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December 3, 2020

CHARLOTTE WINE + FOOD  
ANNOUNCES FUNDS RAISED FROM 2020 EVENTS

**\$75,000 donated to four local children's charities.**

Charlotte, NC (December 3, 2020) – Charlotte Wine + Food Board Chairman Palmer Steel announced Wednesday, December 2 that following the culmination of Charlotte Wine + Food's 32nd year of fundraising, the organization would be making a distribution of \$75,000 to Charlotte-area children's charities. Checks were presented to the four beneficiaries: GenOne, Mitchell's Fund, The Learning Collaborative, and The Relatives at a socially-distant Check Presentation Celebration on December 2nd, 2020.

"Our check presentation celebration is the best day of the year. Learning how our charity partners will put these funds to use to uplift and support the less-fortunate children in our community is always rewarding," says Lauren Deese, Executive Director of Charlotte Wine + Food. Deese continues to say, "This year has been unlike any other in our history, as the pandemic caused us to postpone our annual spring Charlotte Wine + Food Week presented by Truist to fall and present it in a newly reimagined way. The outpouring of support from winemakers and distributors, to restaurants and chefs, corporate sponsors, volunteers, donors, staff and board members was really encouraging. We are thankful to be able to keep our mission alive in such a difficult year and are hopeful for the future of our organization."

The reimagined Charlotte Wine + Food Week was part of its 32nd year of fundraising this past Wednesday, October 14, through Saturday, October 17. Attendees were delighted by an array of events that included signature CW+F staples with a fresh twist: private in-home dinners, restaurant vintner dinners, an Online E-Auction open to the public, a Virtual Happy Hour featuring Winemaker Andy Erickson of Ellman Family Vineyards in partnership with Petit Philippe, and a grand finale Virtual Gala &



Mobile Live Auction featuring renowned Napa Valley Winemaker Julien Fayard and Master Sommelier Des Echavarrie of Scale Wine Group.

Proceeds from the 2020 events will help each of our charity partners continue their own missions.

GenOne partners with talented, first-generation students from under-served communities, helping them successfully navigate to and through college. GenOne provides the social capital and resources needed to equalize the incredible resource gap found between first-generation students in poverty and their affluent peers. They help to break cycles of generational poverty in Charlotte, N.C., a city which ranks 50/50 in Upward Social Mobility. They will use funds to maintain their staff who coordinate and provide these crucial resources.

Mitchell's Fund seeks to improve mental well-being for children and families who have experienced trauma. They will use funds to help pay the annual salary for a mental health counselor who works with sick children and their families in the St. Jude Affiliate Clinic at Novant Health. The counselor uses play, art and talk therapies to help patients process the shock of diagnosis, the pain and anxiety of treatments and, in some cases, helps them prepare for the end of life. In 2020, the counselor worked with over 200 patients and their families.

The Learning Collaborative (TLC), a tuition-free preschool for underserved children, will use funds to support teacher salaries, by far their largest organizational expense. Maintaining their 11 program staff and alleviating hardships caused by Covid is a top priority and crucial to operations. In the event of another school closure, TLC teachers are equipped and ready to transition to TLC@home remote learning, as they did in March 2020. Limiting the impact of COVID on the education of the 50+ preschoolers at TLC is critically important to them entering public school ready for success.

The Relatives serves 5,000 youth each year who find themselves in crisis by giving them the counseling and tools they need to reach safety, stability and independence. The Relatives will use these funds towards their general operating budget. This year, especially, has been a huge challenge for fundraising and the need is all the greater.



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The funds distributed as a result of Charlotte Wine + Food Week were on top of the nearly \$15,000 distributed to the four charity partners through the organization's meal program, which was a direct result of the postponement of the originally scheduled Spring 2020 events. The CW+F team created the meal program as a way to support restaurant partners by ordering take-out meals to distribute to families in need supported by their charity partners.

"Even though we had to make the tough decision to postpone our events in the early days of the pandemic, we knew it was important to continue our mission and to help our restaurant and charity partners during this tumultuous time," said Deese.

Charlotte Wine + Food is in the planning stages of its next events. Save the date for next year's Charlotte Wine + Food Week presented by Truist to take place April 14-17, 2021. The CW+F team is planning for some of the events to take place virtually, if needed. Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are available for every CW+F event, and those interested are encouraged to email [info@charlottewineandfood.org](mailto:info@charlottewineandfood.org) or call the office at (704) 338-9463.

The 2019 - 2021 charity beneficiaries will include the following children's charities: GenOne, The Learning Collaborative, Mitchell's Fund, and The Relatives.

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#### ABOUT CW+F

Charlotte Wine + Food brings together leading wine industry experts from around the world and pairs them with Charlotte's top chefs to celebrate and advance public knowledge of and appreciation for fine wine and food, while making significant contributions to charitable organizations that benefit children and their families in the Charlotte community. For more information, please email [info@charlottewineandfood.org](mailto:info@charlottewineandfood.org).