



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Michelle Eberly, 540.985.0204, [programs@foundationforroanokevalley.org](mailto:programs@foundationforroanokevalley.org) or

Kandy Elliott, 540.777.2399

## **\$1 Million and Counting...**

### *Roanoke Women's Foundation surpasses \$1 million in large impact grants*

**Roanoke, Va. (November 18, 2010)** –In 2004 Virginia Jarrett and Kandy Elliott saw an opportunity for women in the Roanoke and New River Valleys to pool their philanthropic goals and resources for considerable community impact. Six years later, the organization they co-founded, the Roanoke Women's Foundation (RWF), a component fund of Foundation for Roanoke Valley, has announced it has now made more than \$1 million in large impact grants.

The latest grants, a total of \$218,000 awarded at a luncheon held at Hunting Hills Country Club on November 18th, mark a significant milestone in the group's history, one that impresses its founders but doesn't surprise them.

"Kandy and I knew the idea would go over well in the Roanoke and New River Communities," says Jarrett, who first became familiar with the concept of a women's humanitarian group at an Association of Junior Leagues conference where she heard a presentation by the Washington Women's Foundation of Seattle. Jarrett and Elliott, both veteran Roanoke philanthropists, immediately recognized an opportunity to adopt a similar model in Roanoke.

"We felt women would like to pool their resources and make educated decisions together. The first year we had 68 women join us and have since grown to 110 members," says Jarrett.

In six years, RWF has funded more than 21 organizations and programs, including \$100,000 to Virginia Western Community College for its Roanoke City College Access Program, \$100,000 to the Mission of Mercy Project for dental care for needy adults and \$64,000 to CHIP for the agency's case management and support programs.

Alan Ronk, Executive Director of Foundation for Roanoke Valley, noted "The growth of the Roanoke Women's Foundation has been phenomenal, and the impact to date on the recipient organizations and the broader community has truly been transformative and inspiring."

Jarrett added that a huge part of the success of RWF was the women who helped jumpstart it through their service on the founding Board: Jan Garrett, Katherine Walker, Sally Rugaber, Sally Crockett and Charlotte Porterfield.

“Together, we have grown in numbers and refined our grant making process over the years, consistently trying different things and honing our process,” says Jarrett.

Through a rigorous application process and RWF membership voting, the 36 grant applications received during the 2010 grant cycle resulted in the following grants:

**\$50,000 to Feeding America Southwest Virginia (formerly Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank)** to establish a self-sustaining, restricted account, the Roanoke Women’s Foundation Purchased Food Program, which will provide a permanent stream of revenue for the food bank to grow the program to a projected 894,000 pounds of purchased food by 2013 and more in succeeding years.

**\$50,000 to Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE)**, which takes in donated mobility-related rehabilitation, sanitizes and refurbishes it, and gives it to those in the community who need it but cannot afford it. The grant will help increase FREE’s services to individuals by 25%.

**\$30,000 to Greenvale School, Inc.**, which has provided affordable, high quality childcare for low-income families since 1934. The grant will make possible the purchase of new computers and installation of a new network system to ensure data backup capacity and uninterrupted, efficient access to essential information. It will also enable the agency to renovate and paint the exterior of its facility.

**\$58,000 to Rescue Mission of Roanoke, Inc.**, the largest homeless shelter in Virginia. The grant will enable the Mission to add or replace existing bunk bed sets with metal, powder-coated, commercial grade units (122 equivalent beds). From 2007-2009 overnight lodgings at the Mission totaled 18,845, or the equivalent of 50 additional people each night seeking shelter, the largest increase in their history.

**\$30,000 to Smart Beginnings Greater Roanoke** to further the work of coordinating a system of training opportunities for early childhood professionals, improving quality of care provided at childcare centers and coordinating a parent education system that reinforces parents’ roles in providing quality early childhood education experiences. United Way of Roanoke Valley serves as the program and fiscal agent for the collaboration.

The Roanoke Women’s Foundation is open to any woman who makes the commitment to support the RWF for at least three years at a level of \$2100 per year. Members have no other obligation than to fulfill the annual contribution and to participate in the voting process determining the recipients of the pooled fund grants. For more information, visit [www.roanokewomensfoundation.org](http://www.roanokewomensfoundation.org) or Foundation for Roanoke Valley’s website [www.foundationforroanokevalley.org](http://www.foundationforroanokevalley.org). Foundation for Roanoke Valley, the region’s community foundation, currently administers over 240 named endowment funds on behalf of the community.

###