



Julie Taylor (author) with kids at a CRO-supported school.

SHARING OUR TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE

Cliffs Residents Outreach makes a difference in children's lives

Written by Julie Taylor, CRO President and Member at The Cliffs Valley

What does one do after retiring and moving to The Cliffs? You get involved.

Back in 2005, I was lucky to be one of the original five founders who established Cliffs Residents Outreach, an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit that benefits the local community. We are a 100% volunteer organization committed to working with children, our most valuable resource. We support a wide variety of student programs, with a focus centered on funding initiatives that relate to education and human services.

The poverty level outside our gates is humbling. Initially, CRO started with residents supporting two public schools, where we supplied backpacks of food for families in poverty who might otherwise go hungry over the weekend. We also provided school supplies, books, classroom snacks, clothing, lice kits, and medical supplies as well as emergency crisis funding.

Over the past 16 years we have expanded our scope and now annually impact more than 10,500 students. CRO started in one county and is now in four—Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg. We began with two schools and are now in 14 schools and several nonprofit organizations working with children from preschool through college. Today, CRO has a presence in the communities surrounding all six of The Cliffs communities in South Carolina, with a total of about 1,000 volunteers who serve in various capacities, such as tutors and mentors.

Our first fundraiser brought in \$33,000; in the last 10 years, CRO has raised more than \$5 million through generous donations from residents and local businesses. This funding is used to provide healthy nutrition; sponsor field trips; and purchase technology, weight room equipment, playgrounds, book



Terry Eibl, a member at The Cliffs Valley and longtime participant in Cliffs Residents Outreach, has been honored as the Travelers Rest Citizen of the Year. The award—presented by the Travelers Rest Chamber of Commerce—recognizes Eibl's active volunteer work alongside the CRO at Slater-Marietta Elementary School in Greenville County, South Carolina, where he has chaired a mentorship program for the past 15 years in addition to tutoring students in grades K through five. Noting a student population in particular need of male involvement, Eibl has enthusiastically encouraged other men from The Cliffs to serve as mentors; a typical school year sees 50 CRO volunteers logging a collective 2,300 hours at Slater-Marietta. Pictured here, Terry Eibl celebrates his Citizen of the Year Award while flanked by his wife, Suzie, and their children Craig, Jennifer, and Stephanie.

mobiles, computer charging carts, and computer desks. In response to the pandemic, we funded COVID-safe water fountains.

We also sponsor middle school robotics teams. Several of these teams have made it to state-level competition and one made it all the way to Worlds—most of the students who went to Worlds had never been on an airplane before so it was a privilege to provide this experience for them.

Cliffs Residents Outreach is structured with a board of directors, officers, and representatives from The Cliffs' six communities in South Carolina; each community has its own council, which reports to the CRO board. These individual councils identify their projects and programs, and they fundraise for their respective projects. Funds raised are controlled and stay within the individual community. Our corporate partners' donations can be shared across communities at the direction of those organizations.

Generosity helps provide magic in the lives of people who might otherwise be without hope. I believe our goal must be to find solutions

to help the total person and the best way to get there is providing caring adults to build relationships with our kids.

The CRO is The Cliffs' "Charity of Choice." How lucky we are to have the opportunity to be agents of change within our communities, making a difference in children's lives and their futures. I love this quote from Burke Royster, Superintendent of Greenville County Schools in Greenville, South Carolina: "Without a doubt, the entire Greenville County population owes a debt of gratitude to Cliffs Residents Outreach for their enthusiastic support of this community's most precious resource—our children."

INFO > RESIDENTS AT THE CLIFFS ARE MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN IN UPSTATE SOUTH CAROLINA. THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO SHARE YOUR TIME, TREASURE, AND TALENT. PLEASE VISIT CROCOMMUNITIES.COM FOR INFORMATION ABOUT EACH COMMUNITY'S PROGRAMS.