**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Warrenton, VA** -- In the offices of the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation (NPCF), a portion of administrative hours are spent in data gathering and analysis. There are a great many benefits to studying data. What is often surprising is the emotional response that accompanies data fact-finding. We stare at black and red numbers on a white page in our excel software, yet those numbers are loaded with meaning and feeling and represent people’s action, commitment and passion.

Recently, NPCF compiled a comprehensive data spreadsheet on all the activity of the past five years for Give Local Piedmont. If you are not aware or have not heard the term “Give Local…”, this one day, (May 7 this year) acclaimed nationally, and dedicated to giving, was created to honor the 100th anniversary of the advent of community foundations. That celebratory fact coupled with harnessing crowdfunding, by using new and simple technologies, now connects communities, nonprofits, and individuals in supporting a national fundraising day founded on the principle of local giving.

Hosted by Northern Piedmont Community Foundation, Give Local Piedmont is the region's one-day, online giving event. This important campaign inspires community members to donate dollars to our neighbor nonprofit organizations that are making our region increasingly more dynamic. With the vigor of the Piedmont’s local media, a rise and focused use of social media, and influential support of local business, the success of this one day is, in a few instances, greater than some of our nonprofits realize all year. How often does one witness, in one single day, volunteers, donors, foundations, local organizations, media, and large and small business folk come together with common purpose—to invigorate and strengthen the very heart of these communities through the energy of crowdfunding.

As this is the sixth year of Northern Piedmont Community Foundation organizing and managing Give Local Piedmont, it feels like a good opportunity to look back at those responsible for the very first Give Local Piedmont in May 2014.

Cole Johnson, former Executive Director of NPCF and the person responsible for making a strategic decision in engaging this region in Give Local, said very plainly and without emotion, “I didn’t sleep for 6 weeks before the day.” From where NPCF sits now, even with 5 successful years of GLP in which over $4.0 million has been raised for our area nonprofits, it is easy to relate to her anxiety. There are many moving parts to this one day. Getting the word out is one spoke in the wheel. Cole’s original intent in agreeing to manage this day was, in fact, to raise awareness for both the giving community and the incredible front line work of the nonprofit support community in the Northern Piedmont. Cole was apprehensive at the notion of looking at her computer that morning That is until the phone buzzing and emails coming in encouraged her to see that in only the 1st hour of the 1st time this region experienced Give Local Piedmont, over $100,000 had been raised and it was not yet 8:00 a.m.

Ms Johnson related that one of her biggest challenges was, in fact, internal. The board of NPCF was not quite sure what to make of this, out of the box, fundraising day. There is no greater hurdle than convincing folks to do something that had never been done before and for what and why and with no guarantee of success. In the midst of this debate, the Path Foundation stepped in with a guaranteed $100,000 in incentive to be disbursed to all the participating nonprofits. With a guarantee like that on the table, the board had something tangible to grab hold of and supported, heralded and participated with bells on.

Although Caren Eastham was not a board member at the time, she is a current board member and her husband Wayne has also served and was a founding member of NPCF. Caren is by trade a money person. Her professional role in life is the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Oak View National Bank. Her own sense was that, although she was apprehensive, if $50k was raised by GLP in that first year, then great. The “nothing ventured, nothing gained” concept that, in fact, makes an acceptance at possibly raising $50,000 all the sweeter when, the tally for the day arrived at $675,000, with over 3,300 people donating. Caron is so committed to Give Local Piedmont that she has donated on the day from across the Atlantic Ocean, while traveling in Europe.

After year one, the management of Give Local Piedmont fell to NPCF’s current Executive Director, Jane Bowling-Wilson. Indeed, year one was wonderful. Perhaps the greater task was to not only to repeat, but improve. Ms. Bowling-Wilson has advanced the continued growth of GLP in giving to just under $4.0 million in those years. Her stewardship and commitment has been inspiring as she and her staff begin work 6 months out to raise awareness, train all participants in how to capitalize on this event, while working through hundreds of small details on a daily basis. One of the more recent changes and benefits to Give Local during Ms. Bowling-Wilson’s tenure, is the introduction of advance giving. Giving opportunities are open three weeks in advance of the May day. This year, that May day is May 7. And the first giving opportunities will begin on April 23. This allows for folks, like Caren, to not, in fact, have to make a transatlantic give on the day of, rather give in advance. The advance giving is not included in tallies towards gifts, prizes or bonuses though, all of which have become a welcome part of the day. The Path Foundation continues to give $100,000 that is disbursed among participating nonprofits. The staff at Northern Piedmont Community Foundation is currently working tirelessly to involve greater local corporate and business sponsorship to enhance the prizes. Prizes are awarded for things as simple as the most pledges in a single hour, the greatest dollar amount of pledges in an hour, and the first pledge on the books.

For participating nonprofits, this is a happy day. Elfie Schmid, who is the President of People Helping People (PHP) in Fauquier County, was on board that first year and has been involved in subsequent years. Elfie is a marvel. She started as a volunteer in 2000 at PHP. Volunteers are asked to commit to giving 3 hours of their time each month to this organization. Elfie gave a little more. So much so that by 2010, she was appointed the President. She recalls devoting her time in preparation of that first giving day, to outreach, getting the word out. She emailed, she talked to local community, she reached out to the churches in Fauquier County who support People Helping People and she talked to local media. This small, yet dedicated organization, made up largely of volunteers, raised approximately $10,000 that first year. This was a significant day in the history of this organization.

Mark your calendars as May 7 will be here sooner than we all are able to imagine.
Information for Give Local Piedmont may be found on the website dedicated to this day [www.givelocalpiedmont.org](http://www.givelocalpiedmont.org). The first major deadline is coming up. Area nonprofits wanting to participate, either for the first time or the sixth time, must enroll (or update their profiles) by March 15. Eligibility requirements are posted on the Give Local Piedmont website. And for those wanting to give, this website is a terrific resource to study local organizations and the work they do for us in our Northern Piedmont – an astounding area by its physical beauty and in its citizens and their commitment to creating a livable, productive region for all.

*Established in 2000, the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation is a public charity that builds philanthropic capital to enhance and preserve the quality of life in Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, and Rappahannock counties and to strengthen the region’s nonprofit organizations.*

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