



2022-2023 CRO-Vineyards Annual Report

May, 2023

Dear Friend of the Vineyard's Cliffs Residents Outreach,

While the school year is coming to end, it won't be long before the next one begins. In fact, some of the schools we support never really close as subsidized meal programs continue throughout the summer along with summer academic camps.

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 \$172,000 to the Vineyard's CRO during 2022. The bulk of those funds come from YOUR individual donations. 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 your donations have accomplished for the children of Pickens County, SC:

Family Emergency Aid

While not the largest area of our spending, the family emergency aid situations always tug at our hearts and CRO-Vineyards always budgets funds to respond to emergency aid requests for the families in the schools we support. The funding requests come directly from those school Principals. This past school year we supported the following requests:

- **Pest Control:** When a teacher was helping a young student with his coat and backpack, several roaches made an appearance! CRO funded pest control treatments for the family's house.
- **Internet Access:** A young student was out of school for several months due to an illness and cared for at her grandmother's house during the day. For the student to keep up with her schoolwork she needed access to the internet, which the grandmother did not have and could not afford. The school helped the grandmother qualify for a reduced monthly internet fee but the \$180 installation costs were not part of the assistance. CRO covered the internet installation and set up fees.
- **Transportation:** A single father was unemployed and looking for work. He owned a truck but it was not insured and therefore he could not transport his young children or look for work. The school found a policy and CRO provided 6 months of payments to help the father get back on his wheels.
- **Medicine:** A grandmother was raising her grandchild and had recently moved to South Carolina after the grandfather had passed away. The move required transitioning the child's Medicaid support for the child's medicine. This transition led to a gap period with no coverage for the prescription. CRO stepped in to pay for the prescription during the gap period.
- **Temporary Housing:** A family was evicted during the last two weeks of school. The school found temporary housing and CRO covered two weeks of costs so the students could remain in the school district to finish the school year.

Applause for the school principals and their staff! We are constantly amazed at what they do and how they go about assisting their students and families with life situations.



Early Childhood Literacy
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Now Available in Pickens County!

CRO-Vineyards started with a 40 child pilot at the Holly Springs preschool in 2021. One year ago, we voted to expand DPIL access to all of Pickens County. Now, 12 months later, 2,240 out of 6,636 eligible children under 5 years old are registered and receiving a free book monthly through this program...and we are just getting started!

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 2 million plus books a month...all over the world. Entire states, like North Carolina and Kentucky...and more recently California, have adopted and funded DPIL statewide. For \$2.20/month or \$26 per year, a registered child receives a book every month and that includes shipping and postage!. Because the Dolly Parton Foundation covers the overhead and administrative costs, 100% of our funding goes directly to purchasing and mailing books to our registered children.

CRO-Vineyards's goal is to provide Imagination Library access to every eligible child in Pickens County. There are an estimated 6,636 children under the age of 5 in Pickens County. The funding requirements for that goal could eventually be in excess of \$130,000 per year, which is more than the Vineyard's CRO can sustain on its own. Rob Ackley, who is leading our DPIL effort, has been busy recruiting funding partners so all the Pickens County zip codes are sponsored. And we are almost there! ***All zip codes in***



Pickens County are open for registrations and eight out of ten Pickens County zip codes have a financial sponsor. We are delighted that the Springs' CRO, The Reserve Foundation and First Steps of Pickens County have joined us as funding partners. Thanks to two very generous Vineyard's donors, we were able to open the last two zip codes while we pursue a permanent financial sponsor for those zip codes. Stay tuned!

CRO-Vineyards has reserved \$60,000 of your donations to cover our share of the DPIL costs for the next fiscal year. We did not want to start a program that we could not sustain. Thus we plan to always stay one budget year ahead of our estimated funding requirement, A portion of this year's fundraising will go to our DPIL reserve..



YAM 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. While the Pickens County School District does not offer a full instrumental music program at the elementary school level,

they do make their school facilities available to Young Appalachian Musicians (YAM) for after school lessons. ***YAM 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 the pandemic as school facilities were closed for after school lessons. CRO offered funding for instruments and scholarships if YAM could focus on getting enrollment back up. This year YAM has increased their enrollment across Pickens County from 160 to 400 students. Hagood Elementary went from 0 enrolled students to 38 students. At Pickens Elementary we now have 61 enrolled students!



We also funded a pilot for ***YAM Plus, a new initiative that targets academically challenged students.*** Each YAM Plus student is enrolled free of charge and receives a weekly tutoring session after their weekly group music lesson. We supported 25 children in the YAM Plus Academic program at Hagood and Pickens Elementary Schools. Here is what the Program Director at Pickens Elementary said about one of her YAM Plus students:

"One of our third-grade boys tried YAM Camp this summer and asked to take his guitar home. When we sent interest letters for fall enrollment, he did not return his. (I feel it may have been a money situation.) When he was invited to join YAM Plus, the paperwork came back immediately. He has not missed one lesson or one tutoring session. At the beginning of the year, he was below the 54 percentile in reading and in the 50 percentile in Math. At the winter benchmark he is now in the 69 percentile in reading and 69 percentile in math. This means he is meeting the 3rd grade goals at this time. Can all of this be attributed to a 45 min. tutoring session and 45 minutes of music each week? Probably not. BUT his behavior and academics have improved. He can't wait to get to YAM each week."

CRO-Vineyard's \$21,000 grant has covered 1) the restringing of instruments, 2) free or reduced fees so no child is financially prohibited from participating and 3) full scholarships for the Hagood and Pickens Elementary students in the YAM Plus Academic program. We have also provided a \$5,000 grant for their summer camps.

FOLKS Jack Lewis Watershed Stewardship Scholarship



Jack Lewis was a beloved member of the Vineyards community and a twenty year volunteer with Friends of Lake Keowee Society, a 501(c)3 dedicated to preservation and conservation of our beautiful Lake Keowee and watershed. Jack was a past President of FOLKS and recently they named a scholarship in his honor. ***The Jack Lewis Watershed Stewardship Scholarship is a \$2,500 scholarship awarded to high school students who show a strong interest in natural resource conservation and the environment.*** FOLKS awarded 5 scholarships in March, 2023 to students from Daniel High School, Walhalla High School and the Governor's School of Arts in Greenville. CRO-Vineyards endowed two scholarships for Pickens County students.

Flame Fridays at Pickens High School



The Pickens High School Principal recognizes that many of his high school students are not available to participate in after school clubs, sports or activities. Students that are engaged in school activities with their fellow students are less likely to drop out and generally perform better. Over 56% of the Pickens High School student population is identified as pupils in poverty (PIP). It is very difficult for these students to stay after school for clubs because many of them work to help support their families or are the caregivers for younger siblings or cousins so that the adults in the family are free to be full-time wage earners in the evenings. Another challenge is that many of the students are highly dependent on the school bus system as the Pickens attendance area runs from the county border with Greenville County all the way to North Carolina.

The PHS Principal launched "Flame Fridays" and dedicated a school hour, every other Friday, to club activities ***so every student can participate in a club***. The goal is to create a culture where every student feels a sense of belonging. The Vineyards' CRO provided up to \$100 to each club each semester to offset expenses and student fees.

Dual Enrollment Scholarships

The Pickens County School District has a dual enrollment program with Tri-County Technical College and Southern Wesleyan University, which provides students a chance to earn college credits during their senior year. With Pickens High School in the northernmost area of Pickens County and the colleges located in the southern end of the county, access and transportation are an impediment to participation. The Pickens County School District and Tri-County Technical College have agreed to pilot a program where Tri-County brings their classes and professors to the Pickens High School campus. CRO has agreed to provide \$15,000 in scholarships to offset the tuition for 3 credit hours. The scholarship will cover half of a student's tuition costs with the student responsible and vested in half the costs.

Pickens County Career and Technical Center

Pickens County Career & Technology Center has been serving the students of Pickens County for decades through the four high schools in our district. They offer a wide variety of courses from Aerospace Engineering to Cosmetology to Biomedical Science and electricity. Over 1,500 high school students attend half day classes at PCCTC. Technology and equipment need regular updates and replacements. CRO is funding the \$25,500 replacement of an obsolete manual lathe system, to be installed this summer.

Pickens Middle & High School Robotics Club



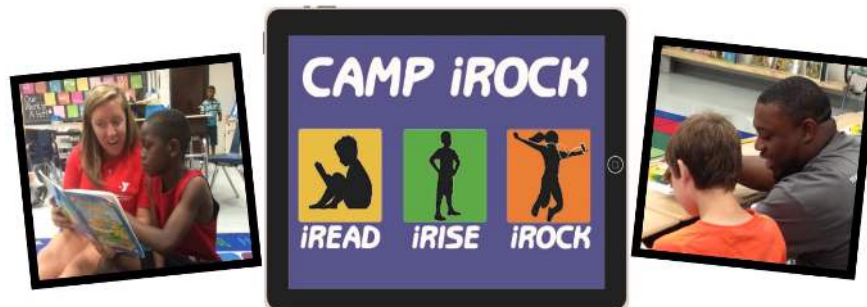
Courtesy photo
Pickens Middle School students Cassidy Riddle, left, and Zoe Morris recently qualified for the VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas, Texas.

Building on the success of last year's 7th grade team that qualified for the World Competition, CRO asked the Robotics Club teacher what she needed to expand and grow participation. She provided us with a list of technology items from robotics kits to GPS technology that would enable participants to develop higher level programming skills and allow more students to join. One robotic kit costs \$1,200. CRO provided \$9,608 to

purchase the new technology. The Robotics Club teacher has used the older technology to expand robotics learning to 6th graders.

Camp iRock

Not surprisingly, elementary level reading competency took a hit during the pandemic. Last year and this year will be key to getting students back on track. 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 \$10,000 to Camp iRock for this summer's camp.



Angel Tree

Once a year, volunteers from our community 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 continue expanding 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 and many more initiatives 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.

Please feel free to contact anyone on the CRO Advisory Council with suggestions, questions or if interested in joining the Vineyards' CRO AdvisoryCouncil!

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

Jean Ann Bollman, Advisory Council Chairman

Davie Haarker (Treasurer)

Rob Ackley

Penny Barr

Rebecca McNichols

Stephanie Cookson

Jan Heppe

Paula Nesbitt

Dick Bollman

Jeanette McCarthy

Brenda Schultz

Laurelle Williams

Cliffs Residents Outreach Corporate Partners

The Vineyards' CRO 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

Fairview Custom Homes

Palmetto Upstate Group-Dream Yard Sports

Platinum Partners

Justin Winter Sotheby's International

Gold & Silver Partners

Villa Verona Design

The Dental Retreat

Singleton Marine

Retracta Screen

Audi of Greenville

Dave Vandeputte / Joan Herlong Sotheby's

Resource Land Holdings

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 schools we support. In those schools, 70%+ of the student body is at or below the poverty threshold for government benefits.