



## For Immediate Release

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### **CHELCO announces Foundation's Muriel Drebing Charitable Fund**

**DeFuniak Springs (October 30, 2024)** – Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CHELCO) announces the “Drebing Fund” following the bequeathment of approximately \$1.9 million from former cooperative member Mrs. Muriel “Midge” Drebing to the CHELCO Foundation.

Following her passing in October 2021, CHELCO received word from Mrs. Drebing’s attorneys of the generous gift and her intentions: that the funds be used for educational and community programs that benefit CHELCO members in need and the community.

While Mrs. Drebing’s wishes were broad and allowed the Foundation flexibility to use funds for various causes within our local community, the CHELCO Board of Trustees felt it imperative that decisions were made in the best interest of Mrs. Drebing’s wishes while also practicing sound financial decision-making to perpetuate the availability of funds for charitable giving.

Following the approval of its Board of Trustees, CHELCO invested the money from the Drebing trust to earn interest, dividends, and other capital gains. The gains and earnings were designated for community programs rather than the invested principle, ensuring the gift's longevity.

In the summer of 2024, CHELCO partnered with United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) to distribute funds to local charitable organizations. Through the UWEC [Partner Agency Certification](#), all 2024 recipients were rigorously vetted and met standards for transparency, financial health, and governance. In 2024, funds were split between two general purposes. Approximately \$22,000 was distributed to agencies that assist CHELCO members with utility bill payments, and an additional \$67,500 was awarded to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations working in CHELCO’s service territory that support critical needs.

“Mrs. Drebing’s vision will allow us to extend support to members and programs that will create meaningful, lasting benefits,” said CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes. “Her generosity speaks to the very heart of cooperative values – strengthening our communities and supporting one another. We are committed to honoring her legacy with responsibility and care.”

CHELCO is grateful to Mrs. Drebing for her profound contribution, which will touch many lives throughout our area for years.

To learn more about the Drebing Fund, please visit [www.chelco.com/drebing-fund](http://www.chelco.com/drebing-fund).

CHELCO is a not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative serving more than 66,000 accounts in Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes and Santa Rosa counties in the Florida Panhandle.

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