CENTRAL CAROLINA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation Awards $240,000 to Eight South Carolina Organizations

Columbia, S.C. – November 24, 2026 – The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation awarded $240,000 ($30,000 each) to eight South Carolina organizations working to strengthen communities across the state, with a focus on affordable housing, arts education in public schools, and child welfare. In a notable milestone for this grant cycle, each organization that was invited to apply received funding.

The grants will support a range of community needs, from helping children recover from trauma and providing essential resources for foster youth to keeping families in their homes and expanding creative learning opportunities for students.

Established in 2000 by Hootie & the Blowfish band members Darius Rucker, Jim "Soni" Sonefeld, Dean Felber, and Mark Bryan, the Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation has awarded more than $4.5 million in funding to nonprofits and public schools, continuing its longstanding commitment to strengthening communities across South Carolina through this year's grant awards.

"We are truly blessed to still be playing together for our fans across the globe, but nothing means as much as giving back to these important programs in the place that birthed us, South Carolina," said Soni Sonefeld.

2026 Grant Recipients

Affordable Housing

- **Eastern Carolina Housing Organization's Homelessness Prevention project (Myrtle Beach, SC):** Preventing homelessness by providing services to individuals and families facing eviction, such as eviction prevention assistance, rental and utility support, and case management to help them maintain stable housing.
- **For The Struggle, Inc.'s SC Elder Response Initiative (Columbia, SC):** Helping low-income seniors maintain safe and affordable housing, build generational wealth, and improve financial stability through critical home repairs, accessibility improvements, estate planning resources, property tax relief assistance, and educational materials.
- **Metanoia's Energy-Efficient Appliance project (Charleston, SC):** Enabling first-time homebuyers earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income reduce their long-term housing costs by upgrading to energy-efficient appliances in newly constructed affordable homes.

Arts Education in Public Schools

- **Bamberg County School District's Making the Art Connection project (Bamberg, SC):** Expanding hands-on arts education at three public schools through pottery, ceramics, and artist-led workshops, providing creative learning opportunities.

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- **Florence School District 3's band program rebuild (Florence, SC):** Rebuilding its band program through the purchase, repair, and maintenance of musical instruments, removing financial barriers and creating opportunities for students to participate in music education.

Child Welfare

- **Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center's Collaborative Community Response to Child Abuse program (Charleston, SC):** Reducing the negative impact of abuse and trauma on children through child-focused investigations and evidence-based mental health services to help children and families affected by abuse and trauma.
- **Palmetto Association for Children and Families' Statewide Training & Development Plan to Strengthen Child & Family Services (Columbia, SC):** Strengthening child and family services organizations through a coordinated, comprehensive training initiative that will equip professionals and organizations across South Carolina with evidence-informed practices to promote consistency in service delivery and ensure the highest quality of care for children and families.
- **South Carolina Youth Advocate Program's Essentials for Foster Children program (Columbia, SC):** Providing essential supplies, educational resources, extracurricular opportunities, and individualized support to children in foster care, helping them heal, grow, and thrive.

The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation supports other organizations and initiatives throughout the year, extending its impact across South Carolina. This includes a recent $40,000 grant to help the Ware Shoals High School Band travel to Hawaii to perform aboard the USS Missouri and participate in the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day parade. This investment reflects the band's continued commitment to expanding opportunities for students through arts education and creating meaningful experiences that reach far beyond the classroom.

The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation maintains an endowed donor-advised fund at Central Carolina Community Foundation, the Midlands' local center for philanthropy. Through this partnership, Central Carolina Community Foundation oversees grant requests, administration, evaluation, outreach, and funding distribution on behalf of the band.

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About Central Carolina Community Foundation

Central Carolina Community Foundation connects and mobilizes people and resources to strengthen our community. The Foundation partners with donors to turn their passions into meaningful impact through charitable funds, strategic giving, and support for nonprofit organizations across the Midlands and beyond. Through grants, partnerships, and community leadership, the Foundation advances solutions that address the region's most pressing challenges. Founded in 1984, Central Carolina Community Foundation has awarded more than $335 million in grants and is home to more than 500 charitable funds totaling over $290 million