2020 was a year like no other in the Foundation’s history - a few months of “normal” quickly pivoted to a “new normal” that called for rapid response to emerging needs and changing conditions brought on by the Covid-19 crisis. Our focus: to offer key events and activities in safe ways; and to sustain our community through these difficult times through a robust grants program.

The DMF acted quickly to identify important community needs worthy of grant support. We funded Del Mar Community Connection’s driver program for safe delivery of essentials to seniors, supported St. Peter’s Helping Hands food program, and supported Del Mar Village Association’s Fuel the Frontline program. Special grants like these totaled over $75,000 in 2020.

When we realized the direness of the City of Del Mar’s budget situation, we worked quickly to evaluate priority items that had to be cut from the City’s budget, and granted $180,820 to restore funding for specific items that are within our mission, and that support the health and safety of our citizens, community involvement in civic affairs, and the quality of life for residents. This grant included fire fighter turnout gear, Beach Safety Center capital improvements, lifeguard support (training; patrol vehicle), the project to extend River Path Del Mar from Grand Ave Overlook to Crest Canyon, and more.

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DMF’s signature First Thursdays and Bluegrass and Beyond programs offered diverse performances at the Del Mar Powerhouse and Town Hall early in the year, including jazz (Chris Klich and Laura Preble), classical (Nuvi Mehta), Americana (Eve Selis Band), and bluegrass music (Hawktail).

After March, the Cultural Arts committee experimented with a variety of ways to offer its First Thursdays programs in Covid-safe ways: curated programs with video links, distributed by email; and live performances, with artists performing from isolation rooms at a local studio, with sound and multi-camera video expertly mixed and livestreamed to an online audience.
DMF Talks found a temporary home on Zoom, as it continued to bring highly-accomplished speakers to Del Mar, on topics ranging from Keeping Our Oceans Healthy (Dr. Octavio Aburto, Scripps Institution of Oceanography) to how fruit fly experiments at the International Space Station are helping human cardiovascular treatment (Dr. Karen Occor).

Other special events in 2020 included a Virtual Coffee with Captain Herbert Taft, Commander, North Coastal Sheriff’s Station, plus support for holiday canvases painted by school groups to decorate downtown windows.

Creative volunteers created a social-distanced Easter Egg Hunt event this year, with Easter-themed decorations placed around town in outdoor locations, waiting to be discovered on those walks that helped us all cope with stay-at-home restrictions.

An Expressive Arts Youth Workshop, held online, provided a fun diversion for young Del Mar residents, with lots of creative ideas on making art with a wide range of materials that we might find in our homes.

The Del Mar Foundation is a volunteer-powered community foundation, and everything we do is possible only because of the many volunteers who donate their time, expertise, and creativity to our work. Their hands-on service powers our committees, our Board of Directors, our events (both traditional and virtual), and countless behind-the-scenes tasks and responsibilities.

Our community is distinguished by a strong commitment to philanthropy, and our donors’ generous support makes it possible for the Foundation to thrive, and to have the resources to respond to community needs even in times of extraordinary challenges.

To our donors and volunteers, we extend our heartfelt thanks, especially in such a challenging year as 2020!