our annual campaign to better align with the school calendar. In reality, some of the schools we support never really close as subsidized meal programs continue throughout the summer and the schools also host summer academic camps. Sadly, we continue to have a high degree of poverty in the schools we support.

On the strength of last year's donations, your CRO Advisory Council was able to pursue some big, bold initiatives that we had contemplated for years. Our residents and our corporate partners together contributed over \$170,000 to CRO Vineyards during 2021. Amazing! Thank you! I would especially like to thank our CRO Corporate Partners who are highlighted on the last page. These businesses are generous supporters of CRO-Vineyards and I hope you support them as well.

Here are the highlights of what we have accomplished with your donations:

### **Family Emergency Aid**

CRO continues to be a source for emergency aid for the families in the schools we support. In all cases, these requests come directly from the Principals of those schools, usually requesting that we bridge a time gap between the critical need and the start of aid from social programs.

- This was certainly the case this year as we supported after school child care for 3 children while they waited for their state ABC vouchers to be approved and start.
- Assistance was also provided to a single father who had a 3 year old in the Holly Springs Preschool and After School Care. This father had a seasonal job and his hours were cut in the winter. As a result, he faced having to pull his child from the school. Working with the Holly Springs Preschool Director, CRO provided a scholarship for the child's tuition and the school covered the after school care.
- We continue to assist with other needs like rent payments, utility payments and other items that impact the security and safety of children and their families. While we can't predict what types of emergency assistance will be needed, we always reserve funds in our budget so we can help.



### **Early Childhood Literacy Initiative - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**

Big. Bold. New to Pickens County. For years CRO-V has evaluated programs that provide books to preschoolers. The biggest challenge was reaching a critical mass of preschool age children and the overall cost. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library addresses both of those issues. Organized by zip codes, DPIL mails an age appropriate book every month to registered children between the ages of 0 and 5. DPIL is an award winning, well-established and well-organized program that now ships almost

2 million books a month...all over the world. Entire states, like North Carolina and Kentucky, have adopted and funded DPIL statewide. In South Carolina, there are a few geographies that offer the Imagination Library, but none in Pickens County...until now. ***CRO-Vineyards has launched the Imagination Library!*** Following a successful pilot at Holly Springs Preschool, where every student and teacher was registered, we are now expanding to all the zip codes in northern Pickens County. These zip codes encompass the children that feed into Pickens Middle and High Schools...***more than a 1,000 eligible preschoolers***. For \$2.10/month or \$25 per year, a registered child receives a book every month (and that includes shipping and postage!).



CRO-V believes strongly that we should not initiate a program that we cannot sustain. Thus we reserved the funds needed to support DPIL in northern Pickens County for 2022 and 2023. That positions us to stay two years ahead in our fundraising to support the Imagination Library.

But it doesn't stop there. Early on we reached out to United Way of Pickens County. After researching and studying the program for most of last year, the UW Education Council voted to support (not fund) DPIL in Pickens County! We are now working with the United Way to secure additional funding sources so DPIL can be extended across Pickens County. The Pickens County Library System is also on board and will offer library programs around the monthly books, including mobile programs using the PCLS outreach vehicle we funded for them in 2019-2020. ***This is a big step forward for early childhood literacy in Pickens County.*** We are very excited about the Imagination Library and it's initiation in Pickens County!

### ***Instrumental Music Program at Pickens and Hagood Elementary Schools***

Research shows that instrumental music training fires up the brain circuitry that is also used for languages and math. CRO is eager for the students at Hagood and Pickens Elementary to have the opportunity to learn an instrument. While the Pickens County School District does not offer and is not prepared to support a full program, they do make their school facilities available to Young Appalachian Musicians (YAMS). ***YAMS introduces children to the music of their heritage through small group instruction in instruments common to the Appalachian region*** (fiddle/violin, guitar, banjo, mandolin). Although the program has been around since 2007, enrollment dropped significantly during Covid as school facilities were closed for after school lessons. Working with YAMS, CRO has offered scholarships for up to 100 students if YAMS, Hagood Elementary and Pickens Elementary can enroll the students. We have also provided a grant for the YAMS summer camp as enrollment is so strong that they will offer a second camp this summer. ***Off to a good start..or rather striking the right note!***



### ***One School, One Book***

Both Pickens and Hagood Elementary school offer this program during the school year in which one book is selected and the entire school community - parents, volunteers, and teachers - reads that book over a period of weeks to the children. ***Hagood Elementary is piloting a summer version of One School, One Book*** and has enlisted CRO's help. CRO has purchased all the books for their summer initiative and every child will go home at the end of the school year with the selected book and recommended activities for the parents and children to follow.

### **Pickens Middle & High School Robotics Club**

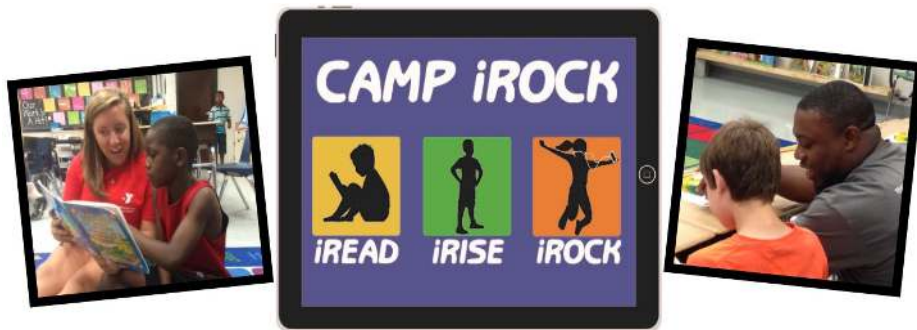


Courtesy photo  
Pickens Middle School students Cassidy Riddle, left, and Zoe Morris recently qualified for the VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas, Texas.

This was a banner year for the Robotics Club of Pickens Middle & High Schools. For the first time ever, **a Robotics team (two 7th grade girls) qualified for the World Competition!** Since this was unexpected and not budgeted, CRO stepped in and paid the World Competition registration fee. Leveraging that success, the middle and high school Robotics Club teacher, is expanding the club and CRO is helping by purchasing additional Robotics Kits (at \$1,200 each) and other technology that will teach higher level programming skills.

### **Camp iRock**

Not surprisingly, elementary level reading competency took a hit during Covid. As a result, Camp iRock is adding additional classes this summer. Camp iRock is an award winning summer reading camp that targets students needing a little extra boost to reach grade level reading skill before the next school year. Camp iRock attendees are nominated by their teachers and attend free. CRO, once again, is providing a significant grant to Camp iRock to help meet the additional demand.



### **Completion of Prior Year Projects**

#### **Holly Springs Playground Renovation**

The Holly Springs playground renovation was completed in the fall and additional playground equipment has been installed, from water tables to foam construction logs. The School Director reported "I can not overstate what a positive impact the playground renovation has had on our program. We have been able to spend many more days outside without the (prior) mud pits."



### **Pickens Career and Technology Center**

A brake/lathe system has been installed for use in their mechanics and automotive training classes. A transport trailer has arrived and enables PCTC to expand some of its programs to the middle school level. PCTC serves 1,700 high school students who spend part of their academic day pursuing skills training and certifications.

### ***Angel Tree***

Once a year, volunteers from our community are needed to provide some holiday cheer for deserving children in our area. This past year Pickens and Hagood Elementary School staff selected 20 children for some extra aid and 20 volunteer angels rallied to their cause. Each volunteer purchased needed clothing items and a gift, then wrapped them all so the parents could give them to their child. In total, their gifts represented \$3,000 in donations.

***Thanks to YOU and your generous and sustained support***, CRO is in a sound financial position to expand our support in Pickens County. This year's fundraising efforts will insure we can continue to support the schools, the Imagination Library and instrumental music programs for next year and beyond. The CRO Council is so grateful that you have trusted us to make wise allocations and enabled us to have sufficient funds to respond to new opportunities.

Today we are launching our 2022 Campaign. Once a year and only once a year, CRO reaches out to the community for donations. ***“Play It Forward”***, our 2022 fundraising event, will take place on Monday, June 6th and the annual appeal is now underway. To learn more, donate or to purchase tickets for the 10 Hole Pitch & Putt Challenge and/or the Dinner and Auctions please go to our online campaign site at **<https://playit.givesmart.com>**

Please feel free to contact anyone on the CRO Advisory Council with suggestions or questions.

**On behalf of the CRO Council and with sincere and deep appreciation,**

Jean Ann and Dick Bollman  
CRO-Vineyards Co-Directors

CRO Advisory Council:  
Ken Michaels (Treasurer)  
Rob Ackley  
Penny Barr

Stephanie Cookson  
Jan Heppe  
Paula Nesbitt

Jeanette McCarthy  
Brenda Schultz  
Laurelle Williams

*Cliffs Resident Outreach, 501©3, is a 100% volunteer organization focused on the literacy, nutrition and well-being of children in Pickens County, SC. CRO-Vineyards utilizes 98% of its donations for grants to qualifying organizations or individuals within our focus. Funding supports initiatives for pre-school age children through high school. In general, our expenses are less than \$2,000 a year and cover items like our website cost, post office box rental and very limited printing, mailing or fundraising expenses. For family emergency aid, our funds typically cover situations at one of the two elementary schools we support. In those schools, 70%+ of the student body is at or below the poverty threshold for government benefits.*

## ***Cliffs Residents Outreach Corporate Partners***

CRO-Vineyards would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous and sustained support from our Corporate Partners. Donations are shared across multiple Cliffs Resident Outreach community branches.

### **Presenting Partner**

***The Cliffs***

### **Titanium Partner**

***Kroeger Marine***

***South Street Partners***

### **Platinum Partners**

***Century BMW***

***Fairview Custom Homes***

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