‘Tis the Season for Giving

Bath Community Fund awards first grants
Bath Community Fund awards grants of $14,500 to support environmental, capital improvement projects

Less than three years after it was established, the Bath Community Fund of the Akron Community Foundation announced its first grants. Gifts totaling $14,500 were awarded on Nov. 18 to five qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations serving Bath Township.

The fund, created in 2014 by a group of Bath residents, is a permanent endowment dedicated to strengthening the Bath community by providing leadership, fostering collaboration and creating a legacy of charitable giving.

The following is the list of grants awarded in 2016:

- Crown Point Ecology Center: $5,000 to build an environmentally friendly cob oven out of mud, sand, water and straw that will be used for workshops and events.
- Bath Township Community Development Corporation Inc.: $5,000 for the construction of an additional restroom near the Regal Beagle at the Bath Nature Preserve.
- Western Reserve Playhouse: $3,000 to upgrade the facility’s air conditioning system and provide a comfortable atmosphere for patrons.
- Victory Gallop Inc.: $1,000 to support the 2017 horse shows, where children with special needs and life-threatening illnesses can demonstrate their riding skills, receive recognition for their accomplishments and practice sportsmanship.
- Bath Township: $500 to support the second phase of the Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit, including a completion of the trail that leads visitors around the property; also, to add landscaping with native flowers and wildflower beds.

The environmentally-friendly cob oven at Crown Point Ecology Center can be used to bake pizza and bread, and it will be available for weddings, graduation parties and other events held at Crown Point.

“Building with cob is both a historic and an environmentally sustainable practice,” said Monica Bongue, Crown Point’s executive director. “Once it’s built, the cob oven will serve as an invitation to the Bath community to learn more about this sustainable building technique, to experience...”

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the ancient practice of cooking in a cob oven and to experience the lovely natural surroundings of Crown Point.”

Western Reserve Playhouse officials said the existing air conditioning unit was on the verge of burning out, and the extra ceiling and pedestal fans used to supplement the unit made it difficult for hearing-impaired guests to enjoy performances. The uncomfortable level of heat also limited the attendance of senior citizens.

“Seasonal temperatures this year caused many of our patrons to excuse themselves from performances because the air conditioning could not handle large audiences in combination with very high temperatures and humidity,” said Jack Steele, treasurer of the Western Reserve Playhouse. “Funding for this project will help preserve the playhouse and its long-standing history in the community.”

“With its legacy of creativity, educational experiences and live entertainment, Western Reserve Playhouse is a true community treasure,” said Mary Anne Krejci, chairperson of BCF’s grant committee. “It’s part of the history and culture of the Bath community and certainly deserving of grant funding to enhance the comfort and enjoyment of its patrons.”

An additional restroom at the Regal Beagle will be only the second such facility in the 411-acre Bath Nature Preserve.

Since its inception, the Bath Community Fund has accumulated nearly $320,000 and was able to reinvest in the Bath community for the first time this year. The fund is embarking on the “For Bath, Forever” endowment campaign to raise $2.018 million by Bath’s bicentennial in 2018. For more information, contact Jody Miller Konstand, advisory board chair, at 330-618-4477 or jmkmedia@msn.com.

Since receiving a $1 million bequest from the estate of Edwin Shaw in 1955, the Akron Community Foundation has built a philanthropic endowment of nearly $182 million with a growing family of more than 540 funds established by charitable people and organizations from all walks of life. ∞

Donation envelope in this issue

Your gift to the Bath Community Fund will ensure that it continues to grow and impact Bath residents. Join your friends and neighbors and support the power of the Bath Community Fund.

Gifts to the fund are fully tax deductible and help to increase grant making to programs that preserve the unique legacy of Bath Township. To make a contribution, send in the donation envelope included in this month’s Bath Country Journal or contact Jody Konstand, advisory board chair, at 330-618-4477. ∞