



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Jonnycake Center of Westerly Receives \$12,000 in Support for COVID-Relief Operations**

**Westerly, RI – The Jonnycake Center of Westerly** announced it has received **\$12,000 in grants** for the purposes of **alleviating the local impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**. These funds are helping the Center provide direct assistance to residents in need through a variety of social services programs.

Grants came from the **John Clarke Trust** (\$2,000), the **Roy A. Hunt Foundation** (\$5,000), and the **Rhode Island Community Food Bank** (\$5,000).

The COVID pandemic has resulted in a groundswell of new struggles for underserved residents in the Jonnycake Center of Westerly's service area. Issues range from health concerns to mounting job losses, financial difficulties, increased food insecurity, and decreased access to childcare and education. Families with lower incomes have disproportionately often borne the brunt of the impact, resulting in a more urgent need for help than ever.

As a Social Services provider and Food Pantry serving southern Rhode Island, the Jonnycake Center of Westerly adapted its operations so that it could continue providing food and emergency financial support to neighbors who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. The Center's primary services include its **Food Pantry**, which provided over 233,000 meals to the community in 2019-20; **Social Services**, which distributed over \$111,000 in emergency financial assistance to nearly 3,000 local residents in the last year; **Holiday Gifts and Meals**, which served over 1,500 residents and children in 2020; a **seasonal Community Garden**, which provides sustainably-farmed fresh produce for its own Food Pantry and pantries of peer agencies; a seasonal **No-Cost Farmer's Market** providing nutrition for neighbors in need; **Volunteer Opportunities** that welcome people of all ages and abilities; and a public-facing 7,000 square-foot **Thrift Store** which provides approximately 50% of the funding necessary for the Center to stay operational.

"In a time of rising need, we are thankful for these organizations who have stepped up to assist," said **Lee Eastbourne**, Executive Director. "The grants from the John Clarke Trust, the Roy A. Hunt Foundation, and the Rhode Island Community Food Bank allow us to stay flexible and well-prepared to serve however we continue to be needed in our community. We can enjoy an element of stability in our operations at a moment when much remains uncertain about the lasting impacts of the pandemic."

Thanks to these grants, the Center can purchase up to **120,000 pounds (60 tons) of food** for its Food Pantry, and continue to offer **financial assistance** for essential needs such as rent or mortgages, heating, utilities, and critical medical bills. Assistance is made available on a need-based basis. New clients are always welcome.

To learn about the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, visit [jonnycake.org](http://jonnycake.org), call (401) 377-8069, or visit 23 Industrial Drive in Westerly, RI during operating hours. To make a financial contribution towards the Center's Food Pantry and Social Services, please visit [jonnycake.org/donate-2](http://jonnycake.org/donate-2) or call (401) 315-4584.

**About The Jonnycake Center of Westerly**

The Jonnycake Center of Westerly's mission is to provide a continuum of services in cooperation with other agencies in our service area to assist people through crisis situations and work with each individual to find a path out of dependency toward self-sufficiency. For more information, visit [jonnycake.org](http://jonnycake.org), become a fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jonnycakecenter), follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/jonnycakecenter) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/jonnycakecenter), or call (401) 377-8069.

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