The Youth Civic Group Program also known as El Crucero PSH first initiated a grant proposal with the intention of teaching their children about character, concern for others, governmental systems and community service. All of which are primarily done through observation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the children of El Crucero PSH were provided with multiple opportunities to actively engage in their community, as well as participate first-hand on the multiple and varied opportunities to engage in real-life experiences.

As a result of the successes of El Crucero PSH the children were not only able to engage in community service, but learn about public policy and El Crucero PSH policy and how decisions are made (including voting), and last but not least be informed about local public issues and local El Crucero PSH issues.

Roadrunner helped expand its distributions to at-risk seniors in Animas, NM in Hidalgo County. Prior to the grant, there was only one senior-focused distribution in both Hidalgo and Sierra Counties.

Roadrunner’s strategy for enhancing the SHI site in Hidalgo County was to fund a mobile distribution once a month as the county has 22.4% senior population and 15% senior poverty. Roadrunner knows that the SHI site in Animas is pivotal since not many other senior-focused options exist in these two countries. Also, these two counties have an above average percentage of grandparents raising grandchildren, which means their need for access to food is even higher. Studies show that seniors who live with grandchildren are more likely to be food insecure than seniors who do not.

In the end, funds were expended in their entirety to provide food distributions through the SHI program. All sites remained open in Hidalgo and Sierra Counties despite the Coronavirus pandemic and Roadrunner has continued to provide support to seniors in those areas today.
DEMING ANIMAL GUARDIANS

Deming Animal Guardians sought to educate “seniors” to the health benefits of pet ownership and facilitate the formation of this bond by making adoption of a dog or cat easier and more affordable. Their goal was to form new human-pet bonds.

They began by setting up a table in the lobby of the senior center in Deming, NM with a display and information on the seniors for seniors program in which senior dog or cat adoption always is free to senior citizens when animals are adopted from Deming Animal Guardians. They then printed place mats with information on the health benefits of pet ownership for utilization at the senior center along with planned presentations to the monthly Deming luncheon. An article was also written for the Deming Headlight publicizing the program.

In the end, they were able to aid in the formation of 24 dog/cat-human bonds. Collars and leashes were made available to seniors upon request. Veterinary services were required to facilitate adoption, adoption fees and printing costs exceeded the $2,500 grant award. Future plans include the development of an evaluation plan for future programming.
Beloved Community

Beloved Community originally planned to carry out collaborative art projects with a number of community organizations representing diverse groups when the pandemic hit. After an abrupt halt, they decided that they needed to figure out a way to make the work happen in spite of—and perhaps because of—the pandemic. Indeed, it was an opportunity to engage in the general community in a new way rather than just specific groups.

As a result, Beloved was able to engage a more diverse participants from ages 6 to 90 of all backgrounds. One “Belonging through the Arts” participant expressed pleasure that Beloved Community is “building an identity as an arts organization.” Indeed, these projects made possible by the funding partnership between Western Sky and CFSNM have solidified out organization’s tradition of using creative practices to challenge stereotypes, celebrate diversity, engage gifts and build a sense of community.

For future collaborative arts projects, Beloved Community plans to elicit evaluative feedback from members of the public who see the artwork. It is also our intention to collect feedback from participants directly after events.

BASE Play

BASE Play is an after-school program offered to 3rd-6th grade students affiliated with Major League Baseball Youth Programs under the RBI program. In Dona Ana County, BASE play partners with Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) and the County of Dona Ana (DAC) to provide academic support, homework labs, hot meals, transportation, access to wrap around services, and recreational baseball and softball.

Since inception, averages of 70% of students in the program who are struggling academically are able to transition to passing grades. 55% of participants are boys, 45% are girls. Due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, BASE Play had to creatively think of new ways for students and families to interact one on one. BASE Play coordinators saw grab-and-go meal distribution as a great opportunity to connect with students and families that were not yet a part of the BASE Play family, and leveraged this opportunity to create awareness of the programming and share enrichment materials in the community. BASE Play coordinators were also able to connect 31 families in Dona Ana County to support services provided by partner organization Families and Youth Incorporated.
Mesilla Valley Community of Hope provides and trains Coordinated Entry Survey’s in Luna and Sierra Counties to help people experiencing homelessness qualify for housing assistance.

Overall, MVCH staff conducted 33 Coordinated Entry surveys in Luna County and 6 in Sierra County to get people on a list for HUD housing. MVCH also secured funding from the NM Mortgage Finance Authority to actually begin housing people in these counties. The organization had a foot forward by already conducting Coordinated Entries which are required to obtain housing assistance.

The funding will help to rapidly rehouse people living on the streets as well as to respond to people facing homelessness (Homeless Prevention funding). Future plans include continuing to do the Coordinated Entries until community partners are invested. MVCH will also continue to provide housing in the counties as long as the funds exist. MVCH is also serving Otero County and helping this agency build capacity so that they can apply for HUD funding through their own agency.

An evaluation plan for future programming would include a target number of agencies/individuals trained to perform Coordinated Entry Surveys; target number of clients that participated in a complete survey; how many clients received housing from the Coordinated Entry and how many days it took from survey to housing entry.
CASA DE PEREGRINOS

The purpose that the Food Security Program is intended to accomplish is to provide a supplementary source of food to low income families to augment other food subsidies like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as “food stamps”) and food that families purchase themselves. It helps provide economic stability, by helping families avoid the painful choices between food and other necessities.

The SNAP program provides important assistance to families, but it is far from enough. Recent data from the New Mexico Voices from Children found that 80% of SNAP benefits are used within the first two weeks of when they are received, and, 21% are used on the day that they are received. More than half of SNAP households experience food insecurity or hunger. The Food Security Program can provide, on average, 85-90 pounds of food to a family each month. As the USDA defines a “meal” as 1.2 pounds of food, this distribution can represent about 70-75 meals, or enough to feed a family of four for just under a week, which can help make up the slack between SNAP benefit grants.

Casa de Peregrinos served almost 30,000 unduplicated individuals during 2019, at 23 distinct locations, 33% of whom were children. Over 21,000 people were served at the Las Cruces Pantry alone. With Dona Ana County having a population of 213,000, Casa de Peregrinos served over 14% of the people in the county. One in every seven individuals living in Dona Ana County came for help. 3,804,286 pounds of food were distributed to families in need. In the end, Casa de Peregrinos distributed over $6.5 million in resources to the community.
The First Teacher/Primer Maestro (FT/PM) parent classes are a 6 week course where parents participate and learn important foundational skills for young children. The classes are offered in Dona Ana County which includes Las Cruces, Sunland Park, Chaparral, Anthony, Vado/Del Cerro, Hatch and Mesilla Park. The FT/PM classes’ aims to combat challenges by helping families get their young children prepared to go to school.

The focus of the program is to provide books, educational tools and enriched learning to parents, guardians, and caregivers of young children. The goal is to prepare each caregiver with the best knowledge on their child’s educational development because they are essentially their first teacher. Participants (parents/caregivers) learn various topics they can implement at home with their children.

During this grant period, each family received 18 bilingual books, age-appropriate educational materials, the “Steps for Success” developmental skills chart, and a handbook which included songs and activities. The FT/PM material is aligned with the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines. Overall, the program continues to see positive results from the First Teacher/Primer Maestro program and shows the following results:

- 97% of parents read more to their children
- 92% of parents talk more with their children
- 96% of parents play more with their children
- 95% of parents understand more about how children learn
- 93% of parents enjoy learning time with their child more than ever before