

# SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

## GIVE A LITTLE FOUNDATION



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on this extremely difficult past year and prepare for what lies ahead, we're inspired by the image of "waiting baskets" found in the poem *Mule Heart* by Jane Hirshfield. The idea for the poem came, Hirshfield says, when she once visited Greece and observed how baskets were placed equally on the sides of mules to carry things up and down the steep slopes.

In our daily lives, our own persevering "mule hearts" also carry baskets on each side. We can fill some with our bounty and good fortune, with the things we love and want to hold on to. The others contain our sorrows, our griefs and worries, our pain, all we have lost.

Especially important in times of hardship is the balance. Not getting too off-kilter or being weighted down on one side by our struggles. Most of us have surely experienced how troubles have a way of taking over, of overshadowing the rest. Especially if they're long-lasting, we may need to be deliberate, even mulishly stubborn, about restoring the balance. Doing this can be a matter of what we notice, what we focus on. We can think small; seemingly simple things can help. Tulips in bloom. A good laugh. A call from a friend. A haircut.



One of the reasons we send you these newsletters is to let you know how vital your role is in lightening the misfortune baskets of our neighbors and filling the ones that hold promise. As you well know, the burdens for many in this pandemic have been almost too heavy to carry. The good news is that every day you're personally helping to shift the balance in crucial ways for individuals and families in our community.

By means of your incredible support and generosity, the good fortune baskets of hundreds of people have been filled this past year with necessities such as: winter coats and other clothing, shoes and socks, medicine, eyeglasses, food, hygiene kits, tires, gas and grocery gift cards, bus passes, school supplies and headsets for children learning at home, paid invoices for utilities, auto repairs, and rental deposits, beds and household items, a trampoline (see below), and much more.

In addition, these baskets now contain intangibles: much-needed relief (from stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness) as well as gratitude, hope, comfort, and even joy. What we have learned over and over again is that people are astonished and incredibly grateful (sometimes breaking into tears) to find out that they've received help from caring folks who don't even know them. Even a little assistance can go a long way toward restoring faith and lifting spirits.

We hope that your spirits are lifted as well to know that by our holding together, many positive things *are* happening. Please add some very good feelings to your own baskets.

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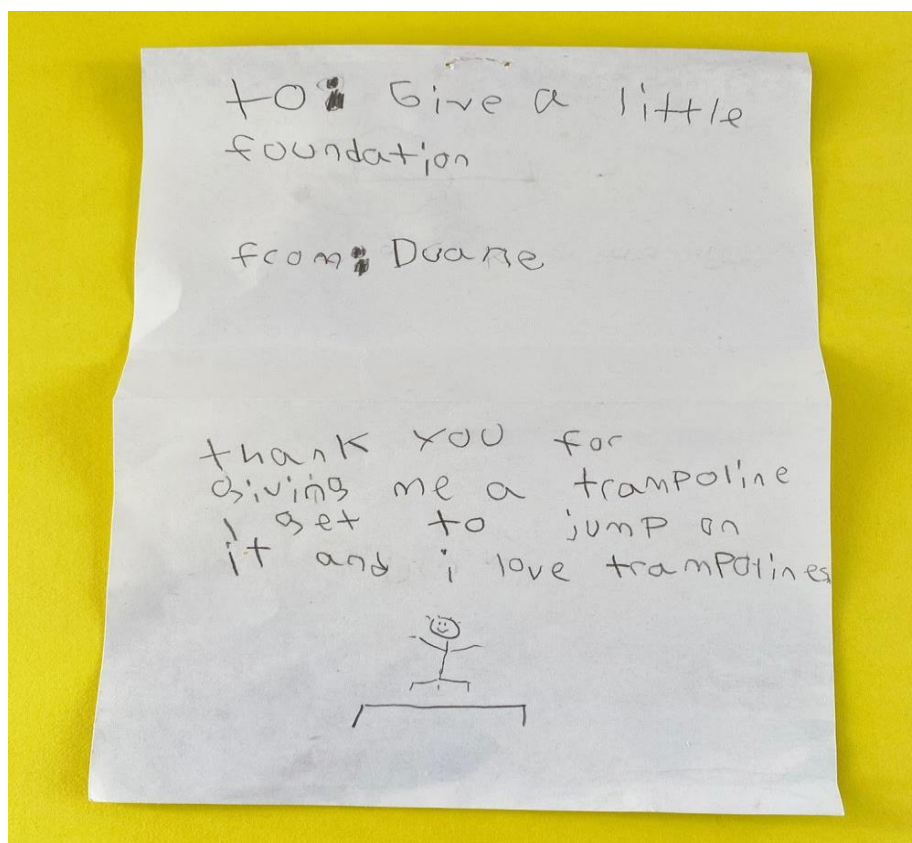
## HELPING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES WHILE SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN CLOSED

During the long period of school closures--and now in this transition period--we're continuing to help children in cooperation with dedicated school counselors and staff who are disbursing needed items through direct outreach to families. We thank the staff for caring about the large numbers of children who have been struggling at home.

Among many difficult situations, we are especially saddened to report that some local schoolchildren lost family members to COVID. After being notified by school counselors, we've put together "Comfort Bags," a small gesture to be sure, but the counselors said the bags were very well received. In addition to a small stuffed animal, the bags contained a soft blanket, Play-Doh, coloring books and markers, nutritious snacks, masks, and several books, including **The Invisible String**, which is written for children experiencing loss and grief.



Another story that particularly touched our hearts was that of a young boy whose medical issues were much improved by jumping every day on his small trampoline. When the trampoline fell apart and the boy's condition worsened, his school counselor notified us that the family did not have the funds to replace it. The cost was very reasonable and the result joyful! (The "thank you" letter here appears as it was sent to us except that we have changed the boy's name.)



## WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT

We are immensely grateful to all of you who are longstanding or more recent donors, including a growing number of monthly sustaining members, and also to those of you who lend important support in other ways.

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THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS  
AND PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS

We're delighted to welcome four new Business/Professional Partners: Lynne Barbatsis, Retired Audiologist; Adam Dean, Farmers Insurance; Beverly Snyder, Retired Educator; and Wild Haven Property Management Co. [See our website](#) for details and a complete list of our partners, and please contact us at any time for further information.

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HILLSIDE FOUNDATION GRANT  
SUPPORTS SENIORS

We're extremely fortunate and grateful to have received for 2021 a **renewed major grant from the Hillside Foundation** to help senior citizens experiencing crisis or hardship. As restrictions ease, we are now implementing a range of new outreach initiatives for the elderly in our community who have many unmet needs from the past year. The response so far is very positive.

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As always, we welcome your ideas, suggestions, and thoughts, especially as we go forward with new hope and possibilities. Please contact Francine Fiore at [francine@givealittlefoundation.org](mailto:francine@givealittlefoundation.org).

We send our warmest wishes as the spring season brings blossoms and renewal,

*Francine Fiore, Bonnie Mann, Phillip Pirages, Rob Stephenson, Ellen Summerfield, and Patti Webb* on behalf of everyone at Give A Little

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