



Follow the Money, Follow the Heart.

By Sandy Semans Ross

On Nov. 30, 1982, Edward Greene, W. Ray White, Jack Adams and the late George Crocker, David Stick, Martin Kellogg and Andy Griffith organized the Outer Banks Community Foundation and thus planted a giving tree. The idea originated during a conversation between Stick and Griffith who wanted to find another way of giving back to the community. It acts as a trust for charitable giving and uses the income from the various funds to help support causes ranging from scholarships and nonprofit start-up seed costs, to supporting the environment and the arts

To understand the scope of the organization's growth and impact, one must "follow the money." This is the first of a 12-part series focusing on following the money and telling the stories of giving.

Part 1: Grant in 1982 Brings Crisis Help to Hatteras Island

Word spread about the creation of the Outer Banks Community Foundation in 1982 and donations began pouring in from across the county. The first call for grant proposals in 1983 didn't receive any responses, but determined to accomplish its charitable goal and based on a community survey of area needs, the Community Foundation contacted the three-year-old Outer Banks Hotline to ask for a presentation to the board about what was needed to help meet the organization's goals. After the presentation, the board voted to award a \$1,200 grant that required matching funds.

Nancy Griffin, now director of secondary instruction for Dare County Schools, was the first director of Hotline's operations and told the Community Foundation board in 1983 that Hotline needed a toll-free number for Hatteras Island residents because the island only had toll service.

"We raised matching funds by speaking to church and service groups on Hatteras Island and reaching out to businesses and individual citizens who were community-oriented," said Griffin. "This gave Hotline the opportunity to raise awareness of critical needs as well as to solicit support for a grass-roots solution. Folks on Hatteras Island have always understood the special challenges of being isolated from resources and the need to come together to meet community needs."

Both Hotline and the Community Foundation have grown over the last 30 years.

“There was only a one-room office in Nags Head at the time,” said Griffin, referring to Hotline in 1983. “I was the only paid Hotline employee then and volunteers came to the office to provide limited crisis-line service, since there was no call forwarding available then. As we expanded to Hatteras, volunteers from Hatteras helped to raise funds and spread the word about needs and services.”

Among the calls the agency received after getting a toll-free number, were requests for help in a family where there was abuse; a young woman who found herself without a place to live or money to support herself; a need for assistance with an alcohol problem; and a parent who needed services for her handicapped child.

“The crisis line began as a three hour-a-night service to handle crisis calls of any kind and then expanded to a 24-hour service,” said Griffin. “There really was no other crisis service available at the time. We provided a trained peer listening and support service to men, women, and teens who were reaching out for help of all sorts and made referrals to other community services that were extremely limited at the time. We soon found in tracking those calls that domestic violence and related issues made up a substantial volume of the calls. This led Hotline to develop additional services to address these needs.”

As Hotline grew north of Oregon Inlet, it also began to come into its own on Hatteras Island. Donations and grants have been an important component of its funding, but also playing a big role has been the profits from their thrift stores.

“The first Hotline thrift store opened in Manteo in February 1984,” said Griffin. “Hotline's second thrift shop was opened on Hatteras Island, I think in 1985, through the generosity of Kathy Kiddy. That first Hatteras shop operated out of a trailer Kathy had in Frisco, and she volunteered much of her time to raise funds to meet Hatteras needs in those early days.”

Looking back, Griffin said her experience with Hotline reinforces what she already knew.

“It's been thirty years since my husband and I felt the strong call to move to the Outer Banks from Minnesota and become part of this community,” said Griffin. “We always have been moved by the resourcefulness and compassionate spirit that inhabits this place. While we have been involved in quite a few charitable activities since coming here, the vision of joining in community to recognize and build value in people, places, and things that some may overlook is most inspiring. My experience with Hotline, built upon an abundance of compassion, community collaboration, and creativity, continues to bolster my faith that amazing things can be accomplished again and again with this outlook.

“I truly believe ours is a very special community. We have been blessed with all the resources we need to meet the needs of the people. As we keep our minds, our eyes and our hands open to meeting those needs, as we share our gifts and talents in

creative ways, the Outer Banks will continue to be the very best place to visit, live, and raise a family.”

For more information about the Outer Banks Community Foundation visit www.obcf.org; to learn more about Hotline, go to www.obhotline.org.