

## Bethel Rural Community Organization Honors Awards Application for WNC Communities

Question: What joint efforts with other community centers, local government, nonprofit agencies, schools, farms, or businesses does the community development organization initiate or support? These efforts may be related to conservation, beautification, health, education, technology, job support, serving those in need, etc. You may simply list these – no need to write detailed explanations.

### **TASKS LISTED BY COMMITTEE:**

#### **BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**

- Created budget and COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Conducted a series of committee meetings to survey needed repairs, upgrades, and beautification projects – **33 hours**
- Reports to board and membership – **7 hours**
- Made floral decorations for sale for all meetings attended (through March) (Michael's, A C Moore, Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Sloan's Plant Farm, Pottery Barn, Wal Mart) – **61 hours**
- Set-up for 4 meetings – **34 hours**
- Meetings with contractors, ordering, and completing installation of decorative shades throughout the facility (Lowe's) – **8 hours**
- Purchased kitchen supplies (Sam's) – **1 hour**
- Designed layout for re-hanging 24 historic art prints as well as awards received by BRCO – **2 hours**
- Disassembled, reassembled, and organized the shelving and contents in the new library – **10 hours**
- Decorated the new library with curtains, art prints, and light fixture – **8 hours**
- Designed the layout and garden features connected with a circle driveway that accommodates pantry workers and participants (Karyn Kolaski (architectural drawings), NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (design approval for historic facility) – **19 hours**
- Researched, interviewed, scheduled five vendors for work on driveway – **10 hours**
- Site visits for grading and rocks – **18 hours**
- Articles for BRCO Newsletter – **3 hours**

**TOTAL BEAUTIFICATION HOURS: 218**

#### **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS (B & G) COMMITTEE**

- Formed a new B & G Committee to focus on maintenance projects that we previously farmed out to service companies. Budget and COVID budget derived from the Beautification budgets.
- Procured a grant and completed a circle driveway to accommodate food pantry workers and clients from Dogwood Health Foundation (grant - \$6,600). – **11 hours**
- Rabbitskin Enterprises LLC and Rockman Burriss Stone Company were contractors for driveway construction and rock - **7 hours**
- Repaired belfry entrance to eliminate fly infestation and ozonation treatment of attic – **4 hours**
- Trimmed historic tree at community center (Jesse Inman Tree Trimming Services) – **3 hours**
- Fire Safety inspection (B Fire Safe) – **1 hour**
- Water analysis inspection (West Carolina Water Treatment) – **2 hours**

- Lawn maintenance (Harmony Baptist Church – tenant) – **1 hour**
- Received donation of a large track of land at the western entrance into Bethel which will accommodate future “Welcome to Bethel” signage that involved legal consultation (Carol & Richard Ploch - donors, Attorney Chuck Dixon). Appalachian Antique Hardwoods agreed to mow the plot. - **15 hours**
- Upgraded the ceiling entrance into the attic in library - **2 hours**
- Extended electrical capability into the new library that included a light switch and an outlet (Hometown Hardware) - **3 hours**
- Added a decorative lighting fixture to library (Lowe’s) - **1 hour**
- Added corner molding to the library – **3 hours**
- Removed linoleum from library and refurbished the original wooden flooring – **2 hours**
- Prepped and painted the library - **22 hours**
- Repaired door locking system at entrance to the dining hall – **1 hour**

**TOTAL BUILDINGS & GROUNDS HOURS: 78**

**BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE**

- Created budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Donated to Bethel Elementary (\$500) and Bethel Middle (\$500) for indigent children’s Christmas fund (Total - \$1,000) (Benevolence project)
- Donated to Bethel Middle for track lighting (\$750) (Benevolence project)
- Donated to Haywood County Sheriff’s Department’s Cops for Kids Christmas project (\$250) (5K/Half Marathon Race project)
- Donated to Center Pigeon Fire Department (\$500) and Lake Logan Fire Department (\$500) (Total - \$1,000) (5K/Half Marathon Race project)
- Donated to Haywood Advancement Foundation’s Buy Haywood agri-tourism guide project (\$500) (Rural Preservation project)
- Donated to the Bethel Middle School FFA monarch butterfly project (\$89.65) (Hometown Hardware) and for competition t-shirts (Barefoot Campus Outfitters) (\$398.40) (Total - \$488.05) (Rural Preservation project)
- Donated to Haywood Waterways Association (\$50) (Rural Preservation project)
- Donated to Preservation NC (\$50) (Historic Preservation project)
- Coordinated with Bethel Middle School Guidance Department to fund Bethel Middle School eighth grade trip (\$1,000) (Education project) - **2 hours**
- Members made masks and donated to Canton Community Kitchen/First Baptist Church project – (Benevolence project) **68 hours**
- Donated masks received from MANNA and Day One Disaster Relief/Canton First Baptist to pantry clients, BRCA members, and volunteers (Benevolence and Food Pantry project) - **9 hours**
- Partnered with the 2-1-1 outreach service (Benevolence project) – **1 hour**
- Assisted Commission for a Clean County with trash pick-up in Bethel (Historic Preservation project) – **3 hours**

**TOTAL BENEVOLENCE DONATIONS: \$5,088.05; TOTAL BENEVOLENCE HOURS: 87**

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- Created budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Provided speakers for 4 meetings (ceased meetings after March due to COVID) about a variety of topics: Cheryl Inman Haney’s historical presentation as the winner of the Pigeon Valley Citizens for Historic Preservation, Rural Preservation’s Hemlock Restoration Workshop project, Haywood Waterways Association, and the Canton Area Historical Museum (General Organizational project) – **4 hours**
- Made presentation at a Haywood County commissioners meeting about BRCO’s accomplishments (General Organizational project) – **7 hours**
- Made presentation at County Council of Community Clubs meeting about BRCO’s accomplishments (General Organizational project) – **2 hours**
- The organization planned a power-point presentation to Rotary, but snow and the pandemic did not allow us to present. (listed under General Organizational ) – **19 hours**
- Attended meetings of the Waynesville Historic Commission (9 hours), the Haywood County Historical & Genealogical Society (44 hours) , and DAR (6 hours) (Education and Historic Preservation project) -**Total - 59 hours**
- Attended a “Guardians of Our Troubled Waters” screening about the clean-up of the Pigeon River – sponsored by Haywood Waterways and Mountain True (Education and Rural Preservation project) – **9 hours**
- Attended a workshop (Grant Writing for Non-Profits) at Haywood Community College that was conducted by Mandy Pearce with Funding for Good. (General Organizational project) – **6 hours**
- Presented a program at the Transylvania County Public Library in conjunction with WNC Communities about BRCO’s historic preservation projects (Education and listed as a Historic Preservation project) – **20 hours**
- BRCO’s Passenger Pigeon scratchboard art print by Stephanie Grimes was the featured piece in an Asheville art show about endangered species – IMPACT – held at Pink Dog Gallery. (Education and listed as a Historic Preservation) – **4 hours**
- Presented a Leadership Haywood program (Education and listed as a Rural Preservation project) – **5 hours**
- Coordinated with Bethel Middle School FFA instructor to develop a woodworking skills and larva/pollinator/Monarch education program (counted as Benevolence, hours counted as Education, and listed as Rural Preservation project) – **10 hours**
- Support for two Journey Scholarship recipients: Lilly Ensley and Brooks Valentine (Education project) – **2 hours**
- Coordinated a Hemlock Restoration workshop at Lake Logan and educated membership about the workshop (Education and listed as a Rural Preservation project) - **60 hours**
- Worked with Pisgah High School Guidance Department and 8 committee members who selected Lilly Ensley to receive the 2020 BRCO Scholarship (\$1,000) with a publicity article in *The Mountaineer*. (Education project) – **17 hours**
- Donated to Bethel Middle’s eighth grade trip (\$1,000) Education project) – **2 hours**

**TOTAL EDUCATION HOURS: 230 (24 hours counted as Historic Preservation; 65 hours counted as Rural Preservation): 141**

## **FOOD PANTRY (FP) COMMITTEE**

- Created a budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Partnered with MANNA for weekly ordering; MANNA also gave a grant (\$552.47) – **12 hours**
- Shopped at Go Grocery and House of Raeford when food was low at MANNA – **192 hours**
- Volunteers transport, sort, and arrange food in pantry weekly – **476 hours**
- Volunteers pack boxes before and clean up after – **120 hours**
- Volunteers distribute to pantry clients monthly. Due to COVID, clients pick up pre-packaged boxes in the new circle driveway rather than shopping at the facility (driveway grant from Dogwood Health Foundation for \$6,600 – listed as Beautification and Buildings & Grounds project) – **387 hours**
- Perform client intact assessment and report client numbers to MANNA – **18 hours**
- Until March we were serving an average of 18 families and 42 individuals. Since April - July we are serving an average of 31 families and 84 individuals.
- Distribute coupons to clients for use at local produce stands and farms (partner with the RP Committee (process coupons), Haywood County Farm Bureau - \$500 grant, Haywood Electric Membership Corporation - \$500 grant, and an anonymous individual - \$1,000) (Rural Preservation project) – **3 hours**
- Reimburse local farm stands for coupons redeemed – **18 hours**
- Publicity article with *The Mountaineer* and *Vicinitus* brought in several donations. - **4 hours**
- Distribute masks to all workers and clients ( gift from MANNA and Day One Disaster Relief/Canton First Baptist project) (listed as Benevolence project) – **9 hours**
- Partner with Encouraging Word Baptist, Riverside Baptist, and Spring Hill Baptist for funds/food for the FP program (\$1,680)
- Partnered with the Kathleen F. Memorial Foundation and seven individuals and families who donated funds for the FP program (\$1,942.53)
- Partnered with Haywood Gleaners to receive fresh produce – **6 hours**
- Partnered with WNC Communities to interview FP clients about the Census (General organizational project) – **2 hours**
- Monitor temperature weekly of all freezers and refrigerators – **6 hours**
- Policies and Procedures Manual addition of COVID procedures (General Organizational project) – **6 hours**
- Partnered with Haywood County Health and Human Services Agency and report families and individual numbers served at monthly pantry – **6 hours**
- General meeting reports – **1 hour**

**TOTAL FOOD PANTRY HOURS: 1,270 (9 hours counted as Benevolence): 1,261**

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION (HP) COMMITTEE

- Created a budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Continued sales of 24 art prints, *Legends, Tales & History of Cold Mountain* – Books 1 - 6, CDs (*Cold Mountain Heritage Driving Tour* and *Possum on a Whale's Sunburst Sessions*), and DVDs (*From New College to Springdale, Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel and Cold Mountain Region, and Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us*). Sales are conducted via our website as well as at Blue Ridge Books, Canton Area Historical Museum, and Lake Logan Conference Center. Art prints are reproduced at Staples and framed at Village Framer. (Sales: \$1,485.75) – **30 hours**
- Received the NC Society of Historians Multi-Media Award for the *Sunburst* DVD (2019) – **10 hours**
- Nominated BRCO's 24 art prints for the N.C. Society of Historians Multi-Media Award by creating a book of all prints with commentary about the procurement and history of each. (2020) – **101 hours**
- BRCO's Passenger Pigeon scratchboard art print by Stephanie Grimes was the featured piece in an Asheville art show about endangered species – IMPACT – held at Pink Dog Gallery. (listed as Education) – **4 hours**
- One of 70 sites on the Blue ridge National Heritage Area's Heritage Trail
- One of 54 sites on the Tourism Development Authority's Haywood County Quilt trail
- Received a donation of art prints by Bethel native and renowned New Orleans artist, Jason Hawkins, of 3 historic houses in Bethel which were photographed by a committee member, copied at Staples, framed at Village Framer, and information placed on the website – **16 hours**
- Honored at a BRCO September meeting - the 2019 Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation recipient: Cheryl Inman Haney who has written two books and received two state historic markers for Bethel. Publicity article in *The Mountaineer* and *Vicinitus* – **20 hours**
- Selected Pigeon Valley Award for Historic Preservation recipients for 2020: Bob and Phyllis Barnett who restored the historic Inman Chapel – **4 hours**
- Interview conducted with Jay Fields, affiliated with WNC Communities, on his historic communities project: *Closely Held Stories of Community – Bethel Community Below Cold Mountain.* – **3 hours**
- Maintain historic site at Pigeon Gap Watering Hole with Mc Carson's Mowing – **1 hour**
- Respond to numerous historically related email and phone requests – **5 hours**
- Communication about historic topics with HP Committee - **51 hours**
- Made dozens of files and organized a file library of historical information about HP projects, historical sites, Bethel families, as well as data about Haywood County towns and WNC history – **134 hours**
- Made dozens of files and organized a file library of BRCO board and meeting history and minutes, finances, WNC Communities Honors applications, County Council of Community Clubs reports and minutes, publicity, and important documents - **76 hours**
- Made dozens of files and organized a file library of BRCO's eight committees and their documents – **34 hours**
- Committee members transcribed the 1926 Flora Kinsland Plott Diary. – **34 hours**

- Committee members completed research and website information of all post offices in Bethel from the 1841-1942. – **12 hours**
- Committee members researched the history of Bethel Rural Community Organization (2000 – present) and its predecessor, Bethel Community Organization (1991-2000); information was placed on the website. – **5 hours**
- Committee members researched the six mid-20<sup>th</sup> century community clubs that existed in Bethel. – **6 hours**
- Committee members researched the Pigeon Valle Fair that existed in Bethel in the mid-1900s.- **14 hours**
- Committee members researched the community cannery movement in the U.S., its inception in Haywood County, and the Bethel Cannery history; information has been placed on the website. - **56 hours**
- Committee members researched and listed additional Bethel authors to the Bethel Writers and Media Contributors website listing. - **20 hours**
- A committee member researched the possibility of securing a state historical marker for Truss Bridge #79, NC 's oldest metal truss bridge. - **2 hours**
- A committee member researched the history of the Hargrove family history in Bethel. - **15 hours**
- A committee member researched the funicular railroad that existed at historic Sunburst Village. - **15 hours**
- Scanned *Sonoma-Valley of the Moon-Sunburst* book to create a table of contents and index – 25 hours
- Completed a projects timeline for HP projects from 2019-2020 which was placed on the website - **2 hours**
- The HP Committee was featured in the July BRCO Newsletter. The article enumerated the numerous projects the committee has completed since 2005. – **3 hours**
- DVD filming of a 100-year-old quilter and her daughter – **4 hours**
- Presented a program at the Transylvania County Public Library in conjunction with WNC Communities about BRCO's historic preservation projects (listed as Education) – **20 hours**
- Attended meetings of the DAR, Haywood Historical & Genealogical Society, and Waynesville Historic Commission (counted as Education) – **59 hours**
- Planning a program in October about how to place a site on the National Register of Historic Places. The HP Committee has placed two sites on the National Register. Program would be sponsored by WNC Communities and assisted by NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources. Due to the pandemic, we are waiting to see if the event can occur. - **1 hour**

**TOTAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION HOURS: 786 (59 hours counted as Education): 727**

#### **5K/HALF MARATHON RACE**

- Created a budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- BRCO held one of its most successful races in October of 2019 that involved year-long planning with a separate email, separate website, and separate Facebook page devoted to the event. – hours – **100 hours**
- The Race affiliated with the following entities who assisted with the technical aspects of the race as well as providing awards and prizes: Pace Magazine, Asheville Track Club, Carolina Runner,

Patti Boo Designs, Mud Dabbers, Cold Mountain Toffee, Smoky Mt. Coffee Roasters, Robin Blu, Event Mercenaries (timing), Canton Insurance Agency, Bethel Middle School, Jukebox Junction, Center Pigeon Fire Department, Lake Logan Fire Department, Haywood County Sheriff's Department, Pisgah High School junior varsity and varsity cheerleading squads, Pisgah High School athletic department, *The Mountaineer*, and *Vicinitus*. - **130 hours**

- The Race was an Asheville Track Club Grand Prix Race and a USATF certified race so that runners could set national time records. – **2 hours**
- Local organizations sponsored the race at various amounts: Accurate Auto Repairs, Appalachian Apothecary, Brad C. Morgan, DDS, Canton Insurance Agency, Champion Credit Union, Clark & Leatherwood, Cold Mountain Nursery, Computerized Book Keeping & Tax Service, Custom Paving, Fat Buddies, First Citizens Bank, Frank G. Queen, PLLC, Haywood Regional Medical Center, Hazelwood Pharmacy, Hometown Hardware/Frank's Singlestop, Home Trust Bank, John H. Highsmith, DDS, PA, Johnson Tomato, Jukebox Junction, Ken Wilson Ford, Peak Dentistry, Pigeon River Grill, Riverview Farm & Garden, Rogers Express Lube, Silver Bluff LLC, The Pressley Group, Travis & Julie Rogers, Underwood-Dills & Associates PC, and Waynesville Tire. – **59 hours**
- Dozens of volunteers planned, assisted with pre-set up of the gym, water stations, track layout, safety monitoring, finish line, awards ceremony, and the soup and food line. – **280 hours**
- Planning for this year changed because of the pandemic, and the race will be a "virtual" race this October with runners using the honor system to turn in their times. T-shirts and awards will be a part of the mix, but planners are still unsure about all of the details of the new protocol.  
- **20 hours**

**TOTAL RACE (INCOME - \$17,997; EXPENSES - \$8,773; PROFIT - \$9,224) Hours: 595**

#### **RURAL PRESERVATION (RP) COMMITTEE**

- Created a budget and a COVID budget – **4 hours**
- Conducted a Hemlock Restoration workshop in collaboration with The Hemlock Restoration Initiative and Lake Logan Conference Center. The workshop brought approximately 18 participants from various regions of WNC to learn how to control the hemlock woolly adelgid. Five BRCO members participated in the day-long event and also presented a program to BRCO's general membership at the November meeting. (listed as Education) – **60 hours**
- Tended the Heritage Garden at the Museum of NC Handicrafts at Shelton House in Waynesville. The gardens at the historic site are listed as a Monarch Waystation by Monarch Watch. - **32 hours**
- Helped to initiate and supported the Bethel Middle School FFA Monarch cage project (\$89.65) (counted as Benevolence, hours counted as Education) – **10 hours**
- Donated to the Bethel Middle School FFA competition t-shirt project (\$398.40) (counted as Benevolence) (time counted as RP) – **1 hour**
- Affiliated with/received donations from the following for the coupon project that assists BRCO food pantry participants who use their coupons for fresh produce at local farms and produce stands: Haywood County Farm Bureau (\$500), Haywood Electric Membership Corporation (\$500), and an anonymous individual (\$1,000) (listed as Food Pantry) – **6 hours**
- Printed/collected coupons for food pantry participants, produce stands, and farms-**30 hours**

- Provided a critical funding piece for the Buy Haywood agri-tourism project, sponsored by Haywood Advancement Foundation, that publishes a brochure/guide to Haywood County farms, produce stands, farmers' markets, tailgate markets, stores, restaurants, and value-added businesses. BRCO is listed as a primary sponsor for the guide which is distributed by the thousands during the agricultural season. (\$500) (counted as Benevolence; time counted as RP) – **1 hour**
- Program for Leadership Haywood about rural conservation in Bethel (listed as Education)(time counted as RP) - **5 hours**
- Funding donor to Haywood Waterways Association (\$50) (counted as Benevolence)
- Completed information for the Policies & Procedures Manual (listed as General Organizational project) – **40 hours**
- Attended a screening of “Guardians of Our Troubled Waters” at Lake Junaluska Assembly – sponsored by Haywood Waterways and Mountain True – about the clean-up of the Pigeon and French Broad Rivers (counted as Education) – **9 hours**

**TOTAL RURAL PRESERVATION HOURS: 198 (19 hours counted as Education): 179**

#### **GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL**

- Created a budget and a COVID budget. Board held extra meeting for COVID budget. – **5 hours**
- Meetings (6 per year) with speakers have been curtailed since March, except that board meetings have occurred with masks and social distancing guidelines followed. We held 4 general meetings (280 hours) and 6 board meetings (96 hours) **Total Meeting hours - 376**
- Officers/Directors/ duties: President - 53; Vice-President – 33; Secretary – 28; Treasurer – 260. Board Chair: 20 **Total Officers/Directors hours – 394 hours**
- BRCO held a yard sale in the fall of 2019 with numerous members participating in planning, storing, sorting, displaying, taking money, providing food, and breaking down the displays after the event. (Income - \$1,362.46) – **168 hours**
- BRCO participated/gave report at the October County Council of Community Clubs meeting at Cruso Community Club at which Haywood County Commissioner attend. (received \$2,000 grant and \$50 for having the most attendees). No County Council meetings have occurred since that time. – **40 hours**
- BRCO manages 2 websites (General – 30 hours) (Race – 40 hours). **Total Website hours - 70**
- BRCO manages 2 Facebook accounts (General – 26 hours; Race – 30 hours). **Total Facebook hours – 56 hours**
- BRCO manages 2 email accounts (General – 26 hours; Race – 30 hours). **Total Email hours - 56 hours** (RACE WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, AND EMAIL COUNTED WITH RACE)
- Our Secretary began a bi-monthly BRCO newsletter last year that is distributed to all BRCO members as well as to community members. The newsletter has been a great way for the organization to reach our membership during these times when we are not meeting. The newsletter is also a wonderful tool for connecting to the Bethel Community to allow them to learn about us and how much we contribute to the community. – **40 hours**
- BRCO presented our list of accomplishments at a Haywood County Commissioners' meeting. – (counted as Education) - **6 hours**



- BRCO members participated in the Blue Ridge Heritage weekend sponsored by the Museum of NC Handicrafts at Shelton House. We connected with dozens of interested people, some of whom later attended our meetings. We also sold art prints and DVDs. - **30 hours**
- BRCO members attended a grant writing workshop sponsored by Haywood Community College and conducted by Mandy Pearce with Funding for Good. (counted as Education) – **6 hours**
- BRCO participated in the Tinsel Trail event at the Museum of NC Handicrafts in Shelton House. Our tree featured items that relate to our benevolence and preservation emphasis. – **50 hours**
- The organization received a land donation of a significant piece of land which members mow; land will have a “Welcome to Bethel sign.” (counted as Buildings & Grounds) – **15 hours**
- The organization planned a power-point presentation to Rotary, but snow and the pandemic did not allow us to present. – hours (counted as Education) – **19 hours**
- The Bylaws Committee met numerous times and arrived at updated Bylaws that were accepted by the membership. – **23 hours**
- The Bylaws Committee began working on a Policies & Procedures Manual (counted as Food Pantry and Rural Preservation) – **45 hours**
- The facility is used by community members for rentals; we also rent year-round to Harmony Baptist Church. – **12 hours**
- BRCO affiliates with Canton Insurance Agency, Duke Power, and Home Trust Bank for insurance, electricity, and banking.
- BRCO has received the Community of Distinction award from WNC Communities since 2013. In 2019, we also received the President’s Award for 25 years of participation. (\$2,000 and plaque); application – 101 hours; meeting attendance - 20 hours. **Total hours - 121**
- Because of BRCO’s stellar participation in community activities, we were asked and have assisted the Saunook Community Organization with its initial organizational steps. – **15 hours**
- BRCO is one of 3 Haywood County community organizations who participated in the WNC Communities Census project. We handed out census information cards at the pantry, made cards in Spanish, and contacted people as notified. – **19 hours**
- BRCO members participated in the NC Internet survey relayed by WNC Communities. – **2 hours**
- Met with Haywood County Schools to offer financial support to build restrooms at the Bethel Elementary softball/baseball/track facility - **10 hours**

**TOTAL GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL HOURS: 1,578 (15 hours counted as Buildings & Grounds; 31 hours counted as Education; 5 hours counted as Food Pantry; 100 hours counted as Race; 40 hours counted as Rural Preservation): 1,387**

BEAUTIFICATION HOURS: 218

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS HOURS: 78

BENEVOLENCE HOURS: 87

EDUCATION HOURS: 141

FOOD PANTRY HOURS: 1,261

HISTORIC PRESERVATION HOURS: 727

5K/HALF MARATHON RACE HOURS: 595

RURAL PRESERVATION HOURS: 179

GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL HOURS: 1,387

**TOTAL BETHEL RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION VOLUNTEER HOURS: 4,673**

Question: How has your community organization responded to your community's needs during this unprecedented time? Please share any other special accomplishments. Please limit response to no more than 2 pages or 600 words.

The pandemic has forced changes concerning meetings and planned projects. General meetings, County Council of Community Clubs meetings, programs/projects organized by BRCO, and attendance at meetings scheduled by members have been cancelled since April. BRCO is looking into having its September meeting via ZOOM. The board has continued to meet to readjust the budget in light of reduced income, redesign our chief fundraisers (5K/Half Marathon Race, rentals, and yard sale), and visualize creative ways each of our committees can continue to function under a new paradigm.

BRCO has geared its new focus on food needs in the community. There is a hefty rise in pantry clients. Until March we were serving an average of 18 families and 42 individuals. Since April we are serving an average of 31 families and 84 individuals. We have ramped up our food pantry supplies by shopping at other locations besides MANNA, redesigned our distribution protocol, publicized our needs, and procured grants for our farm/produce stand coupon program. Three local churches continue to provide a chunk of our pantry budget (\$1,680). In addition, publicity has allowed us to receive significant additional funds from MANNA, the Kathleen F. Memorial Foundation, and several donors (\$2,495). Our longstanding Rural Preservation coupon project which allows food pantry participants to shop at local farms and produce stands was financed by two businesses and an individual (\$2,000). In addition, we have connected with the Gleaners organization so that we provide fresh produce.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Dogwood Health Foundation for \$6,600 to cover the cost of developing a driveway in front of our facility that allows for easier access by pantry workers as well as clients. We are also developing a memorial garden inside the driveway to honor a BRCO founder.

Other benevolence projects include individual members contributing to the mask-making effort. BRCO's members connected with a local church to make masks for volunteer workers at the Canton Community Kitchen. BRCO also received several hundred masks from both MANNA and the Day One Disaster Relief/Canton First Baptist Church project. We distributed masks to food pantry committee members, clients, and members of the organization.

Other committees such as the Beautification Committee and the Historic Preservation Committee combined volunteer efforts to remake an unsightly storage area into a functioning library to house historic preservation files, BRCO files from the organization's inception, and files to accommodate the needs of every committee – a move that ensures that all organizational files will be easily accessible and in one location. Unfortunately, several beautification projects were placed on hold in anticipation of a downturn in income. Previously, BRCO had farmed out most of its beautification and facility upgrades, but the pandemic spurred us to create a new Buildings & Grounds Committee that will perform all maintenance projects identified by the Beautification Committee.

A major adjustment for the organization that will complicate our fund-raising capability is a change to planning the annual 5K/Half Marathon Race – our chief fundraiser. As the oldest Half Marathon in the state, we did not want to lose the tradition, so our Race Committee is planning a “virtual” race. Participants will use the honor reporting system to run the race on their own time and at their own location. We anticipate fewer expenses, and hope to hang on to sponsors. Additional loss of income

occurred for the months our tenant, Harmony Baptist Church, did not meet or pay rent, and we could not rent the facility for events.

While members were basically in lockdown, we conducted numerous projects that we could do from home: completed a number of research projects by the Historic Preservation Committee, nominated our art prints for the NC Society of Historians, conducted write-ups by committee chairs for our new Policies and Procedures Manual, upgraded website information, and reviewed applicants for our \$1,000 educational scholarship. A new project that connects us to members as well as to the community that has proven to be popular is the BRCO Newsletter produced by our Secretary/Webmaster.