

the house that jack built.



KRISTIN O'MALLEY, PRESIDENT AND CEO

“This Is the House That Jack Built” isn’t really about Jack or Jack’s house. The popular British nursery rhyme is a cumulative tale that shows how the two are indirectly linked to other things and other people:

The rooster that crowed in the morn
That woke the judge all shaven and shorn
That married the man all tattered and torn
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn

And so on and so on—until we inevitably get back to Jack. This year’s pandemic is like a cumulative tale. You can’t isolate one problem, fix it, and move on. Everything is too closely connected. Schools close. Children go home. Parents can’t work. They can’t pay the rent to—you guessed it—stay in the house that Jack built.

Right now, the needs are still great. In the community. In the nonprofit sector. For the past seven months, these organizations have had to accelerate services to respond to the unprecedented demand for assistance. They’ve also had to radically adjust their infrastructures—programming models, staffing needs, volunteer support, and service delivery methods—while implementing and adhering to the strictest of health protocols.

My last column, [Cliffs Notes](#), focused on how The Cape Cod Foundation was helping our community navigate through the pandemic by assessing community needs, leveraging partnerships, and mobilizing, building, and deploying resources. To date, we have raised more than \$1.5 million for our Strategic Emergency Response Fund and deployed \$1.2 million to more than [40 nonprofit organizations](#) serving the needs of Cape Cod residents.

Here’s a snapshot of how we’re helping nonprofits respond to the cumulative impact of the pandemic and a brief look at the Foundation’s strategy moving forward.

ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

Our economy hinges on tourism and hospitality. Even in “ordinary” times, many year-round residents work multiple jobs to stay afloat and rely on the income they earn during the busy summer months to sustain them the rest of the year. Now, after three muted seasons of tourism critical to our economy, many residents are still facing furloughs, reduced hours, pay reductions, and full unemployment. Earlier this spring, local food pantries and food programs noted 100%-300% increases in access. According to Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, one in ten Cape Cod residents

was food insecure *before* the pandemic. Current data indicates this number will increase 59%-70% as a direct result of the pandemic. In short, this health crisis has further devastated residents who were already living paycheck to paycheck and impacted those who have never needed help before.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Almost 66% of the funds we have deployed so far support very basic human needs: food, housing, and other emergency assistance. With your support, we've helped fund food pantries and food delivery programs across the Cape. We've helped local residents pay their rent, mortgage, utilities, medical bills, auto loans, and insurance premiums. We've also supported childcare programs for essential workers and helped provide personal protection equipment to keep people healthy and safe.

Food and Basic Needs	65.8%
Programs for Adults with Disabilities	15.4%
Childcare for Essential Workers	6.0%
Mental & Behavioral Health	4.3%
Healthcare	3.4%
Programs & Services for Vulnerable Populations	3.4%
Community and Economic Development	1.7%

ON THE FRONT LINE: A PARTIAL LIST OF GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

YMCA Cape Cod: To support childcare for essential workers

One of the earliest grants we awarded was to YMCA Cape Cod to help provide free childcare to essential workers. While the organization has a long history of providing childcare, it needed to create a new delivery model to keep children, families, and its staff safe. In the first eight weeks of the pandemic, the drop-in style programming served over 750 clients, providing a vital lifeline for essential workers and the community that depends on them.

Elder Services of Cape Cod: To support its Meals-On-Wheels Program

During the initial months of the pandemic, Elder Services of Cape Cod received a 16% increase in requests for its Meals-on-Wheels service. It not only had to meet the increased demand, it also had to purchase 5,000 shelf-stable and frozen meals to have on hand in case the health crisis caused a disruption in service from its regular suppliers. Ironically, since the majority of its 1,260 volunteers are over age 60 and in the same high-risk health category as the seniors they serve, the organization also needed to figure out how to fill its diminished delivery force. In time, they recruited more than 100 out-of-work teachers to help.

Fishing Partnership Support Services: To support local fishermen and fishing families

Restaurant closings caused a ripple effect across the Cape. Decreased demand, historically low prices and fluctuating fish markets made our fishing families vulnerable—especially those in aquaculture and shellfish sectors, who have been largely unable to access federal and/or state support. Fishing Partnership Support Services, founded in 1997, brings critical support services and programs to more than 20,000 New England fishing families. Through the great efforts of Navigators engrained in the local fishing community on Cape Cod, almost 100 Cape Cod fishermen and fishing families received financial assistance for food, rent, utilities, and other basic needs with the funds from the Foundation's grant.

Cape Kid Meals: To provide weekend bags of food for local children and families

While free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs serve children during the school week, what happens on the weekends when they do not have access to these programs? Enter Cape Kid Meals. The nonprofit has been providing backpacks of food to children across Cape Cod since 2014. And, since the onset of the pandemic, it has worked closely with its 26 school partners, as well as other community organizations, to expand access to its program. From March-June, the nonprofit collaborated with meal

distribution sites at various schools across the Cape and enlisted an army of volunteers to help deliver food bags to families that could not pick them up. It also expanded its reach by delivering “family bags” to help other members of the enrolled child’s family. And, for the first time ever, the program operated throughout the summer and helped fill the gap when other summer food service programs shut down and school-year programs began. Over the past seven months, Cape Kid Meals has served thousands of local children and families.

Cape Cod Council of Churches: To support the Faith Family Kitchen and Cape Cod Family Table Collaborative

There are many food pantries and mobile food programs responding to the increased demand across the region by providing the ingredients to make nutritious meals at home. The Cape Cod Family Table Collaborative was established during the pandemic to provide healthy, *fully prepared* meals to underserved populations. Hundreds of individuals and/or families have been served each night the program operates through a unique partnership with the Cape Cod Culinary Incubator, the American Culinary Federation of Cape Cod, Jeni’s Joy, the Cape Codder Resort & Spa, a private summer camp, and supportive business owners with box trucks. The Foundation also awarded a grant to the Council to support its Faith Family Kitchen, which shifted from its traditional congregate meal program to a safe “grab-and-go” program for residents in need.

Cape Abilities: To Support Additional Staff and Programming for Round-the Clock Resident Care

Because of the pandemic, The Cape Abilities team had to quickly convert its staffing model. The organization increased staff hours to provide round the clock care for 130 residents living in supervised homes and created remote educational and “social” activities to engage residents who could no longer go to work or attend day programs during quarantine.

Catholic Social Services: To provide emergency assistance to immigrants and immigrant families

At the onset of the pandemic, Catholic Social Services quickly utilized its existing relationships and connections on Cape Cod to identify and provide support for hundreds of local immigrants and immigrant families in need. Many were unable to access other COVID-19 relief assistance programs.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Cape Cod & The Islands: To support an increase in support calls

As people tried to cope with the difficulties of the pandemic, the number of calls for support to NAMI nearly tripled. As a result, the nonprofit required additional staff hours to respond in a timely manner. Many of the calls are from parents of young adults (18-29) who are having a very hard time adjusting to pandemic life. Some of these young people have shown signs of mental health issues in the past; the uncertainties of the pandemic have brought them to the forefront.

The Foundation also awarded grants to other organizations caring for vulnerable populations, such as Independence House, Duffy Health Center, Latham Centers, Inc., Community Connections, and the Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center.

NEXT STEPS: RESPOND. REIMAGINE. REBUILD.

There have been many other success stories over the past seven months. In the tough days and months ahead, our nonprofit organizations will continue to work to provide a safety net for thousands of Cape Codders in need. And the Foundation will continue to actively build and deploy resources to respond to those needs. At the same time, we’re looking farther ahead. We’re about to launch several new initiatives to help reimagine and rebuild our communities. For good. Stay tuned.

PS: Author Freeman Ng has written an optimistic cumulative tale about sheltering in place during the pandemic. If you’re so inclined for a new rhyme, view a [narrated video](#) or download the free picture book for children.