

Martin County, Minn., April 17, 2020 – The Schmeckle Foundation has gifted \$150,000 to local community programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The foundation is partnering with the Martin County Area Foundation and Families First of Minnesota to deploy funds to three crucial areas of the community: early child care providers, food shelves, and healthcare workers.

“Martin County is one of the hardest hit rural counties in Minnesota from COVID-19.” said Wade H. Abed II, Schmeckle Foundation Trustee. “Now, more than ever, this is the time for us to lift each other up. Our goal is that this gift inspires others in the community to donate to the Martin County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund developed by the Martin County Area Foundation.”

The Martin County Area Foundation will distribute the funds by making grants to nonprofits and local units of government to:

- assist disproportionately affected communities
- meet immediate needs of economically vulnerable populations
- respond to the increased demands placed on stressed social support systems and public services.

“Our quality of life in this area has never before been challenged like it is being challenged right now due to the Covid-19 pandemic.” stated Jason Subbert, Martin County Area Foundation Board President. “We hope you will consider donating to the fund and help us be the light and hope that some are so desperately looking for right now.”

In addition, the Schmeckle Foundation is partnering with Families First of Minnesota, a 501(c)3 organization located in Mankato and Rochester, to provide emergency grants to early child care providers. Families First of Minnesota will administer the program and will be contacting Martin County providers as early as Friday, April 17th.

“Many child care providers exist because they have a passion to serve families; and in times like these, there are no blue prints for how to handle these sort of situations.” states Jon Losness, Executive Director, Families First of Minnesota. “It is vital that we support daycare providers during this crisis so they remain open for business when parents are able to travel back to work.”

Another portion of the Schmeckle Foundation gift has been distributed to various local food shelves.

“The gift was such a fabulous surprise that provided support when we needed it most.” said Greta Lintelman, Executive Director at Heaven's Table. “The entire gift will go towards supplying the food shelf. With these funds, we can ensure we have balanced nutritional options such as fresh fruits and vegetables and quality proteins.”

In closing, the Martin County Area Foundation is providing a dollar-for-dollar match to the first \$30,000 in donations made to the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund by Friday, May 15th. Donations are tax deductible and can be made online by going to the Martin County Area Foundation Website.

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