



T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION

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BUILDING A THRIVING DEEP EAST TEXAS

March 18, 2020

Friends of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation:

Unsettling...

Uncharted...

Uncertain...

Unprecedented...

Those are all words I have heard used to describe the global impact of the novel coronavirus and the related disease, COVID-19. As that impact makes its way to rural East Texas, we are thinking about your role in our communities and our role in the region. Even as experiences are unsettling and as life is unsettled, know that foundation staff continue to work and are available to respond to your calls and emails.

As needs in your community become more clear, please let us know. Please also let us know if you need flexibility in payment schedules, report due dates, or grant deliverables. Planned work will be disrupted, and programs and events have already been—and will continue to be—cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus and COVID-19. If that is the case, grant funds will not be automatically rescinded—Temple Foundation program staff will work with you to develop a plan for how best to use those grant funds going forward. This is uncharted territory for all of us. It will most likely be difficult for weeks or months. We are committed to figuring things out with you and working alongside you.

Like everyone else, foundation staff are trying to make sense of a new routine...frequently washing hands, not shaking hands, not hugging, maintaining space around each other in the office, meeting with external friends and colleagues by phone and video. Like everyone else with invested assets, the foundation's investment portfolio is down from the highs of only a few weeks ago. Our investment strategy includes defensive elements to lessen the impact of the downside. We are not immune from the market selloff; however, in these

uncertain times, we have the financial resources to continue supporting your work in our communities.

Unprecedented circumstances often require unprecedented responses. We do not yet know what those might be. You will perhaps have opportunities to execute your mission in a new way. It might be that new partnerships form to meet a need. Or, there could be other creative responses never before conceived. You have an open invitation to send us your ideas.

The shock of the pandemic reminds us of the importance of our priority on rural communities. Everything reported in the news is from an urban U.S. perspective. Current events highlight the need for our focus on rural places and rural people and on jobs that provide a living wage and benefits, access to rural health care, and the role broadband will play in telehealth and education with more and more rural students expected to learn using online platforms.

The phrase “new normal” is being used a lot. This is indeed our current reality, but my prayer is that our true normal—hugging, handshaking, and gathering together with friends and loved ones—will quickly return. In the meantime, we thank you for the work you do year-round, and we are especially thankful for your leadership today, tomorrow, and in the weeks to come.

Stay well.

Wynn Rosser
President & CEO