Fund awards $11,250 to programs for women, children

On Friday, June 17, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund awarded $11,250 to seven nonprofit organizations serving women and children in Medina County. Since its inception in 1998, the fund has awarded 85 grants totaling $136,272 to improve the lives of local women and children.

This year, more than half of the amount awarded will support programs for students in Medina County schools, including a $2,000 grant for Brunswick’s BEAT Video Program, which teaches students to write stories, conduct on-camera interviews, and shoot news videos.

Another grant will help feed hungry students through Feeding Medina County’s Weekenders for Children program. Each Friday, the program provides bags with three nutritious meals and snacks to preschool and elementary-age students who participate in their school’s free and reduced-price lunch program. The goal is to ensure those students can continue to eat healthy meals outside of school.

“By keeping children nourished over the weekend, they come to school on Monday mornings hungry to learn, and not hungry,” said Sandra Hinkle, executive director. “Research supports that children are better learners, healthier and more socially adjusted if they are well fed.”

With the help of this grant, Feeding Medina County will reach 750 children in 19 schools across Medina County.

“The board members of the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund are pleased to fund such an important county-wide program,” said Mari Halkovich, Grant Selection Committee chairperson. “The Feeding Medina County Weekenders Program helps many families and is a model for other communities.”

The following is a full list of grants awarded in 2016:

- **Brunswick Educational Foundation**, to support the BEAT Video Program, in which student “backpack journalists” create print, Web and video stories about Medina County initiatives for broadcast by Northeast Ohio media outlets, $2,000
- **Children’s Center of Medina County**, to purchase educational materials for child sexual abuse prevention programs, $1,000
- **OutSupport Inc.**, to support a leadership program that will help LGBT and allied students in Medina County promote inclusivity and diversity in their schools, $750
- **Faith in Action Medina County Caregivers**, to provide free transportation to and from medical appointments for elderly and disabled women in Medina County, $2,500
- **Feeding Medina County**, to provide bags of healthy food for hungry students to take home for the weekend, $2,500
- **LifeAct**, for suicide prevention and depression awareness programs at Brunswick, Buckeye, Cloverleaf, Highland and Medina high schools, $1,500
- **Matthew 25 Coalition**, to provide emergency assistance to women and children in rural southwest Medina County, $1,000

See all the grants MCWEF has awarded in its 18-year history at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFgranthistory.
The statistics are staggering: One in 10 children is a victim of sexual abuse, and more than 90 percent know their abuser. These crimes are prevalent in all socioeconomic groups and in all communities – Medina is no exception. That’s why the Children’s Center of Medina County is dedicated to helping those victims by reducing further trauma and helping them find hope and healing.

As an accredited member of the National Children’s Alliance, the Children’s Center of Medina County is based on the child advocacy center model, which focuses on providing compassionate, holistic care for children by removing treatment obstacles and streamlining investigations. This model was created in 1985 by former Congressman Robert E. “Bud” Cramer of Alabama.

“Prior to this, the social service and the criminal justice systems at the time were not working together in an effective manner or one that the children could trust,” said Rhonda Wurgler, executive director of the Children’s Center. “This problem added to the children’s emotional distress and created a repetitive and often frightening experience for the child victims.”

The Children’s Center brings a team of professionals together in one centralized location to ensure child victims only have to go through the interview and examination process once. A detective, a child protective services worker, and a state attorney are able to observe from another room as a forensic interviewer speaks with the child. The interview is taped and can be entered into evidence should the case go to trial.

An exam room is also available on site, where a nurse practitioner can thoroughly examine the child to address any immediate medical needs and photograph evidence with state-of-the-art cameras. Finally, advocates are on hand to help guide families through each step of the recovery process.

In addition to nurturing the children that come through their doors, advocates at the center are equally focused on reducing the number of children and families who need their services. Throughout the year, the Children’s Center participates in several community outreach events to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and human trafficking. They also provide education and prevention programs for local families and organizations.

One of those programs is the Stewards of Children program, which is designed to empower adults to protect the children in their lives from being abused.

This year, thanks to a $1,000 grant from the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund, the Children’s Center was able to purchase 100 interactive educational booklets for the program. The booklets provide a resource for participants to take home and help the center accomplish four objectives:

1) Increase awareness of the prevalence, consequences and circumstances of child sexual abuse
2) Equip adults with new skills to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse
3) Enact proactive, positive change to organizational policies and procedures
4) Inspire individuals to commit to action via a personal prevention plan.

The Stewards of Children program is available to educational institutions, worship centers, recreation facilities, and any other organization that has direct contact with children and youth. For more information, contact Kim Brightbill, case manager, at kbrightbill@MedinaCountyChildrensCenter.org.

See more photos of the Children’s Center at www.akroncf.org/CCMC.
In 2016, people throughout Medina County celebrated Mother’s Day with gifts totaling $1,725 to the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund. Their generous gifts will support women and children in our community forever, a fitting tribute to the women who have made a difference in their own lives. All of the women who were honored received a special card telling them of the gift that was made in their name. We’re grateful to the many people who took part in this year’s campaign and helped spread the word about our vital work in Medina County.

Mother’s Day gifts pay tribute to special women

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Memorial Gifts for:
Irene Becker by Gini Paige
Sara Coleman by Jayne Coleman
Shirley Fraas by Leah Comes
Mim Heffelinger by Letha Mapes
Catherine N. Hinkel by Elizabeth Daubner
Lillian Moran Hinkel by Elizabeth Daubner
Laura Lappin & Bertha Justus by Kim Brightbill
Ashley Mapes by Letha Mapes
Kathleen McNeil by Sharon McNeil
Alice Conway Moran by Elizabeth Daubner
Virginia Ritchie by Gini Paige
Katie Horn Woodcock

Tribute Gifts for:
Aunt Carol by Brady & Lillianne Isaac
Annie Brightbill by Kim Brightbill
Kim Brightbill by Rhonda & Edward Wurgler
Kathy Castiglia by Julie Owens
Lyndsay Castiglia by Julie Owens
Katie Culp by Peggy Culp
Peggy Culp by Cathy Posner
Tammy Daubner by Anne Molnar
Nancy Venard
Normadean Dickinson by Diane Meckes
Stacey Doty by Diane Dermody
Pat Drum by Cindie J. Schneider
Claire Gerdes by Judith Gerdes
Mindy Gerdes by Judith Gerdes
Joyce Giles by Cindie J. Schneider
Janell Adams Harvey by Louise Kuhrs Harvey
Shannon Sipes Harvey by Louise Kuhrs Harvey
Bonnie Hill by Diane Dermody
Diane Hulvey by Mari Halkovich

Diana Hunter by Ellen Hunter
Estella Hutchinson by Nancy Pound
Sharon Ishee by Mari Halkovich
Jodi Walter Jones by Cathy Posner
Angela Kelly by Tim & Patricia Roy
Lena Knight by Cindie J. Schneider
Carol Koons by Kim Brightbill
Tammy Lynes by Kim Brightbill
Lucille Maimone by Margaret Medzie
Nancy Maimone by Margaret Medzie
Kristen Mangan by Mary Isaac
Janice Marsh by Julie Owens
Dawn McGough by Cindie J. Schneider
Cindy McQuown by Cindie J. Schneider
Joan Meckes by Diane Meckes
Dr. Nicole Miklos by Cindie J. Schneider
Elaine Mravetz by Diane Meckes
Marjorie Neal by William Neal
Phyllis Neal by William Neal
Sheila Noel by Rhonda & Edward Wurgler
Rosa Owens by Julie Owens
Marsha Pappalardo by Mary Isaac
Cindie J. Schneider
Cathy Patrick by Cindie J. Schneider
Jennifer Pinkerton by Ana & Brooke
Pinkerton
Susan Ponting by Julie Owens
Cathy Posner by Peggy Culp
Morgan Mason
Delcie Pound by Nancy Pound & Jack Heimovics
Katherine Power by Louise Kuhns Harvey
Jami Rak by Diane Meckes
Laura Rampe by Sharon McNeil
Linda Riley by Kim Brightbill
Patricia Roy by Angela Kelly
Elizabeth Ruth by Kim Brightbill
Shely Sarna by Margaret Medzie
Ashleigh Schneider by Cindie J. Schneider
Mary Lou Seger by Suzanne Simmons
Nancy Sprowls by Betsy Sprowls
Karen Studd by Diane Meckes
Mary Agnes Sullivan by Judith Gerdes
Terry Tobias by Sharon McNeil
Robyn Tsacoumangos by Diane Dermody
Joan Vance by Margaret Medzie
Nancy Venard by Tammy Daubner
Deb Wasylko by Cindie J. Schneider
Mary-Kathleen Whitten by Sharon McNeil
Hope Wilder by Ellen Hunter
Rhonda Wurgler by Sharon McNeil
Lucy Zaynor by Margaret Medzie

Additional Donors:
Anonymous
Perry Clark
Grange Insurance Companies
Therapeutic Associates of Medina

Save the Date
Sept. 19
Women Moving Millions
MCWEF is partnering with Akron Community Foundation and Fairport Asset Management to host a free interactive financial and philanthropic education program just for women. We’ll be discussing asset allocation and investment strategies, estate and tax planning, strategic philanthropic giving, and much more. To receive an invitation, register for our e-news at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFnews.
Save the date for the 10th anniversary of Festival of Trees

You really don’t want to miss out on this year’s Festival of Trees! We’re planning new features and surprises to celebrate the event’s 10th anniversary. Our goal is to raise more than $30,000 to continue our legacy of helping the women and children of our community.

Join us on Thursday, Nov. 10, at 5:30 p.m. at Weymouth Country Club for the fun and festivities of this signature event. Be sure to invite your friends, family and neighbors, too! It is a great kickoff to the holiday season and the perfect place to shop for those special and unique holiday gifts.

Castle Noel owner Mark Klaus will serve as the evening’s master of ceremonies as we recognize this year’s grantees and pay tribute to our founding members.

In addition, the wine pull was such a success last year that we are bringing it back with a few new twists and surprises. Live and silent auctions, an ornament raffle, and a new 50/50 raffle will round out the evening.

Your presence and participation are needed to make this event even more successful than last year. We need your assistance in promoting the event to the community, purchasing tickets to the event, volunteering to help, contributing auction items, and bidding the auctions up the night of the event. You are the key ingredient to the success of our evening. We can’t continue to help the women and children of Medina County without wonderful supporters like you!

For details or more information about how you can make a donation, become a sponsor, or contribute goods and services, please email us at medinacountywef@gmail.com or call Diane Meckes at 330-472-0458.

Tickets will go on sale in September. To receive an invitation, register for our e-news at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFnews.