Community Foundation & United Way
Team Up for Emergency Relief

It’s hard to believe that in March most of us knew very little about the “Coronavirus” we now refer to as COVID-19. However, even during that time of uncertainty, the Community Foundation and United Way of Huntington County knew our community would need a quick response to the economic, health and education impacts of the pandemic. On March 18th, the two organizations teamed up to create the Huntington County Emergency Relief Fund and provided matching dollars that leveraged additional gifts from the community including lead gifts from Trinity United Methodist Church, First Federal Savings Bank and OSV Institute. Since then, the community partnership has raised and invested tens of thousands of dollars back into our local nonprofit organizations on the front lines of relief efforts. Below is a list that highlights these organizations and how they have helped Huntington County infants, seniors and everyone in between during this first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Boys & Girls Club of Huntington County $7,500
Covered additional staff hours, food and supplies needed to serve 40 youth whose parents were working essential services

Love INC & Salvation Army $25,000
Assisted in an increase in individual assistance claims for rent and utility, medical and/or childcare expenses.

Grants continued on page 3

New Strategic Focus on Educational Initiatives

Stemming from community conversations and research conducted over the past two years, the Community Foundation is creating a new strategic focus to stimulate educational initiatives within Huntington County alongside the key success indicators detailed below.

The first indicator starts with kindergarten readiness and sets the table for future academic achievement and lifetime success. At this early stage of development, children learn the fundamental skills that serve as the foundation for reading, counting and social interactions. Progressing through early grades, literacy becomes critical as students transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Students that fall behind grade level at this early stage have a distinct disadvantage to their peers putting them at jeopardy of persistent achievement gaps later in life. Along with early grade literacy, middle grade math has been identified as a strong link to high school graduation, college attainment and readiness in the workforce.

Progressing through adolescence, high school graduation has shown to lead to higher wages, better health outcomes, stronger relationships and higher rates of generational achievement. It also sets the stage for post-secondary enrollment/completion through four-year or two-year degrees or technical certifications. The completion of these post-secondary skills increases earning potential, workforce stability, health and community involvement. The last stage of the pipeline is career fulfillment where skilled citizens are matched with good jobs and are productive and engaged members of our community.

Local organizations working on educational initiatives are encouraged to go to www.huntingtonccf.org/grants to learn more and apply for funding opportunities.
Drake Goetz Memorial Park Installs Playground Equipment

On November 20, 2017, Drake Goetz was in an accident that took his life at the age of fifteen. Although he is no longer with us, his memory is still encouraging those left behind to be good and to do good. Soon following his untimely departure, Drake’s friends and family approached the Community Foundation about establishing a fund to build a park to honor his memory. What started out as dream a few years ago is now very close to becoming a reality. The park features a full-size basketball court, soccer field, pavilion and walking paths. The inclusive playground is awaiting a safety foam base and when completed will be a safe place for children and families of all ages and abilities to play.

Through the love and dedication of Drake’s family, friends and countless others - not to mention a long line of miracles - a wonderful park has been created for Huntington County. Hundreds of hours of sweat equity, time and donations have come together for this state-of-the-art facility. Future plans include finishing a pickleball court and finalizing bathroom amenities. At the time of this writing the park is just a few thousand dollars short of its $583,000 goal. To stay up to date on the progress of the park or to make a donation, visit www.drakegoetzpark.org or check them out on Facebook @drakegoetzmemorialpark.

Wilson Estate Gift Leaves a Permanent Legacy

Robert “Bob” Wilson was a career businessman known for his supermarket Bob’s Finer Foods on South Jefferson St. in the City of Huntington. Bob was a very generous man who believed that Huntington was good to him, thus he wanted to return the favor. Through his estate, Bob created four endowment funds each of which provide around $7,000 in permanent annual support for causes and organizations he was passionate about during his life.

The Robert E. Wilson Purchase Award Scholarship Fund endows the annual award Bob supported for over 20 years through Huntington University’s annual Juried Student Art Exhibition. This annual award of $250 is chosen by Huntington University’s art faculty to become part of their permanent collection.

The Robert E. Wilson Endowment Fund is a designated fund established for the benefit of Camp Watcha-Wanna-Do in Fort Wayne, IN. The Camp serves adolescent cancer survivors across Northeast Indiana.

The Robert E. Wilson Community Service Grant Fund is a community grantmaking fund created to benefit local nonprofit organizations through the Community Foundation’s Make a Difference semi-annual grant cycles.

The Robert E. Wilson Scholarship Fund is a scholarship to assist full-time students attending Huntington University.

Bob’s example shows us the impact that one person can have in a community not only during their life but also after their passing. In addition to estate gifts, there are many planned giving options that can benefit both the donor and the community. If you or someone near to you is interested in establishing a planned gift through the Community Foundation, please contact Matt Ditzler at 260-356-8878 or matt@huntingtonccf.org to set up an appointment.

Children Receive a “Voice” Through CASA Program

The Community Foundation awarded a $10,000 grant to the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) of Huntington County to re-implement the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA) in Huntington County. These funds will be matched by the State CASA along with a one-time start-up amount.

CASA will be a YSB program in full partnership with the Huntington Circuit Court and collaboration with other community partners, such as the Department of Child Service (DCS). The CASA program provides a child with a “voice” within the court system once a child has been identified as a “Child in Need of Service” (CHINS). The sole role of the highly trained CASA volunteer is to help identify what is in the best interest of the child, the child’s concerns, wishes and desires and represent those within the court system.

Parents often have attorneys who represent their rights and desires, while DCS has trained staff and attorneys. Decisions are often made “in the best interest of the child” often without hearing the child’s thoughts or opinions. This program will provide the platform for the child’s input when decisions are being made that affect the child.

For more information about CASA visit www.huntingtonccf.org/CASA.
$21,700 Awarded from 8 New Scholarship Funds

Along with the Robert E. Wilson Scholarship, these seven additional scholarships debuted in 2020 to assist with tuition expenses for post-secondary educational pursuits. The overall total awarded through these scholarships was $21,700.

Brenda C. Bridge Memorial Scholarship
Brenda was a lifelong educator working for Huntington County Community Schools and Region 8 Educational Services. This memorial scholarship provides financial assistance to Huntington County residents pursuing a career in education, nursing or vocational, technical or skilled trades.

David & Susan Brewer Family (John, Anne & Michael) Scholarship
David and Susan established their family scholarship to assist graduates of Huntington North High School attend one of their preferred educational institutions including Indiana University (Bloomington), DePauw University, Vincennes University or Huntington University.

Robert M. “Bob” Straight Memorial Endowed Scholarship
For over 25 years, Robert “Bob” Straight’s leadership and guidance impacted many students, athletes, teachers, friends and colleagues through his time at Huntington County Community Schools. This endowed 4-year scholarship continues to support Huntington North graduating seniors who have earned a varsity letter in at least one IHSAA sport.

Larry & Janice Jordan Ryan Scholarship
Larry and Janice created their scholarship for graduating seniors who are pursuing similar career paths to their own in pre-dental, pre-nursing or education.

Roanoke Elementary School PTO Scholarship
The Roanoke Elementary School PTO made their annual scholarship a permanent legacy by establishing this endowed scholarship. Financial assistance through the scholarship is awarded to graduating seniors of Huntington North High School that attended Roanoke Elementary school for a minimum of three years.

Wayne & Caroline Jenks Athletic Scholarship
Wayne spent 42 years working for the Huntington County Community School Corporation and the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. The Jenks Family created the scholarship to help Huntington North graduating seniors who competed in athletics.

Mark Douglas Fisher Scholarship
Mark loved coaching youngsters baseball as Whitko High School’s head baseball coach along with coaching various summer baseball leagues. This scholarship is available to graduating seniors from an array of high schools that Mark’s former players attended and provides financial assistance to students with financial need and who share Mark’s genuine love for baseball.

Emergency Relief Grants (Continued)

Aging & In-Home Services of NE Indiana
Provided 750 meals to meet the increased demand to feed homebound seniors in Huntington County
$3,750

New Life Ministries
Helped meet the high demand for food at the meal ministry along with basic needs support for Women’s Life House residents
$3,750

Community Harvest Food Bank
Supplemented the cost of food for the Farm Wagon program that makes weekly trips to Huntington and Markle
$1,000

Visiting Nurse
Provided personal protective equipment for employees treating homebound patients in Huntington County
$1,750

Salvation Army of Huntington County
Helped restock community food pantry
$3,000

Love INC
Met the increased demand for hygiene supplies
$1,000

Pathfinder Services Kids Kampus
Helped purchase of diapers, wipes, formula and some groceries for 70 families that were facing financial hardship
$3,220

Place of Grace, Remnant Ministries, Harmony House, Huntington House and Indiana Dream Center
Supported residents who had been laid off work with basic needs while living in recovery homes
$3,000

Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention
To work with trustees offices, Love INC and Salvation Army to help those at the bottom of the income bracket with different housing needs
$5,000

Boys & Girls Club of Huntington County
Covered transportation for dinners, daily fees, COVID-19 supplies, and food ingredients to 6-12 grade students to take home over the weekend to cook for their families
$4,300

Bowen Center
Purchased personal protective equipment kits for their most at-risk clients
$500
Meet the New Community Foundation Team

January 1, 2020 marked significant changes for the staff of the Community Foundation.

Matt Ditzler took over as the new Executive Director replacing Michael Howell who retired in December of 2019. Matt has been with the Community Foundation since July of 2012 and holding prior positions as Director of Accounting and Associate Director. Matt is a lifelong resident of Huntington County. He and his wife Karissa live in Huntington with their three children, Ezra, Lucy and Jude.

Also, in January, Jo Ellen Bradley began her role as the newly established Program Officer, to oversee the Community Foundation’s scholarship and grant programs. Previously, Jo Ellen had served as Public Relations & Grant Writing Specialist for the Honeywell Foundation in Wabash, IN. Jo had lived in Huntington County for 10 years and is excited to now work in the same county she calls home.

During the latter part of March, Janet Branham became the Community Foundation’s new Office Manager – another first for the office. Janet splits her time between the Community Foundation and the United Way of Huntington County as part of a collaboration. Janet spent her youth in Huntington County and is excited to be back in the community.

Matt, Jo and Janet are eager to serve Huntington County and ready to help whenever possible. Feel welcome to send them an email, give them a call or stop by the office to say hello!