

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coves Amphitheater Donates \$38,000 to Local Charities

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Union Hall, Virginia – The Coves Amphitheater held its season wrap party this weekend, celebrating **Neighbors in Need**, a coalition of four Franklin County charities dedicated to fighting food and healthcare insecurity. During the event, Ellen Holland of the Free Clinic of Franklin County (Bernard Healthcare Center), Lisa Lietz of SML Good Neighbors, Staci Talley of The Franklin County Soup Kitchen (Stepping Stone Mission), and Lucille Bowman of Transition Basics, were presented with a combined **\$38,000** in donations.

Hosted on the Coves Amphitheater stage, the event transformed the venue into a warm and inviting setting with heated lanterns, blankets, and holiday décor. Guests enjoyed gourmet brisket chili and cornbread prepared by Billy Howland of Billy's SLAPP'N Sauce and Eddie and Debbie Shelton of Diamond S Farms. A dessert spread curated by Debbie Crawford, the Coves Hospitality Coordinator, featured pies, cheesecakes, and cookies. Musician Corey Hunley performed an acoustic set throughout the afternoon.

Representatives from each charity addressed attendees, expressing gratitude for their partnership with the Coves and highlighting the impact these donations make in their daily operations.

"We deliver food to the underprivileged that can't get to food banks," explained **Lucille Bowman of Transition Basics**. "The Coves have helped us tremendously. They support us, they advertise for us – a lot of our funds come from The Coves."

"Being able to be creative with fundraising is a pretty big deal and this was a huge opportunity for us," said **Staci Talley, President of Stepping Stone Mission**. "One out of every eight Franklin County residents is struggling to know where their food is going to come from. An \$800 skybox purchases 150 meals for our kitchen."

"Reserving a skybox is an excellent way to help the Free Clinic and all the nonprofits with funds to continue our mission of work and funds to accept new patients," stated **Ellen Holland, Executive Director of the Free Clinic of Franklin County**. "When there aren't enough funds to have a free clinic, people go without healthcare. By this time next year, I would even guess that we will have a waiting list."

“We have to raise \$260,000 every single year to keep going,” said **Lisa Lietz, Executive Director of SML Good Neighbors**. “The support from The Coves is huge for us. That is a chunk of our budget every year that we know we don’t have to worry about.”

Crumpler also recognized **SML Gives, Inc., led by Joey Donovan**. The organization provides logistical support for nonprofits lacking delivery resources for food, filling a crucial gap between nonprofits and the people they serve. Donovan shared his personal motivation for founding the organization, reflecting on the support he received during difficult moments in his life.

“About 20 years ago, I was homeless and living under a bridge—and I didn’t know where my next meal was,” Donovan said, his voice wavering. “Fast forward to today and I have the privilege of building an organization that is serving the community I love so much.”

Since the amphitheater’s opening in 2020, developer **Dennis Crumpler** and General Manager **Gary Jackson** have directed concert profits to charity partners. The cornerstone of their fundraising efforts is the reservation of private concert skyboxes, where 100 percent of proceeds go directly to the Neighbors in Need coalition. Each temperature-controlled skybox includes six tickets, a private party deck, access to VIP amenities, and optional catering upgrades. The Coves’ intimate mountain-lake setting has hosted nationally recognized artists including Old Crow Medicine Show, Trampled by Turtles, Indigo Girls, Michael Franti, and Young the Giant.

The 2026 Coves Charity Concert Series lineup is nearing completion and will be announced in the coming weeks. In the meantime, Neighbors in Need partners will offer pre-sale skybox reservations to donors, supporters, and corporate sponsors to help launch their 2026 fundraising efforts.

To donate to Neighbors in Need, visit covesatsml.com/donate.