On June 16, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund awarded $13,000 to nine nonprofit organizations serving women and children in Medina County. Since its inception in 1998, the fund has awarded 94 grants totaling nearly $150,000 to improve the lives of local women and children.

Among this year’s recipients was the Children’s Center of Medina County, which received an $800 grant to replace aging medical equipment. The funding will help the organization purchase a new ophthalmoscope and otoscope to examine children’s eyes and ears as part of the complete physical evaluation performed on all children who report abuse.

“The new equipment will guarantee a more thorough and accurate diagnostic impression to ensure children with health issues can be referred to the proper specialists,” said the center’s executive director, Rhonda Wurgler.

The grant will enable the Children’s Center to serve at least 400 children throughout Medina County over the next decade.

“It is vital that the children who are treated at the center receive the very best care, and we’re proud to provide medical equipment that will help the Children’s Center fulfill its mission,” said Dr. Mari Halkovich, chairperson of MCWEF’s Grants Review Committee.

Other grants awarded this year will provide emergency assistance to women and children in rural communities, support substance abuse prevention programs in schools, and educate students about teen dating violence. The following is a full list of grants awarded in 2017:

- **Brunswick Educational Foundation**, to support the BEAT Video Program, in which student journalists create print, web and video stories about Medina County initiatives for broadcast by Northeast Ohio media outlets, **$500**
- **Children’s Center of Medina County**, to purchase medical equipment to examine children who have reported sexual abuse, **$800**
- **Feeding Medina County**, to provide bags of healthy food for hungry elementary and preschool students to take home for the weekend, **$1,500**
- **First Impression Inc.**, to purchase undergarments and personal items for underprivileged female job seekers, **$1,600**
- **Mathew 25 Coalition**, to provide emergency assistance to women and children in rural southwest Medina County, **$750**
- **OutSupport Inc.**, to purchase age-appropriate library books about LGBTQ issues for schools in Medina County, **$1,750**
- **Rape Crisis Center**, to prevent teen dating violence by educating middle and high school students in Medina County about bullying, consent and healthy relationships, **$2,000**
- **Summer Reinforcement Program Inc.**, to purchase Chromebooks for students in the remedial reading program to increase their literacy and digital learning skills, **$600**
- **Wadsworth Drug Free Community Coalition**, to support substance abuse prevention and awareness programs in Wadsworth, **$3,500**

See all the grants MCWEF has awarded in its 19-year history at [www.akroncf.org/MCWEFgranthistory](http://www.akroncf.org/MCWEFgranthistory).
Welcome, summer! This time of year is always a great opportunity to get outside, celebrate milestones, and enjoy the beautiful Ohio sunshine. This year, I am incredibly excited to officially begin my first term as president of the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund as I succeed our admirable outgoing president, Cathy Posner. I’m grateful for Cathy’s leadership in growing our endowment and shaping our strategic vision.

The story of how I became president of the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund is near and dear to my heart. I was first inspired to get involved in the nonprofit community when my son Brady was born prematurely at only 26 weeks, 2 days of life. Brady spent 132 days in the NICU and came home with a feeding tube, CPAP machine and oxygen after months of being intubated.

During that time, Medina County nonprofits played a tremendous role in educating my husband and me about the developmental programs and therapy services available to our son. Once Brady’s condition began to improve, I knew it was time to find a way to give back to these remarkable organizations. I began to research what I could do to help.

I soon came across an organization that provided grants to agencies that encourage the advancement of women and children in Medina County. After learning this organization had a strong history of not only improving the lives of women and children, but also helping women embrace their own role as philanthropists, I knew the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund was the place for me.

Now in my fourth year with the fund, my goal is to continue to promote our mission and demonstrate how we can uniquely meet the needs of women and children throughout Medina County.

Each of those members brings diversity of thought, talent and passion to the fund.

I am honored to lead and work with such an amazing team of women. Nothing we do would be possible without a strong community of passionate people — people who organize fundraising opportunities, offer up their space for meetings, review grant applications, serve on our committees and more.

There are so many people who have helped make the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund what it is today. My vision is to collectively carry that torch forward as we serve the evolving needs of women and children in our community. I invite you to contact me to learn more about how you can join us. You can reach me directly at 330-242-1350 or medinacountyWEF@gmail.com.

Have a wonderful summer,

Mary Isaac, president
Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund
Grant combats growing opioid epidemic in Wadsworth

The statistics are staggering. In Medina County alone, there were 258 reported drug overdose cases in 2016 — more than double the rate of the previous year, according to the Medina County Drug Task Force.

This alarming epidemic affects people of all ages, races and social classes. No community is exempt, including Wadsworth, which recorded one of the highest numbers of overdoses in the county last year.

In 2015, the dramatic increase in police calls for overdoses caught the attention of Matt Hiscock, Wadsworth's director of public safety. At the same time, Dr. Andy Hill, superintendent of Wadsworth City Schools, was witnessing the impact of overdoses on teens and parents in his district.

Members of the community who had lost children to addiction were rising up with urgency, asking officials to bring this devastating problem into the light.

In response, Hiscock, Hill and a group of other community leaders and citizens created the Wadsworth Drug Free Community Coalition. Organizers knew the best place to start raising awareness about addiction was in the schools, so

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Mother’s Day gifts pay tribute to special women

In 2017, people in our community celebrated Mother’s Day with gifts totaling $1,520 to the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund. Their generous gifts will support local women and children forever, a fitting tribute to the women who have made a lasting difference in their own lives. All the women who were honored received a special card telling them a gift was made in their name. See the full list of donors at www.akroncf.org/MCWEFMothersDaygifts.
they began sending emails to parents and posting on the district’s website to encourage family conversations at the dinner table.

Students also created a resource guide for law enforcement officers to hand out when responding to overdose calls so victims would know where to get help. In addition, they started a 24-hour hotline called the Wadsworth Recovery Connection. Operated by the Wadsworth United Methodist Church and a group of volunteers, the hotline assists people who are searching for local service agencies.

The community coalition officially became a nonprofit in August 2016. Since then, it has grown to more than 40 members, empowering drug-free families and teens while providing resources to those who currently struggle with addiction.

“Addiction is a family disease, and the effects of the substance abuse epidemic have been far-reaching and crippling to the fabric of the community,” said coalition member Chrissy Gashash. “At the same time, we know there is also a large population of teens who choose to be drug-free, and our program with the school will focus on eliminating stigmas on both sides of the equation.”

In 2017, the Medina County Women’s Endowment Fund awarded a $3,500 grant to support the organization’s community-based prevention and awareness programs, including a youth-led public service announcement campaign in local media outlets and schools. A monthly speaker series at the Wadsworth Library and outreach at downtown events will also continue to raise awareness about the effects of substance abuse.

Follow the coalition on Facebook to see MCWEF’s grant in action at www.facebook.com/WadsworthDFCC/.

Campaigns like Red Ribbon Week increase awareness among students about the importance of staying drug-free, a core part of the community coalition’s mission.