

# The Journal

## BCT honors 150th anniversary with donations to local nonprofits

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Representatives of the Bank of Charles Town and local nonprofits pose together after BCT donated \$1,871 to each in honor of its 150th anniversary, part of the BCTCards for the Hungry initiative.

Journal photo by Jessica Wilt



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MARTINSBURG — In 1871, the Bank of Charles Town opened its doors for the first time, and since that day, BCT has put the community first, being known as “The Community’s Bank.”

With the community in mind now more than ever, BCT celebrated its 150th anniversary by giving back to the people who have been there to support it and others over the years, donating \$1,871 to eight local nonprofits on Tuesday at a ceremony at the Martinsburg branch.

The donations were made in honor of the BCTCares for the Hungry initiative, the \$1,871 reflecting the year the bank opened.

“Our BCTCares for the Hungry committee wanted to recognize our 150th anniversary by supporting our neighbors, especially those who continue to struggle with food insecurity,” BCT President/CEO Alice Frazier said in a press release. “Our symbolic \$1,871 donation, representing the year we were founded, is just one aspect of our commitment to our eight regional charity partners. Additionally, our employees are excited to return to volunteering as each community transitions out of pandemic restrictions.”

The eight nonprofits recognized were Berkeley County Meals on Wheels, the Berkeley County Backpack Program, CCAP Loaves and Fishes, Jefferson County Meals on Wheels, Jefferson County Community Ministries, Loudoun Hunger Relief, the Loudoun Education Foundation-Backpack Program and Washington County Commission on Aging-Meals on Wheels.

A warmth among the group of nonprofit leaders and BCT employees as they gathered to pose with oversized checks, the meaning behind the donation for each side was clear. Leslie Crabill, senior vice president and director of wealth and investments, thought back to a pre-pandemic time when the BCT employees got as much out of volunteering with the local charities as the organizations themselves.

“It almost turned out to be a team building day,” she said. “Meals on Wheels, when we first started this, we had about 15 volunteers that went over one day. It was the coolest thing. They got to go over during work hours. They were meal prepping. They learned more about each other, and they learned more about the organization and our community. I think, honestly, we’ve gotten as much out of this as the organizations we’re supporting.”

Those days opened eyes to the need in the community, how neighbors helping neighbors makes all the difference in times of need, BCT dedicated to making a positive impact as an organization and as individuals.

“We changed our focus, if you will, our philanthropic focus back in November of 2019,” Crabill said. “Our employees have always been so passionate about helping in the community. We looked around and thought, ‘How do we get people focused in one direction?’ Unfortunately, hunger in our community, it’s in every market. Every county that we serve, there’s a struggle somewhere for hunger, so the BCTCares for the Hungry, it just made sense for us to this.”

“We’re very fortunate to have our partners at the United Way, all the agencies that help us. Our employees look forward to not only doing food drives, but they get to volunteer.”

The beauty in the group that surrounded Crabill and her fellow employees wasn’t just the warmth and love for helping others but the camaraderie among organizations, each tackling the same needs at various angles and various levels.

“What CCAP does, what (the) Berkeley County BackPack Program does, the stories they tell just bring tears to your eyes,” Crabill said. “We’re very fortunate to have these organizations help us feed our community.”

In fact, United Way of the Eastern Panhandle CEO Penny Porter said the needs of the community could not be tackled without the work of each organization, needs in times of crisis not being a one-size-fits-all or one-organization-heals-all situation.

“It’s really a wonderful situation,” Porter said. “The collaboration between the nonprofits in the Eastern Panhandle is really phenomenal, and that’s been with us pre-pandemic and certainly has been one of our strengths as everybody has tried to respond and help families in needs this last year. And it’s continuing. If one agency can not necessarily help with the entire situation, they reach out and connect with another organization that can also help them.

“There’s never just one single organization that can meet the needs of a crisis. It is great, and it’s necessary to have that collaboration and cooperation amongst those that are working together. We are very, very lucky in the Eastern Panhandle that we have that.”

Porter thanked BCT for being a large supporter of the United Way and local nonprofits, the donation coming at the tail end of the Unity Campaign, a 12-day giving drive that runs through Friday, a community effort to help keep vital programs, such as those highlighted by the BCT donation, operating and meeting the area’s needs. Several of the organizations on the receiving end of the BCT donation are part of the Unity Campaign.

“It’s wonderful, absolutely wonderful. BCT has been a generous supporter of United Way for many years, and this is a wonderful example of that support just continuing,” Porter said. “Our nonprofit community, with their specific focus on hunger in the Eastern Panhandle, certainly has been an important focus this last year during COVID and continuing now as families and individuals recover and try to get back on track.”

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