Go Bold or Go Home? TCF did both.

By Anne Labley

“TCF adjusted how they work with the community to streamline the process to access funds,” Liilliam Torrez, superintendent, Taos Municipal Schools.

The past year presented the nation and the community with unprecedented challenges. Yet, according to Lisa O’Brien, Director of Taos Community Foundation (TCF), “as atrocious and awful as it has been, the pandemic was a game-changer.”

Indeed, TCF has had a banner year. The foundation opened a record number of charitable giving funds, donations and assets surged, and legacy gifts were at an all-time high.

Perhaps most telling, partnerships between community leaders and the community they serve proved to be formidable and unwavering.

MINIMIZING PAPERWORK, MAXIMIZING COMMITMENT

“At the beginning of the pandemic, TCF rapidly moved to working with community partners to address immediate human need,” commented Cheri Lyon, El Pueblito UMC Pastor and Shared Table director. “They minimized the paperwork and maximized their commitment to helping nonprofits and others meet the urgent demands for supplies such as food and masks. The fast turnaround required a new level of trust that organizations would use the funds with optimal efficiency and efficacy.

“Philanthropy is often the first entity providing financial support during a crisis,” noted O’Brien, and explained their shift in execution.

“Philanthropy is always a leap of faith. You don’t always know what the outcome will be. We chose to move forward in a strategic way. We leaned into the expertise of our community and trusted that everyone was bringing their best. By not focusing entirely on the outcome, it pushed us to move past the unknown. The lessons from the experience have proven to be more valuable.”

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO COMPREHENSIVE CHALLENGES

Sandra Emory, Executive Director of Youth Heartline, witnessed the significant shift to streamline resources when the community needed them the most.

“As a nonprofit that has been serving the community for 30 years, it is heartening to feel heard and wholly supported by a community foundation. Conversations, no matter their form, turn into creative solutions.”

Luis Reyes, CEO of 4K Cannon Electric Cooperative, commented on TCF’s pandemic pivot: “They rose to the occasion to help those who needed it and filled the gaps for our community. They’ve been a shining star.”

The solution-driven impetus has had a positive ripple effect on the community. Pandemic notwithstanding, TCF met the challenges with expansive thinking.

“That’s when growth happens—who wouldn’t stand outside that comfort zone and reach for the stars?” O’Brien added. “We’re focusing on what we’re seeing through our collective windshield—the narrower mirror is small for a reason. We are looking ahead and we’re taking the boldness with us.”

ABOUT TCF

The current Board of Directors includes Dr. Charlie Anderson, Adriana Blake, Dr. Catherine Collins, John Hamilton, Alk Henry, George Jourimanie, Dave Lambert, Vernon Lapas, Ben Maddox, Dennis Manzanares and David Norden.

Taos Community Foundation is located at 115 La Posta Road, Suite A, Taos, NM 87571. For more learn more, visit taoscf.org or call (575) 737-9300.