

DAILY TIMES

Guest Column: Reopening doesn't mean recovered in Delaware County



By *Frances M. Sheehan* Times Guest Columnist

Delaware County, which ranks 59th in the state on quality of life measures, has been one of the hardest hit regions by COVID-19 and has the highest pandemic [death rate](#) across Pennsylvania. As the state slowly starts to move forward, it is essential to recognize that a reopened status does not mean our county is recovered. Far from it. The need for assistance is still very great and it will continue well into the foreseeable future.

Fortunately, there are ways each individual, community and business can lend their support to the most vulnerable in our community — including the 10 percent of people who live in poverty and rising with the economic downturn, the 25,000 families who cannot cover the cost of basic needs, and persons of color who are essential employees at a disproportionate rate and thus at higher risk of acquiring the virus.

At the Foundation for Delaware County, we work to prioritize the needs of our residents, finding opportunities to help them overcome economic, health and social challenges. We are more committed than ever to making a difference, and call on others to join our efforts through the [Delaware County COVID-19 Response Fund](#), which was created to minimize the economic hardship and disruption of services in our county.

With support from corporate partners including PECO, one of our first and largest donors, individual contributors, and private givers, we've provided grants to local organizations that have proven track records and are trusted by those they serve.

Over \$440,000 in grants has been awarded to 56 frontline organizations and that impact continues to grow as more funds are raised, and thus awarded. These dollars are bringing testing to our poorest neighborhoods; helping child care services begin operation again; providing food boxes and essential items, such as diapers and basic hygiene products, to low-income families; collecting personal protective equipment for frontline workers; and providing breakfast and lunch items for students.

While this pandemic has impacted many of our vulnerable residents, it has also shown me how powerful our community is in coming together to help those in need. However, there is still a long way to recovery for our more than 560,000 residents.

Now is the time to focus on what we can do as individuals, communities and businesses to step up in support of those in our region — our neighbors — who rely on us. Every donation to the Delaware County COVID-19 Response Fund counts, no matter how small. Consider donating if you can and help spread awareness of the fund as a resource in Delaware County. One small act of kindness today can make a transformational difference tomorrow.

Frances M. Sheehan is President of The Foundation for Delaware County.