

Championing mental health in the Blue Ridge Mountains

How Family Service of Roanoke Valley upleveled donor outreach and community support



Family Service
of Roanoke Valley

Impact at a glance



2,109
individuals served
in 2023



90%
of revenue goes to
program services



90%
of clients demonstrate
progress toward
treatment goals



100%
reported feeling
hopeful because of
counseling with FSRV

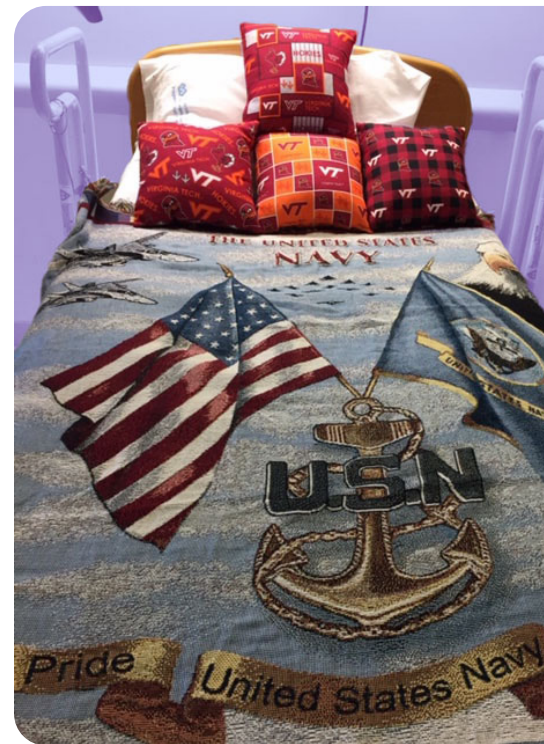
When John arrived at an assisted living facility in Roanoke, Virginia, he had **nothing to put in his bare room**. He didn't even have clothes, so staff members offered what had been left behind by deceased patients. Nothing quite fit.

At the same time, John needed a potentially life-saving procedure, but he was mentally incapacitated. Following protocol, a local circuit court in Roanoke appointed [Family Service of Roanoke Valley](#) (FSRV), a nonprofit organization offering mental health services, to be John's legal guardian.

Amanda, a guardianship case manager with FSRV, gave consent for John's medical procedure. As she continued to visit him after the operation, she learned he was a U.S. Navy veteran and a Virginia Tech fan. She set out to find some Navy bedding and university apparel to fill his drawers.

Soon, John had clothes that fit.

Founded in 1901, FSRV serves over 2,000 people annually in the community of Roanoke Valley in Southwestern Virginia. Through counseling programs and on-the-ground support, FSRV is dedicated to improving the mental health of residents.



John's redecorated room

CHALLENGE

A community in need

“Mental health touches everybody, no matter who you are,” says Jill Sluss, chief development officer at FSRV.

Though a small community of 100,000, Roanoke Valley needs services addressing substance abuse, violence, and mental health, particularly over the last several years.

22%

increase in drug overdoses from 2019-20

49%

of households reported mental health as a top concern during the pandemic

27

gun-related homicides in 2023

SOLUTION

Wide-reaching services

To address growing community needs, FSRV offers an array of services, including:

- Community and in-home counseling
- Individual, group, and play therapy
- In-school and after-school life-skill programs for youth
- Case management and parent aide for families
- Guardianship and conservator programs

FSRV counselors also embed themselves in neighborhoods hard-hit by gun violence and offer assistance to individuals on their own turf.

“These residents have gotten to know and trust our counselors and are able to come to them for help,” Jill says. “And then just by word of mouth, it’s spreading that, ‘Oh my goodness, I can get help right here. I don’t have to go downtown to [the FSRV] office.’”



FSRV's office front window, 1938

Raising more, helping more

COVID-19 proved particularly challenging for the community. “Everyone was struggling,” Jill says. “It seemed like nobody knew what was going on and how long we were going to have to quarantine for.”

FSRV came up with creative ways to address those needs by tapping into a larger donor base.

“With the help of [Bonterra Fundraising Essentials], I started a fundraiser called Connect at the Table,” Jill says. “We offered recipes to cook and activities for families to do around the table since everybody was stuck at home together. We raised \$3,160 in five days!”

This money went to counseling sessions for people who were struggling with their mental health during the pandemic.

Jill is also excited by the ability to share personalized thank-you videos to donors through the platform. “I’ve gotten such positive feedback and it’s something I think a lot of nonprofits don’t do. I’m really proud.”



\$40,000
in ticket revenue
raised



3,000 donors
with an average
donation of \$586



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—Jill Sluss,
chief development officer



IMPACT


Making progress

FSRV continues to reach more people in need. Of those surveyed over the past year, Jill says 100% of FSRV's clients report feeling good about their progress in the counseling program and would come back or refer others.

When it comes to FSRV's gun violence program, clients have found "balance and stability in [their] day-to-day experiences," their mental health is "strong," and they're "getting back on track with [their] emotions."

Jill, who has lived in Roanoke Valley all her life, continues to be motivated by her neighbors. "This has always been such a generous and giving community."

She's excited to give back by working for an organization that supports her beloved neighbors. "We really touch a lot of lives here."



Bonterra is technology for the greatest good. Learn more about Bonterra Fundraising and Engagement [here](#).