

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF BURKE COUNTY

NEWSLETTER



HAPPY 2025 FROM THE TEAM

Happy, happy New Year from CFBC! We hope your 2025 is off to a wonderful start. Your partnership means the world to us, and we're honored to play a small role in supporting the meaningful change you're creating in our community. Whether you've been partnering with us for years or are new to working with CFBC, we're excited to continue collaborating with you to help fulfill your mission. If you're looking to expand your programs, apply for new grants, or explore additional resources in 2025, we're here to support you every step of the way.

Together, we can continue to build a brighter future for our community.

As we look ahead to the new year, we wanted to share a few things we're excited about:

- Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary
- Non-Profit Spotlight & Updates
- Fully Staffed Team

2025 marks a big milestone for us—our 25th anniversary! We're thrilled to celebrate this achievement with you and look forward to sharing some exciting updates that we believe will shape the future of CFBC. Stay tuned for more!

In this and future newsletters, we'll provide important updates for non-profits, along with spotlights on organizations doing incredible work. Our goal is to keep you informed about the latest news and resources to help your organization thrive, while also shining a light on the valuable contributions being made in our community.

And finally, we're happy to share that CFBC is now a fully staffed team! We invite you to meet our two newest team members on the last page of this newsletter. If you see them around town, don't hesitate to stop by and say hello—they'd love to chat with you!

NON-PROFIT SPOTLIGHT

There are so many incredible organizations right here in our community doing important work, it's easy to lose track of all the impact they're making. That's why we're excited to introduce our Non-Profit Spotlight – a way to bring some of these organizations and their recent projects or expanding programs to the forefront. Each quarter, we'll share a few stories to help you stay connected with the positive changes happening in our backyard.

BURKE UNITED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Many of you are familiar with BUCM, a vital resource for our community. In 2023 alone, they provided over 1,116,000 pounds of food and donated diapers to more than 460 families. Their mission is to restore resilience in people living in poverty or facing homelessness by ensuring their basic needs are met – and the numbers speak for themselves. We're proud to see them making such a significant impact.

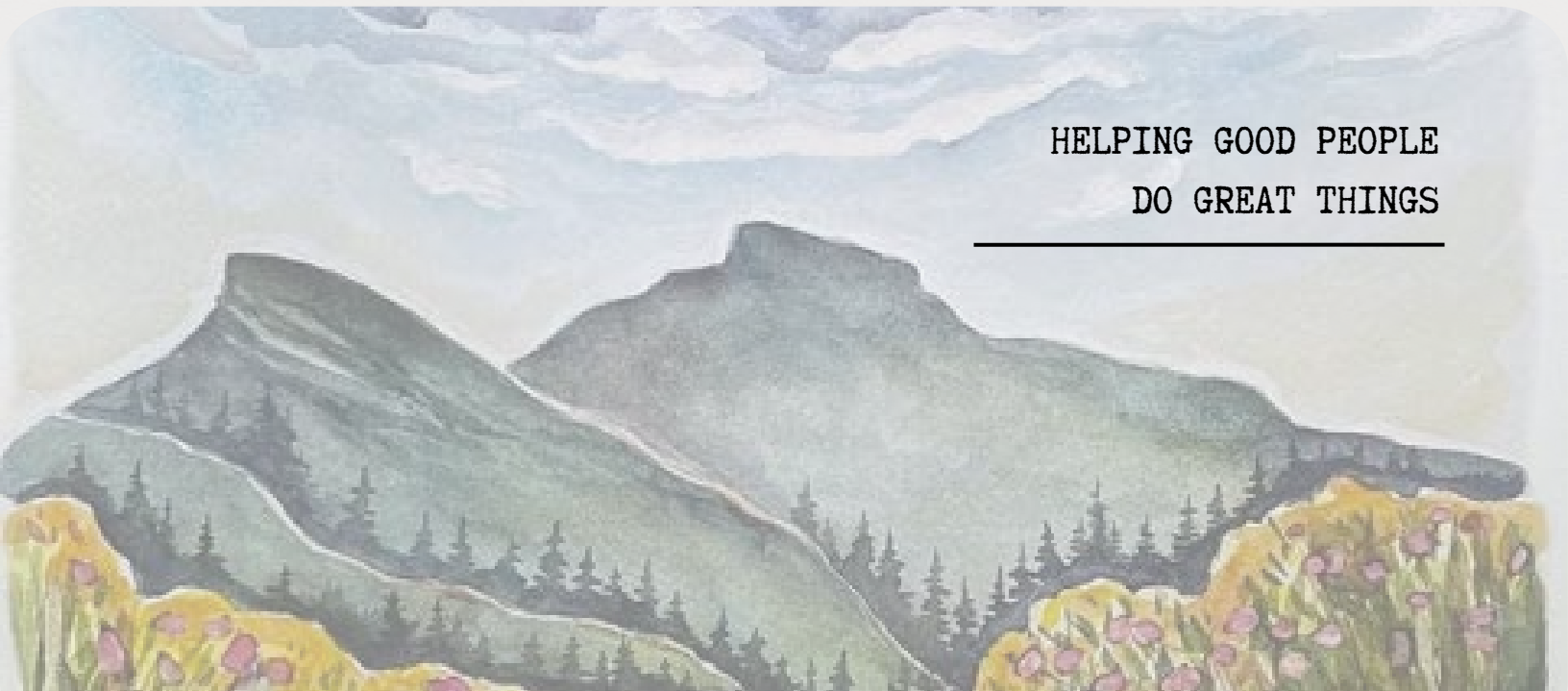
This year, BUCM has an exciting move ahead to the "Old Food Lion Building," where they'll be able to expand their services even further. With this move comes exciting renovations, but also significant expenses. To support this growth, BUCM has launched a \$5 million capital campaign and is already over 68% of the way there! They anticipate the move to take place in Spring 2025, and we're excited to watch their continued progress as they work to better serve our community.

WAITING FOR THE TRAIN

Passenger train service in Western NC was discontinued in the 1970s, but a recent grassroots movement is working to bring it back. In 2023, two new residents in Morganton began discussing the nightly sound of the freight train whistle that echoed through their neighborhood, sparking a much larger effort.

After learning about the Western NC Rail Committee's work to restore passenger rail, the two neighbors reached out to others in the community, including the local mayor. Together, they founded Waiting For The Train, a citizens' group advocating for the return of passenger rail to Western NC.

Passenger rail service is seen as an essential part of the region's future, offering economic benefits, environmental preservation, and fostering deeper human connections. The group is excited to be part of the Service Development Plan, a crucial step in making this dream a reality. They're looking forward to seeing the return of passenger rail – and so are we!



HELPING GOOD PEOPLE
DO GREAT THINGS

NON•PROFIT UPDATES

At the heart of every community are organizations like yours—working tirelessly to create meaningful change. But we know how easy it is to get caught up in the day-to-day and miss out on important updates. That's why we're here to keep you informed with essential information that supports your work and strengthens your impact.

In our Non-Profit Updates, you'll find the latest on available grants, upcoming roundtable discussions, new funding opportunities, and other resources that can help you keep your organization moving forward. Our goal is to ensure you never miss out on the key tools, insights, or connections that can make a real difference in your work.

UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

February 14, 2025 – Burke Youth Organized Philanthropists (BYOP) will open their annual grant cycle. This opportunity is available to 501(c)(3) organizations focused on improving the lives of children (ages 0-18) and their families. Priority will be given to programs that specifically address mental health challenges affecting children and families.

April 7, 2025 – Burke Women's Fund (BWF) will also open their annual grant cycle, supporting organizations that impact the lives of women and families in Burke County. Please note, applications will only be accepted for programs or projects with a minimum size of \$5,000.

You can access the grant guidelines and applications at:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.aspx?urlkey=cfburkecounty>


NON•PROFIT ROUNDTABLES

Our roundtables have been a great success, and we truly appreciate the opportunity to learn more about you and the important work your organization is doing. If you haven't already (or would like to participate again), we'd love for you to join us at the next roundtable! Click here to sign up.

GOVERNOR'S SERVICE AWARD

Please consider nominating your outstanding volunteer or group of volunteers for this special award! Nominations are due by **February 7, 2025**. A community recognition ceremony will be held in May of 2025.

Use the link below for an online or word application.
<https://www.nc.gov/working/volunteer-opportunities/volunteernc/governors-volunteer-service-awards>



HELPING GOOD PEOPLE
DO GREAT THINGS

MEET THE STAFF

As many of you know, CFBC has been a bit of a “work in progress” with a few gaps in our team over the past months. We’ve been eagerly awaiting the arrival of our Grants & Scholarships Manager from Florida, and just as she settled in, our Finance Director went on maternity leave. Well, we’re thrilled to share that we are finally a full, dedicated team once again, and we couldn’t be happier! Without further ado, meet the two newest additions to our CFBC team:

FINANCE DIRECTOR

I’m Pashence Johnson-Sparks, the new Finance Director of CFBC. I’d like to share a bit about myself and my journey.

I started my studies aiming for a career in medicine and graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Pre-Medicine from Lenoir-Rhyne University. However, as my interests evolved, I pursued an MBA in Business Administration, graduating in 2018. Concurrently, I began my finance career with Affinity Living Group, progressing through roles such as FP&A Manager, Executive Director, and Director of External Financial Reporting.

My professional journey took a turn when I became a mother and realized my desire to make a more direct impact on my community. I transitioned to become CFO of Westlife Wellness, a health center in Caldwell County focused on making healthcare accessible, particularly for the underserved and Hispanic populations.

It was during this time that I discovered the work of CFBC. When the Finance Director position opened, I felt drawn to join the Foundation and contribute to its impactful mission. I am truly excited to work alongside a passionate team to support local nonprofits and strengthen the community through philanthropy.

Thank you for all that you do. I look forward to contributing to the continued success of CFBC and the incredible work we do together.

Pashence Johnson-Sparks



GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS MANAGER

I’m thrilled to be part of the team at CFBC, where I can continue my passion for service and community impact. Growing up, I was deeply inspired by my mom’s unwavering dedication to giving back, and that influence has shaped my career in the non-profit sector. Since 2021, I’ve gained hands-on experience in program management, strategic planning, and leadership, and I’m eager to apply these skills to further CFBC’s mission.

As the Grants and Scholarships Manager, I oversee the administration of various grant and scholarship programs, ensuring resources are distributed effectively to maximize impact. My goal is to support Burke County by identifying gaps, fostering partnerships, and helping local organizations access the funding they need to thrive, while also assisting individuals in fulfilling their philanthropic goals.

In my previous role, I managed relationships with over 65 non-profit organizations, developed innovative processes, and led a dedicated team. I’ve seen firsthand how collaboration drives lasting change, and I’m excited to bring that experience to CFBC.

I look forward to connecting with you and learning how your philanthropic goals or mission-driven work align with our mission.

Aubrey Robbie

