Mother’s legacy honored through new charitable fund

As a woman who grew up during the Great Depression, Pearl Leeper Korman learned the value of sacrifice and determination at an early age. Born and raised in Akron, Pearl made the difficult decision to leave college and work full time to provide for her family, an uncommon choice for women at that time.

“My mother worked outside the home her whole life,” said Pearl’s daughter, Sandy Auburn. “She was a wonderful person who didn’t have the opportunities she made sure I had.”

Pearl taught Sandy about the importance of working hard and giving back. And for more than 20 years, Sandy and her husband, Mark, have continued Pearl’s legacy by giving to the Women’s Endowment Fund, including with a pledge to the fund’s “For Women, Forever” campaign that raised $2.013 million in 2013.

Their pledge was fulfilled last year, when the Auburns established the Pearl Leeper Korman and Sandy Korman Auburn Fund at Akron Community Foundation to support the Women’s Endowment Fund in perpetuity.

In January 2017, the fund awarded its first grant to the Women’s Endowment Fund to support its mission of uplifting women and girls by funding programs that promote their economic empowerment, safety from violence, and health and wellness.

Sandy said she feels pleased knowing the Women’s Endowment Fund will perpetuate her mother’s generous spirit and that the community foundation will uphold her and her mother’s charitable intentions forever.

“A hundred years from now, (our fund) will still be helping women and girls in Summit County, and I just think my mom would love that,” Sandy said.

Record grants boost women’s health, safety, finances

In February, the Women’s Endowment Fund awarded a record-breaking $114,460 to 19 nonprofit organizations that improve life for Summit County’s women and girls.

Several grants this year supported programs that help women and girls develop healthy relationships, including an $8,000 grant to the Rape Crisis Center for Heroes 4 Hope, a violence prevention education program for teens.

Formerly known as the Tina Project, this school-based program helps prevent dating and sexual violence by teaching middle and high school students about bullying, consent, healthy relationships and how to be an active bystander.

Since its inception, WEF has granted a total of $30,000 to the Rape Crisis Center to support programs that raise awareness about sexual violence and advocate for women and girls who are affected by this crime.

“The mission of the Rape Crisis Center is perfectly aligned with the funding priorities and mission of the Women’s Endowment Fund,” said Barb Greene, co-chair of the WEF Grants Committee. “We’re proud to support an organization that provides such critical services for women and girls in our community.”

View the complete list of grants WEF awarded this year at www.akroncf.org/WEFgrants.

Local women promote the Rape Crisis Center’s Walk of Heroes event to help end sexual violence.

Sandy Auburn, right, with her mother, Pearl Korman, during a trip to Hong Kong in 1992.

See a video featuring Sandy’s story at www.akroncf.org/AuburnFund.
Save the Date
April 30, 2017
Who Is Your SHEro? Deadline
Don’t miss your chance to give a Mother’s Day gift your mom, aunt, sister or friend will cherish forever. Through April 30, you can make tribute or memorial gifts in honor of the SHEroes in your life. Donations are fully tax deductible and will benefit women and girls in Summit County for years to come. Cards are mailed the first week of May. Give online at www.YourShero.org.

Oct. 3, 2017
On the Table
Join Akron Community Foundation for this citywide civic engagement initiative that brings people together in mealtime conversations to talk about ways to make their neighborhoods stronger, safer and more dynamic. Conversations will focus on tackling pressing community challenges, such as affordable housing, race relations, urban design and public space improvements. To learn more about Akron’s On the Table initiative and get involved, contact John Garofalo at jgarofalo@akroncf.org or 330-436-5624.

Plug in and get involved
Are you passionate about the issues affecting local women and girls? Do you want to make sure your voice is heard? Register for our e-news and be the first to know about the news and events impacting women and girls in Greater Akron.

As an e-news subscriber, you will be the first to be invited to events where you can engage local leaders, socialize with like-minded ladies, and be inspired by national speakers. Also, be the first to know about funding deadlines, volunteer opportunities, and other ways to plug into the Women’s Endowment Fund.

Register today at www.akroncf.org/WEFnews.
Celebrate the SHEroes in your life with a Mother’s Day gift to WEF

Are there women in your life who have inspired and encouraged you? Perhaps your mother, teacher or best friend who has made an unforgettable impact? This Mother’s Day, let those special ladies know they are your SHEroes by making gifts in their name to the Women’s Endowment Fund.

Your gifts will support women and girls 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 Mother’s Day card telling her she’s your SHEro and letting her know of your gift (but not the amount). Your donation will ultimately support the fund’s grantmaking to programs that improve the health, safety and economic empowerment of local women and girls.

Honor all of your SHEroes at www.YourShero.org.

Casual Fridays help women thrive

Many organizations allow their employees to wear jeans on Fridays, but at Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, it’s all for a good cause.

Throughout the year, AMHA employees can choose to participate in Casual Fridays by paying $3 per week. The money raised is donated to nonprofit organizations that support the residents in AMHA housing developments — including the Women’s Endowment Fund.

“A majority of our residents are single moms, and many of the agencies WEF funds offer services needed by these women,” said Chris Yuhasz, director of strategic engagement at AMHA.

Since 2013, the agency’s Casual Friday fundraisers have raised more than $3,600 for the Women’s Endowment Fund, enabling the fund to increase its grants to programs that help women find gainful employment, overcome postpartum depression, escape domestic violence, conquer addiction, and much more.

Read the full story online at www.akroncf.org/CasualFriday.

Memorial & Tribute Gifts


Memorial gifts for:
Leigh Paradise by Ilene Shapiro
Judy Read by GAR Foundation
Kathy Rubens by Ilene Shapiro
Margaret Willett by Dr. & Mrs. Richard Moretuzzo
Brita Wood by Sarah B. Gregg

Tribute gifts for:
Sandy Auburn by Carolyn W. Cox
Edna Borders by Ilene Shapiro
Theresa Carter by Chuck & Anne Armoo
Marie Covington by Suzanne T. Allen, Ph.D.
Sarah Doncaster
Mary Ann Freedman
Carrie Herman
Edward Jones
Barb & Ed Marshall
County Executive Ilene Shapiro
Time To Spare LLC
Elizabeth Dalton by Amy Dalton
Bonnie Estep by Dr. Ernest Estep
Greg McDermott by Akron Community Foundation
Susan McKenzie by John W. McKenzie
Sherry Neubert by Carrie Herman
Norma Rist by Susan Peirce
Ilene Shapiro by Marie Covington
Debra Shifrin by Sherry Hellman
Laurie Zuckerman by Rita Johnson

A gift to the Women’s Endowment Fund is the perfect way to honor a friend, family member or colleague while helping women and girls. The people you honor will receive a card letting them know of your gift in their name!

Make a donation anytime at www.akroncf.org/give/WEF.
On March 7, nearly 450 local leaders gathered at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn to celebrate women’s philanthropy at WEF’s annual dinner. The sold-out event featured Savannah James, founder of the I PROMise Makeover and the Women of Our Future program, and raised an incredible $100,000 for the endowment. Read more: www.akroncf.org/WEF17.