In response to the myriad challenges of 2020, individuals and organizations in Orange County and across the country have stepped up in unprecedented ways. U.S. donations rose by 7.5% in 2020 and the total number of new donors grew by 12.6%, according to the Fundraising Effectiveness Project. Here in Orange County, we witnessed even more inspiring trends. For the year ended June 30, Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) donors crossed the $100 million mark in annual grants and scholarships awarded for the first time ever, and we saw year-over-year grants increase nearly 40% alone this past March and April. Most importantly, the past year saw innovative collaborations flourish in the local philanthropic sector. A recent State of OC Philanthropy report said they’re likely predicted to grow 6.3%.

Philanthropy forecasts that total giving will rise 5.1% in 2021 to continue. The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy found that 86% of OC funders now allow granting to a pooled market was impressive. I’m also proud of how rapidly non-profits pivoted to respond to the challenges of the pandemic. They worked quickly and created positive impact at a time it was needed most.

NICOLE: I’m most proud of how we quickly repurposed our nonprofits to thrive. To get involved with the Orange County Community Foundation, visit www.oc-cf.org.

Editor’s Note: Shelley Hoss serves as president and CEO of the Orange County Community Foundation, which reported revenue of $120.9 million for the 12 months ended June 30, 2020, an increase of 17% over the previous year. For more information on philanthropy, see the Business Journal’s annual ranking of Orange County’s non-profit organizations in this week’s edition.

By Shelley Hoss