Anniversary campaign celebrates impact, looks to future

As the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund approaches its 20th anniversary in 2018, fund leaders are celebrating this significant milestone with a campaign to grow the endowment for future generations.

The Legacy Tree of Giving Campaign aims to raise $104,000 to match the contributions of the fund’s original donors, which would enable MCWEF to permanently increase its grant-making to programs for women and children in Medina County.

“This campaign is an opportunity to celebrate the impact we’ve made in the community while securing the future for the next generation of women and children,” said MCWEF President Mary Isaac.

Donors to the campaign are asked to make a gift of $1,200 – or $100 a month – to help the fund reach its goal. Already, nearly a dozen women have pledged their support, including Corinne Hadley, who learned about the campaign at the fund’s Festival of Trees event last year.

It was a fitting invitation, as Corinne had first been introduced to the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund through its inaugural Festival of Trees event a decade earlier.

“I went to the very first one because my neighbors were involved, and I loved it,” Corinne said.

After hearing about the Legacy Tree of Giving Campaign that evening, Corinne decided to make a gift from her IRA. With a charitable IRA rollover, donors like Corinne who are age 70 ½ or older can support their favorite charities tax-free.

“It was a great way to leverage those assets,” said Mary.

Corinne said she’s happy to support a cause that hits close to home.

“I live in Medina County, and it’s important to me that we keep the money here,” she said. “Women and children are our future, so I want to help them in every way I possibly can.”

For her part, Ellen said she’s thankful for the opportunity to help others create a lasting legacy.

“The beauty of giving to an endowment fund is the legacy you leave,” she said. “Corinne’s gift, along with those of the other donors to our Legacy Tree campaign, will improve the lives of women and children in Medina County for generations to come.”

Learn how you can join the campaign by contacting Renee Scherick at 330-436-5612 or rscherick@akroncf.org. Read the full story about Corinne at www.akroncf.org/LegacyCampaign.
Grant equips women with professional interview attire

What would you do if you had a job interview and couldn’t find the right thing to wear in your closet? Most of us would head to a nearby retailer, but many women in Medina County do not have that luxury. First Impression now fills those needs.

Founded in December 2015 and led by a volunteer executive director, board and image consultant, First Impression’s mission is to provide economically challenged or displaced women with business-appropriate clothing, tools and skills to help them make a positive first impression at job interviews. Currently, no other Medina County social service organization offers this unique and valuable service.

The First Impression process works like this: After completing a brief questionnaire, a new client schedules a visit to First Impression and, with the help of a consultant, is fitted with new or nearly new professional attire for an interview. The client then keeps that outfit, which can include accessories like shoes and jewelry.

Some of the most needed items are foundation garments such as bras and shapers that many of us take for granted but aren’t typically donated with other clothing.

This year, a grant from the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund will help provide those needed items. MCWEF awarded a $1,600 grant to First Impression in June to purchase undergarments and other personal items for underprivileged female job seekers.

Of the funding, First Impression board member Michelle Masica says, “It’s difficult to receive funding for certain needs that are essential to the self-confidence of our clients. We’re grateful the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund understands the impact those personal clothing items can have on a successful interview. It can make all the difference in the world.”

First Impression community partners include VCS Salon & Spa and Legacy Hair Studio, as well as multiple social service agencies that refer clients.

To date, First Impression has helped more than 40 women prepare to re-enter the workforce with professional attire and interview skills, as well as additional resources to help them be successful.

For more information, including a complete list of drop-off locations for donations of professional clothing, visit www.firstimpressionmedina.org.

Smucker gift will support grantmaking in Medina County

The Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund will receive a substantial boost to its grantmaking next year, thanks to the generosity of a well-known local company.

In April, the J.M. Smucker Company made a significant contribution to Akron Community Foundation to support educational initiatives and programs for women and girls throughout Greater Akron.

The Orrville-based company has committed $500,000 over the next five years, and Akron Community Foundation selected the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund to receive a portion of those funds to distribute during its annual grant cycles.

“This wonderful gift will be able to go directly to our grantmaking,” said MCWEF President Mary Isaac. “We couldn’t appreciate it more.”

In 2018, the gift from Smucker will add $10,000 to MCWEF’s available grant funds, nearly doubling its impact in the community. Last year, the fund awarded a total of $13,000 to nine nonprofit organizations that improve the lives of women and children in Medina County.

“We value that Smucker recognizes there are needs in the Medina community and wants to improve the community in which their business is located,” Isaac said. “Their gift will make a lasting difference for local women and children.”

In the coming months, members of the fund’s Grant Review Committee will determine whether the $10,000 will be awarded in a single impact grant or be spread among several deserving nonprofit organizations.

Grant applications will open Feb. 1 and are due March 1.

To stay informed about MCWEF’s 2018 grant priorities, sign up for our e-news at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFnews.
Enduring legacy: A tribute to two of MCWEF’s founders

In 1998, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund was established to help fund programs supporting women and children in Medina County, and to assist women in their role as philanthropists. Jane Lang, Gwen Rivers and Katie Horn were the initiators of this new fund.

A steering committee was formed in 1998, followed by an advisory board. Within a year and a half, their goal of raising over $100,000 was achieved by asking 100 women to each contribute $1,000. The fund awarded its first grant in 2001.


Each was instrumental to MCWEF in her own way. In addition to actively working and volunteering in the Wadsworth community, Gwen was very involved in encouraging donors in Wadsworth as well as other parts of the county to contribute to the new fund.

Jane continued to serve MCWEF by participating as a member of the Council of Advisors, a leadership board created to provide guidance to current board members and the initiatives of MCWEF.

“Jane and Gwen were tireless advocates for the mission of MCWEF and brought to life their vision to fund programs supporting women and children,” said co-founder Katie Horn Woodcock.

Nancy Pound, the first president of MCWEF, notes, “From our first grant of $4,000, MCWEF has succeeded in disbursing nearly $150,000 to 49 nonprofit organizations in Medina County to support worthy programs for women and children. Without the three founders taking on the task of forming MCWEF, Medina County would have a different philanthropic landscape. Small amounts of money, well-placed, have made a huge impact.”

Gwen and Jane will be greatly missed. See a video about the history of MCWEF at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFhistory.

Sales and marketing professional joins advisory board

This summer, MCWEF welcomed Marjorie Cook to its advisory board.

Marjorie is the sales and marketing manager at Eyedeal Graphics, where she helps develop clients’ brand and marketing strategies through electronic and printed graphic design.

Marjorie uses her passion for children and families as a parent advocate at Greenleaf Family Center, where she empowers parents who are raising children with mental health concerns, with a particular focus on the special education process.

Marjorie previously served as a training and education coordinator at the Ohio Federation for Children’s Mental Health, where she trained parents and professionals in special education and family engagement at the local, state and national level.

Marjorie is the proud parent of a teenage son, Alex. Her advocacy for family-driven services is fueled by the successes and struggles that she and her son have encountered personally.

Marjorie’s hope is that one day all children will have what they need to be successful at school, at home and in the community.

Marjorie’s hope is that one day all children will have what they need to be successful at school, at home and in the community. Read about all of our board members at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFboard.

Come join us!

We’re looking for passionate women to join our board and volunteer on our committees. Whether you prefer to work behind the scenes or jump right into the action, we could use your skills. To learn more, contact us at medinacountyWEF@gmail.com.
Year-End Giving

As the holidays approach, consider giving your loved ones a meaningful gift that will last forever. A gift to the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund in their name is the perfect way to honor a friend, family member or colleague while making a difference in the lives of local women and children.

Also, before you ring in the new year, make sure you’ve already maximized your charitable giving for 2017. Gifts made to MCWEF by Dec. 31 will earn you a tax deduction for the current year while supporting women and children for many years to come. Donations can be made online before midnight on Dec. 31 at www.akroncf.org/give/MCWEF.

Gifts of appreciated stock are often an advantageous choice, as you receive a double benefit: You get an immediate charitable deduction for the fair market value of the securities donated and exemption from any capital gains tax on the appreciation.

The fair market value of contributed securities can be deducted up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income.

To learn more and view our simple stock transfer instructions, visit www.akroncf.org/StockTransfers. Please ensure your transfer is initiated by Dec. 20 to guarantee year-end processing.

In addition, if you are 70 ½ or older and you don’t need a portion of your IRA's Required Minimum Distribution this year, you can avoid paying taxes on it while supporting the Medina County Women's Endowment Fund through a charitable IRA rollover.

These tax-free rollovers can be large or small — from $100 to $100,000 (or $200,000 for couples). And unlike a one-time gift to an individual charity, your gift to MCWEF can leave a lasting legacy in the community. Learn more at www.akroncf.org/IRA.

See all the ways you can give at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFways togive.