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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation Awards \$120,000 to Four Organizations,
Empowering Students, Future Teachers, and Communities**

Columbia, S.C. (September 30, 2025)—This year, the Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation has awarded \$120,000 (\$30,000 each) to four organizations that develop future teachers and foster literacy among students, nurture life skills in youth, open doors for children to experience the power of jazz, and support flood recovery efforts.

Founded in 2000 by band members Darius Rucker, Jim “Soni” Sonefeld, Dean Felber, and Mark Bryan, the Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation has awarded over \$4.36 million in financial support to South Carolina nonprofits and public schools.

This year’s Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation grant recipients are:

- Crosswell Home for Children’s Independent Living Skills program (Sumter County, SC): Expanding its Independent Living Skills program to help youth who are in or transitioning out of the foster care or child welfare system. A new part-time coordinator will lead classes in financial literacy, cooking, and job readiness, giving participants the confidence and tools to thrive as independent adults.
- Clemson University’s Call Me MiSTER program (Pickens County, SC): Strengthening Camp iRock, a literacy-focused summer initiative where pre-service teachers join seasoned educators to help struggling elementary students improve their reading skills—while also receiving mentorship themselves.
- Charleston Jazz program expansion (Charleston County, SC): Expanding access to jazz education through combo classes, school performances, and interactive programs such as Jazz Day for Kids, enriching arts education in communities that need it most.
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina’s Emergency and Disaster Response Fund (Buncombe County, NC): Supporting ongoing flood recovery in areas impacted by Hurricane Helene.

“What began as a dream to give back has grown into a lasting legacy,” said Georgia Mjartan, President & CEO at Central Carolina Community Foundation. “By working with the Community Foundation, the Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation ensures that their giving is strategic, responsive, and continues to strengthen communities across the Carolinas.”

“We are part of a large family of donors who, like us, believe in one important principle: when we lift up those in need within our community and state, the entire state benefits,” said Jim “Soni” Sonefeld. “We are incredibly proud to be part of this wonderful mindset and opportunity.”



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The Hootie & the Blowfish Foundation's endowed donor-advised fund is held at Central Carolina Community Foundation, the Midlands' local center for philanthropy. The Community Foundation manages grant requests, administration, evaluation, outreach, and distribution on behalf of the band.

For more information, visit yourfoundation.org/hootie-the-blowfish-foundation/.

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About Central Carolina Community Foundation

Central Carolina Community Foundation connects local citizens with high-impact philanthropy. With more than \$250 million in assets and over 500 charitable funds, the Foundation serves 11 counties in the Midlands through grants and scholarships, promotes giving to nonprofits through Midlands Gives, and provides support to statewide philanthropic initiatives including the One SC Fund.