



Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Contact:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation, Melwood, and Fairfax County Partner to Advance Equity, Increase Social and Economic Mobility along Route 1 Corridor via WISH Center Funding

18 November 2022 (Oakton, VA)- The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is pleased to announce that a \$50,000 grant made to Melwood will go towards supporting the Fairfax County Workforce, Innovation, and Skills Hub (WISH). The grant is made of two gifts- one for \$35,000 awarded at the discretion of the Community Foundation's Board, and the other for \$15,000- directed by the Community Foundation's Shrivastava Charitable Fund.

The WISH Center is a first-of-its-kind workforce development center designed to break down barriers and create opportunities for economic empowerment and independence for the Fairfax County community. Led by Melwood's deeply experienced and connected team and in partnership with Building Momentum, WISH offers tactical skills training, soft skills training, job placement services, career mapping, and resources related to language learning, childcare and affordable housing.

WISH serves youth and adults in meeting employment goals and connecting them to a job at a thriving wage, whether they're looking to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter the workforce, or identify a new opportunity with greater earnings and development potential. The WISH Center will be an important instrument of uplifting for Southeast Fairfax County.

Here's what some of the folks who made this partnership possible had to say:

Emily Homer, Vice President of Community Services at Melwood: *"What's been really affirming and rewarding is the excitement and engagement we've heard directly from community members about this initiative. There are so many smart, talented individuals who have been left behind in the workforce – because of support from the Community Foundation and others, our team is able to connect with and get to know each person on an individual basis and partner with them to pursue the career of their choice."*

Larysa Kautz, President & CEO of Melwood: *"The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia and Melwood are committed to addressing the barriers to self-sustaining employment in Fairfax County. A good job provides more than economic security and access to healthcare, it unlocks the ability to pursue one's interests and dreams. Our accessible and inclusive workforce development services help build a more sustainable, empowered jobs economy for everyone in our community."*

Eileen Ellsworth, President & CEO of the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia: *The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is delighted to support the vision of Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk and to partner with him, Melwood, and Building Momentum on the Workforce Innovation Skills Hub. We believe that WISH will successfully advance the economic mobility of people living in neighboring communities in ways that contribute to the economic growth of our region and to the financial independence and strength of the families that WISH serves."*

Rodney Lusk, Fairfax County Franconia District Supervisor: *"When it comes to economic development efforts like WISH, your outputs are only as good as your inputs. With this investment, the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is giving Melwood and the entire infrastructure and team behind the WISH Center the kind of input they need to generate truly transformational outputs for our residents. I couldn't be more appreciative of their support, and I look forward to partnering with them in the years ahead to provide employment opportunities, and build generational wealth for those who call our community home."*

*** About the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia**

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia grows philanthropy to respond to critical need, seed innovation and lead and convene the community. Comprised of donor advised funds, permanent funds, giving circles, and other charitable endowments, the Community Foundation connects donors to community and promotes a more equitable and inclusive prosperity that marries our economic strength with the full breadth of our diverse community. In the past two years the Community Foundation awarded more than \$20 million in grants and scholarships and now reports \$89 million in managed philanthropic assets. For more information please visit us at www.cfnova.org, or follow up on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

***About Melwood**

Melwood is one of the largest employers of people with disabilities in the country, employing more than 1,600 workers – nearly 1,000 of whom are people with disabilities. Melwood offers job placement, job training, life skills for independence, and support services to more than 2,500 people each year in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Melwood also has an inclusive summer camp program for children and provides employment and support services to veterans and active duty military members who have experienced service-related trauma or injury. For more information, visit www.Melwood.org.