Grant supports leadership training for LGBTQ students

School can be a tough place for kids who are different. That’s why, in 2016, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund was pleased to award a $750 grant to OutSupport, an organization dedicated to meeting the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning community in Medina County and beyond.

With that funding, OutSupport held a leadership training event in November to empower teens, parents and educators to create or support LGBTQA+ organizations in their schools.

The event was free to attendees and took place at the beautiful Lodge at Allardale Park in Medina County on Sunday, Nov. 6. Teens and adults in attendance spent the afternoon listening to guest speakers, including Kevin Karas from the University of Akron, who led the group in exercises that release negative feelings through the joy of movement, and Jeff Bixby from the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network of Northeast Ohio, who spoke about the history, outcomes and benefits of having a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club in schools. Then Jen Oehler, who has been the faculty advisor for the Medina High School GSA for six years, talked about how her group started, how it has grown, and the activities they have sponsored.

Participants from three local high schools attended with their parents. Guests enjoyed snacks and pizza as they socialized, and they left feeling prepared, inspired and empowered to go back to their home schools to start an organization that supports LGBTQA+ students, or to take an active leadership role in an existing organization.

The remaining portion of the grant funds supported a bowling party on April 20 for members of all the GSA clubs in Medina County schools, as well as teens who attend OutSupport’s monthly support group meetings.

It was an excellent opportunity for these teens to share their experiences, get peer-to-peer support, and promote diversity, inclusivity, and a more welcoming atmosphere for all students.

The overall mission of OutSupport is to “promote the health and well-being of LGBTQ persons and their family and friends through support, education, and advocacy.” The group was created to “enlighten the public, to end discrimination, and to secure equal rights.”

To learn more about OutSupport and the important work they are doing for young adults in our community, visit www.outsupport.org.

See all of MCWEF’s most recent grants at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFgrants.
Spring has sprung! The sun is shining and flowers are emerging. However, as I type this, a major snowstorm is predicted for the next day or two. Hopefully, that will be the last quick gust of winter and we can get on to the many celebrations spring brings to Northeast Ohio.

Speaking of celebrations, MCWEF is once again offering the opportunity for you to honor and celebrate a woman of importance in your life with a donation to the fund. We'll send a beautiful, spring-feeling card to the woman (or women!) you honor.

See page 3 for details on our Mother's Day campaign and how you can help us grow the fund. Your donation to the endowment will continue to multiply for generations. It's the perfect gift for the woman who has everything!

Continuing the theme of “growing,” MCWEF is planting the seeds for future growth through our new Legacy Tree of Giving campaign. We're seeking donors who will contribute at the $1,200 or above level. Gifts can be made in one payment or pledged over time for one or two years.

With many different ways of fulfilling that commitment, we hope it is something many of our donors will support. The first 100 donors who fulfill their pledge will receive a beautiful snowscape photograph depicting one of Medina County’s most famous trees, located south of Medina on Route 3.

In the first few weeks of the campaign, more than 10 donors pledged their support. We’d love for you to be involved as one of those first 100 donors. You can call me directly at 216-337-2106 to learn more.

Lastly, other activities are keeping our board members busy. Grants are being reviewed by our Grants Review Committee, which meets in the next few weeks to make selections for funding in 2017. The needs are great, and there is never enough in the “pot” to support all the deserving requests we receive.

One final news update: Stay tuned for an announcement regarding our signature fall event. Changes are in the works, and I think you’ll be as excited as the board is about the new features.

I welcome the opportunity to share more information with you regarding the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund. Please feel free to call me at 216-337-2106 or email me at medinacountywef@gmail.com.

I want to thank the women in our community — both the women who make up the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund Advisory Board and you, our very important supporters. This June, I will transition out of the presidency, and I look forward to passing the torch. It has been an honor and pleasure to work with all of you to serve the greater Medina community.

Have a wonderful spring!
For gifts received Sept. 1, 2016, to March 31, 2017

ABC Therapy Ltd.
Peggy Abraham
Akron Community Foundation
All Fired Up
Rebecca Alsop
Mary Andrew
Anonymous
Antiquation LLC
David L. Arbogast
Jamie Baach
Paula Banks
Baskets Galore
Jean Bauer
Bloom Event Planning & Management Services
Ann Boehnen
Elana Bonnell
John E. Boreman
Jean Boylan
Mary Brady
Mary A. Brennan
Buehler's Fresh Foods
Buffalo Wild Wings
Wendy Campbell
Rosalie Canfield
Castle Noel
The Children's Center of Medina County
Chill Ice Cream Inc.
Christmas Around the World
Dolly Clark
Cleveland Botanical Gardens
Ann Cole
Kelli Cole-Wagner
ComDoc Inc.
Chip Comes
Leah Comes
Tara Comes
Marge Cook
Amy Cox
Peggy & Lloyd Culp
Dan & Tammy Daubner
Tammy Daubner
Decadent Delights
Deer Pass Golf Course
Sean & Amy Demlow
Dino Maria’s Hair Salon
Don Basch Jewelers
DeLean Dotterer
Barbara Dzur
Endz Salon Studios
Kathy Evans
Finery by Flora D
Annette L. Finley
First Impression Inc.

FirstMerit Bank N.A.
Bruce & Nancy Fisher
Five-Star Gymnastics of Ohio
Patricia Fordosi
Linda Garrett
Garth Andrew Co.
Nancy Gatsios
Maureen Gerencser
Karen Glass
Elizabeth Goldthwaite
Carol Grabowski
Meghan Graf
Jennifer Graham
Greater Medina Chamber of Commerce
GTB Medical
H2 Huth & Harris Wine Merchants LLC
Corinne P. Hadley
Lauren Hakos-Cecchi
Half Moon Yoga
Mari Halkovich
Ted N. Halkovich
Mary Ellen Hargrove
The Harp Irish Pub and Restaurant
Amy Hayes
Faye Holvey
Homestead Insurance Agency
Marcy & R. Todd Hunt
Ellen Hunter
Estella Hutchinson
inFocus Photobooths LLC
INSYTE Communications
Ironwood Golf Course Inc.
Mary Isaac
Norman & Theresa Isaac
John & Virginia Jeandrevin
Robert A. Johnson
Patricia K. Kano
Toby & Cindy Kemsuzian
Mark Klaus LLC
Carole Kowell
Kronheims Furniture
Bernard & Phyllis Krzys
Joanna Kula
Theresa Laffey
Janet & Michael Laub
Russell & Anna Leach
Janice Leatherman
Cindy Lenhart
James M. Lepi
Ellen Lewis
Locks, Razor, Scissors
Deborah J. Lougheed
Linda Loveless
Dawn Ludwig
Dick & Betty Lynham
Amy Lyons
Made In The Shade
Mary Kay Cosmetics
Morgan Mason
Stephen & Patricia McCurley
Jennifer McKelvy
Sharon McNeil
Loretta Meade
Diane Meckes
Medical Mutual of Ohio
Medina County Park District
Medina Made
Medina Raptor Center
Janet Moxley
MTO Cleaning Services
Anne Murphy
Victoria Nann
Debbie Neale
Sheila Noel
Joanne M. Oliver
Diane O’Neil
Owl Eyes On You
Marsha Pappalardo
Lesley Peacock
Perfectly Posh
PetalSweet Cleaning
Connie Petrigala-Kubis
Julie Pfeiffer
P.J. Marley’s Restaurant & Pub
Cathy Culp Posner
Cathy & Mason Posner
Delcie Pound
Nancy Pound
Laura S. Rampe
Rape Crisis Center
Leafie Ravida
Christina O. Rickbrodt
Jaclyn Ringstmeier
Robert A. Rogers
Karry Rogus
Romp N Stomp
Root Candles
Patricia Roy
Cheryl Russo
Rustic Hills Country Club
Donna Ruswinkle
Crystal Sabol
Renee Scherick

Celebrate Mother’s Day

Are there women in your life who have inspired or encouraged you? Perhaps it’s a dear mother, teacher or friend who has made an unforgettable impact.

This Mother’s Day, consider honoring those special ladies with gifts in their name to the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund. Your gifts will support women and children in our community forever – a fitting tribute to the women who have made a lasting difference in your own life.

Each woman you honor will receive a beautiful Mother’s Day card telling her of your gift (but not the amount). Donations ultimately support the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund’s grantmaking to programs that meet the growing needs of women and children in our community.

Honor the special women in your life today. Gifts must be made by April 30 to ensure your honorees receive their card in time for Mother’s Day.

Give online at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFMothersDay.
Festival of Trees raises over $24,000

Twinkling blue-and-white trees decorated the tables, beautiful full-size trees dotted the hall, and dozens of wonderful silent auction items circled the room. The 10th annual Festival of Trees was our most magical and successful event yet!

Contributing to that success was more than $10,000 in sponsorships from generous businesses and individuals. In addition, more than 100 bottles of wine were donated for the wine pull, and guests had the chance to bid on fabulous live auction items like a vacation at a Florida condo and tickets to the Polar Express.

Altogether, thanks to you, we raised more than $24,000 to support programs for women and children throughout Medina County!

During the evening, guests enjoyed a scrumptious pasta, salad and soup bar, and Mark Klaus enchanted the audience as the master of ceremonies and auctioneer. It was a marvelous way to embark on the holiday season.

That night, we also introduced the Legacy Tree of Giving campaign, a new way to support MCWEF, at a special reception for both current and former board members just prior to the event. The campaign was then debuted to the entire audience during a special presentation, resulting in 12 gifts and pledges totaling more than $14,000.

We would like to say thank you once again to all of our volunteers, sponsors, contributors and attendees for making it a night to remember. We couldn’t have done it without you!

See more photos from the event at www.akroncf.org/FestivalofTrees2016.