

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASEContact: **Frank Rabey**
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Greenville – Longtime local health-care benefactors the Service League of Greenville recently presented the HealthAssist Uninsured Network with a \$20,000 gift toward the Access East program's continued work on behalf of our community's medically underserved.

The nonprofit Service League made the donation through its Laughinghouse Fund, "which was set up to help the needy," explained Service League President Cassie Causey.

For more than 85 years, the fund has given, among its sizeable support for the regional medical community, an estimated \$17 million to the local hospital, in addition to tuition and scholarship programs for students at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, College of Nursing and School of Allied Health. Likewise, the fund has provided monetary assistance to such major medical support organizations as the American Cancer Society McConnell-Raab Hope Lodge and the Service League of Greenville Inpatient Hospice.

The Laughinghouse Fund has also aided less visible programs and projects that benefit local residents who have no health insurance, and who receive no public or federal assistance. Among those endeavors, the fund provides help with prescription drugs and small medical equipment, including in April buying wheelchairs for each of Pitt County's 39 public schools.

"We've done a lot," Causey said with smile.

As with their recent HealthAssist donation, said Uninsured Network Director Shantell Cheek, the Service League has over the years been "incredibly generous in supporting our work on behalf of the uninsured," to include gifts to boost HealthAssist's own medication-assistance efforts.

"We ask Shantell, 'How may we help?'" said Becki Orr, the Service League's Laughinghouse Chair.

The \$20,000 HealthAssist donation is earmarked specifically for funding HealthAssist's work on behalf of eastern North Carolinians living with diabetes, from providing personal medical equipment to help cope with the pervasive disease to enabling patients to meet copays in order to see local medical specialists.

"The need was there," Orr explained. "So many of us are battling diabetes, or have a family member who does. It affects us all."

The Service League of Greenville began back when the sprawling ECU Health Medical Center was the much more modest Pitt Memorial Hospital on 5th Street. The Service League was particularly beloved back then by doctors and hospital staff for regularly bringing them coffee and homemade chicken-salad sandwiches.

"We are known for our chicken salad!" Causey said.

The Laughinghouse Fund, begun in 1939, has likewise grown and expanded its reach, Causey explained, to well beyond its original mission of "helping patients who could not pay for a hospital bed."



Cassie Causey, left, and Becki Orr, with the Service League of Greenville, presenting Shantell Cheek, Director of Access East's HealthAssist Uninsured Network, with a very large check representing a very large donation!