



For Immediate Release

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CHELCO member's donation continues to impact local communities

DeFuniak Springs (August 2026) – In its third year of distribution, The Drebing Fund—a charitable initiative established in memory of long-time CHELCO member Muriel “Midge” Drebing—continues to create meaningful change across local communities.

Mrs. Drebing, who passed away in October 2021, left an extraordinary \$1.9 million gift to the CHELCO Foundation, the charitable arm of the local electric cooperative. Her generous bequest was made with the intent to support those in need in the community.

Following the approval of CHELCO's CEO and Board of Trustees, the donated funds were invested to generate earnings from interest, dividends, and capital gains. To ensure the gift's longevity, the gains and earnings are being distributed to help fund charitable initiatives and utility assistance programs.

In 2024 and 2025, the fund awarded \$90,000 in community support, helping to sustain and expand local programs in Walton, Okaloosa, and surrounding counties. This year, the fund will distribute \$152,250.

- \$116,250 will be granted to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that deliver educational opportunities, family services, and programs aimed at improving quality of life in Walton, Okaloosa, and surrounding counties.
- \$36,000 will support partner agencies that assist CHELCO members with utility bill payments, helping families keep their lights on through difficult times.

To ensure transparency and maximize impact, the fund is administered in partnership with United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) through their Partner Agency program.

“Mrs. Drebing’s legacy lives on through every family helped, every child supported, and every light that stays on,” said CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes. “Her generosity continues to ripple through our communities in powerful ways.”

To learn more about the Drebing Fund and CHELCO's other charitable initiatives, visit [CHELCO.com/charitable-chelco](https://chelco.com/charitable-chelco).

CHELCO is a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving more than 76,000 accounts in Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, and Santa Rosa counties, including on Eglin Air Force Base.

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