



Lets do great things together!

NEWS FROM THE FOUNDATION

Quarterly Newsletter

September-October-November 2025

36th Annual MEETING



On the evening of October 6, 2025, ninety two people attended the Foundation's 36th Annual Meeting at the Wapakoneta Eagles Banquet Room.

Executive Director Greg Myers introduced the 12 Board Members attending. Robert Askins, Alan Davis, and Mark Jarvis were reelected to serve new 6-year terms on the Board.

Treasurer Courtney Burton gave a brief financial report. Combined assets as of May 31, 2025 totaled \$14,268,938.

Myers reported another record year for scholarship awards—199 scholarships awarded to 99 students totaling \$349,000.

Grants Committee Chair Keith Horner then presented \$92,500 in grants to twenty area organizations.

It was another very successful year for our Community Foundation!



Keith Horner, Chair of the WACF Grants Committee presenting a \$10,000 check to Elaine Poppe for the 2025 Childrens Hometown Holiday events.

Community Fund Grants Awarded Since 2016 —\$627,069—

The Foundation began to receive requests for grant funding shortly after it was established in 1989. The board would review the applications at each meeting and determine to award or deny each request. Board member, Jay Koenig, chaired the Grant Committee for many years. Larry Tester served as the Foundation's first Executive Director from 2002 through 2017.

When Larry retired, Bob Askins was selected to be the new Director. He was eager to find an online application process for scholarships. When that system was operational, he discovered it could also process grant applications. The Foundation implemented it first online grant applications in 2017-18. It awarded grants to eight organizations totaling \$23,919.

The online application process has been highly successful. The Foundation accepts grant application in two cycles May 15 through June 15 and November 1 through November 30. Year after year, the number of applicants and projects has increased. This year, grants were awarded to 35 organizations totaling \$170,900.

When the original Foundation Board met in 1989, it identified several objectives in its Mission Statement. One included "distribute grants for charitable purposes in the areas of health, economic development, basic human needs, education, cultural activities, environment, and community services." We believe it is appropriate to proudly say...**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!** Thanks for your help in making it possible! Now is the time to make your contribution to the Annual Community Fund Campaign.



Another of the 2025 grant recipients was **Tiny Strings of Wapakoneta**, a project of Riverside Art Center. This is an amazing program that provides 15 weeks of beginner violin lessons for kids ages 4-7. The program also provides use of a violin. It received a \$6,000 Community Fund Grant.

Investing in our Community & People since 1989

INVESTING IN THEIR FUTURES

We invited our 2025 scholarship recipients to send us a photo and brief comments about their career goals. Forty of them responded. Here are a few examples of their plans.



CARTER WEBER
Life University

I plan to attend Life University to earn my Doctor of Chiropractic Degree.

Recipient of a Jason Strauser Scholarship

CHRISTIAN AUGSBURGER
The Ohio State University

My goal is to earn a degree in mechanical engineering and work in robotics.

Recipient of the Neil Armstrong Scholarship



KORTNEY FULLENKAMP
Ohio Northern University

I plan to major in Early Childhood Education and become an elementary school teacher.

Recipient of a Jason Strauser Scholarship

LANDON BRANDT
University of Cincinnati

My career goal is to become an Orthopedic Surgeon and work for a professional sports team.

Recipient of a Deborah Kleinhenz Scholarship



KAELYN ZWIEBEL
University of Findlay

I plan to major in Sonography and work as a Pediatric Ultrasound Tech in a childrens hospital.

Recipient of a Jason Strauser Scholarship

JALON McINNIS
The Ohio State University

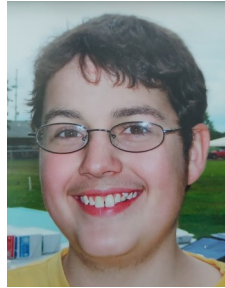
I plan to major in Mechanical Engineering and use my skills and creativity to help others.

Recipient of a Jonathan Sweger Scholarship



INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS & THEIR FUTURES

Jason Strauser Scholarships



Jason Strauser

Judy and Rick Strauser lost their son Jason to cancer in May of 2011. He was 17 years old. They decided to establish a scholarship in his memory with the Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation.

As Judy explains, "Jason loved helping people. He loved it! He was very kind and caring." Judy and Rick believed this was a wonderful way to honor Jason and share his love of helping people with scholarships for future generations of Wapakoneta students.

In order to help fund Jason's new scholarship, they decided to host a Golf Outing in August 2011. It was a great success. That first year, they were able to award \$6,000 in scholarships to six students who were members of Jason's class. They decided to make it an annual event.

With the generous help of family and friends, as well as local businesses and civic organizations, they have had continued success year after year. This year they awarded \$9,000 to six students. Since 2012, they have been able to award 57 scholarships totaling \$69,500 in memory of Jason.

PLANS FOR A DONOR ADVISED FUND

Judy and Rick are planning to create a new fund that would enable them to make grants to Camp Boggy Creek in Eustis, Florida. It is a free and safe camp for children with serious medical issues. Jason went to the camp several times.



Founded in 1986 by actor Paul Newman and General Norman Schwarzkopf, the camp was built on a simple but powerful idea: every child, no matter their illness, deserves to experience the magic of camp—having fun and making friends—all while receiving top-tier medical care.

They will let us know how you can also join in supporting the camp.

A MESSAGE ABOUT CHARITABLE GIVING

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) are still allowed for IRA owners who are 70½ or older to directly transfer up to \$108,000 annually from their IRA to charity, tax free.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from an IRA which is payable to a qualified charity. The distribution does not show up as taxable income at all. Not only does the QCD save you federal tax but also state and local taxes. There is no better way to make charitable gifts.

The combination of tax savings makes this a great way to support a favorite charity — like the Foundation's Annual Community Fund Campaign



"I was fortunate to get a scholarship when I went to college. Somebody was kind enough to spend their money to educate people that they would never get to know. That is what I think philanthropy is about."

—Lee Iacocca President & CEO of Chrysler Corporation 1979-1992

The Community Fund Campaign is the way for everyone to do great things together. It funds the Foundation's annual grants to charitable organizations helping to make our community a better place for everyone.

LEAVING A LEGACY



Mary and Richard Lowry

The Richard & Mary Lowry Funds

Richard (Dick) and Mary Lowry established a scholarship fund within the Foundation in August 2007. Graduating seniors from Wapakoneta High School, Waynesfield-Goshen High School, and Indian Lake High School who were residents of Union, Clay, Wayne, or Goshen Townships in Auglaize County were eligible. They were required to major in agriculture.

In July 2015, Dick established three Endowment Funds to benefit the Uniopolis Historical Society, Uniopolis Fire Department for Park Maintenance, and the Union Township Cemetery. The income from each fund was to be distributed to the organi-

zations quarterly. He established another endowment fund in July 2020 to benefit Fairmount Cemetery. Since 2021, these organizations have received \$92,517 In Lowry Endowment funding.

As he was working through estate planning in 2022, Dick entered into a new agreement with the Foundation. It provides for increased deposits from his estate into his existing endowments. Each fund will receive an additional \$500,000. This will more than double their current annual payments.

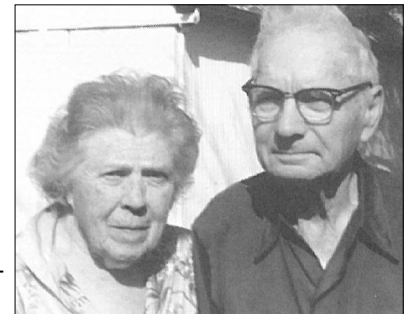
The first new endowment of \$500,000 will benefit the Uniopolis Methodist Church. The second will benefit the FFA Programs at Wapakoneta High School and Waynesfield-Goshen High School. This fund will receive \$1 million from his estate. Annual income will be divided equally between the two FFA organizations for general purposes or scholarships.

After several individual bequests, the remainder of his probate estate will be deposited in the existing Richard and Mary Lowry Scholarship Fund. The estate appraisal prepared for the Auglaize County Probate Court lists the estate value at \$5,599,547. Dick's legacy will likely be the largest single contribution made to the Foundation at this time.

ONE TOWNSHIP: TWO LEGACY FUNDS

In September 2001, Opal Miller established the Merle and Opal Miller Scholarship Fund with an initial investment of \$20,000. The scholarship was for students planning a career in nursing. It was open to graduating seniors in any of Auglaize County's high schools. The Millers were strong advocates for charitable giving.

When Opal died in 2014, she left a \$3.2 million contribution to the Foundation in her estate plan. It was to be deposited into the Merle & Opal Miller Scholarship Fund. She expanded the eligibility requirements to include careers in nursing, agriculture, and agri-business. In addition to scholarships, fund income could be used for other charitable purposes in Auglaize County at the discretion of the Foundation Board. Income from the fund has been used to create the Foundation's Community Fund. As of this year, the Miller Fund has awarded a total of \$87,000 in scholarships.



Opal and Merle Miller

Remarkably, the two largest Foundation funds—Merle and Opal Miller Fund and Richard and Mary Lowry Endowment Funds—were established by two couples in Union Township who lived less than three miles from one another.

Maya Angelou once said, "If you are going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that cannot be erased."

That is certainly what the Millers and Lowrys have done!

COMMUNITY FUND CAMPAIGN

Investing in People, Programs & Projects

**NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE
YOUR INVESTMENT
IN THE FUND THAT PROVIDES OUR
GRANTS FOR LOCAL PROJECTS**

Details on Page 1

Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation

MANAGEMENT TEAM

John D. Johnson, President

Alan Davis, Vice President

Courtney Burton, Secretary/Treasurer

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Robert Askins

Courtney Burton

Alan Davis

Stefanie Holtz

Sandra Huffman

Keith Horner

Mark Jarvis

John D. Johnson

Rex Katterheinrich

Chad Metzger

Lonnie Pedersen

Thomas Schlenker

Denise Wintzer

Gregory Myers, Executive Director

Becky Schaub, Administrative Assistant



FOUNDATION OFFICE

The office is open on Tuesday & Thursday
from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
or by special appointment.

Performing Arts Initiative MOVING FORWARD

Last April, the Foundation celebrated its 35th Anniversary with a special concert at the Performing Arts Center. It was a tremendous success! In addition to a celebration, it was intended to initiate a project to create a Performing Arts Series in Wapakoneta.

The committee that organized the concert has continued to meet. It is now finalizing the needed legal documents to create a new 501(c)(3) charitable organization—*Performing Arts Wapakoneta*. The next step will be to form a new Board of Directors and solicit members. We hope you will want to become involved.

The next question is “Who will lead the organization?”. Who will “volunteer” to organize the initiative? To solve this challenge, the Foundation Board has approved a Community Fund Grant of up to \$20,000 to hire a new part-time director. The Board believes this will help the project succeed.

Our mission statement also includes, “Act as a catalyst in identifying and addressing community needs.” This is another example of the Foundation helping to improve the quality of life in the Wapakoneta area.



Performing Arts Center — *Under the Streetlamp* Concert — April 12, 2025

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Effective October 31, 2025

Fifth Third Accounts

Pooled Account (65 funds) \$13,980,088.99

Depository Account (28 funds) \$1,137,351.23

Edward Jones Accounts

Eagles Community Parks Accounts \$282,791.35

Eagles YMCA Accounts \$169,459.20

Heinrich Scholarship Account \$61,767.94

Total Value of Combined Assets \$15,631,458.71



Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation

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