

ROSS MATTERS!

A publication of the Ross Community Foundation

OUR HISTORY MATTERS

Small but mighty, the Ross Community Foundation is less than two years old, but so much has been accomplished in a short time. From its inception to awarding grants in the community, the RCF story is one worth sharing.

In 2022 Ross residents Martha and Dana Mehl approached the Hamilton Community Foundation about creating a new foundation to serve the people of Ross. What started as a fact-finding mission turned into the reality of a new organization fairly quickly. Because the Mehls already had a relationship with HCF through a scholarship fund, the trust was there. When the idea of becoming an affiliate organization of HCF was suggested, it was an easy decision to make. With affiliation, the newly created Ross Community Foundation would reap the benefits of collective investments, administrative functions, expertise in the field and the impeccable reputation of the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Since July of 2022, the Hamilton Community Foundation team has worked closely with RCF board members, teaching, guiding and

mentoring. The RCF volunteer board was created and each member vowed to work diligently to accomplish a remarkable goal by the end of the year, to raise \$500,000.

From the outset the RCF board wanted to award their first grants in the community in 2023. That meant they had to raise a fair amount of money in order to generate the kind of grant output that would make a difference in the community. So, the Board set out to raise \$500,000 for the Community Impact Fund, the granting fund of the organization. (Industry standard is to grant a percentage of an endowed fund like the Community Impact Fund so that the Fund grants in perpetuity.) Not only did the Board reach their goal but they slightly surpassed it. The Founding Members of the Ross Community Foundation made reaching the goal possible by believing in the mission to support the local community.

In the spring of 2023, the board thoughtfully and carefully reviewed the grants submitted to them, and realized simultaneously the enormous joy of supporting local programs and

The Hamilton Community Foundation has waived any fees related to the RCF Community Impact Fund.

initiatives and the great challenge of having more requests than money to give. With grateful hearts the board granted \$26,500 to organizations directly serving the Ross communities. The appreciation and joy expressed by grant recipients fueled and inspired the board to continue to raise dollars for the Community Impact Fund.

It has been a whirlwind of a process from the moment Martha Mehl uttered the words, "let's start a community foundation for Ross". Today, the commitment of the RCF board and the HCF staff is as strong as ever. The board and staff continue to work to raise awareness about the RCF and to continue to grow the organization for maximum impact in the community.

Your investment in the Foundation today translates into an investment in your community forever. Won't you join our journey to provide a future of support for this community we love so dearly? Call Martha Mehl at 513-738-0909 or Jacob Stone-Welch at 513-341-6985 to learn more about how to support the Ross Community Foundation.

Thank You Joe Conrad for the Billboard Donation!

Thanks to generous donations by board members Laura Hiler, Martha and Dana Mehl and Joe Conrad, the Ross Community Foundation has been able to employ impactful marketing through the Venice Cornerstone publication and billboard advertisement.

We are so fortunate to be able to get the word out about RCF without having to use Foundation moneys, ensuring that we can put RCF funding back into the community!



RCF PUTS FIRST YEAR'S DONATIONS TO USE IN THE COMMUNITY

RCF was able to grant \$26,500 to organizations serving the Ross community in 2023.

2023 Grants:

RLS Choral Program: \$2,500 was granted to Ross Local Schools to help offset the cost of choral uniforms for families who need assistance.

Butler Philharmonic: \$2,500 to support concert costs in the Ross area, thereby promoting local access to the arts.

Ross Township Historical Society: \$500 for equipment that will allow the Historical Society to conduct historical presentations and displays.

St. Joseph Consolidated School: \$5,000 to support the replacement of doors that do not lock for the first-grade classes and safety stenciling for outside doors.

Ross and Morgan Ministries (RAMM): \$5,000 for pantry items, particularly meat, for families in need.

Inspiration Studios: \$2,000 for clients to create mural at the Ross Firehouse.

Ross Local Schools: \$4,000 for language arts intervention materials to help students with reading and writing instruction who have fallen behind in these areas of study.

Harts for Hope: \$2,250 for neighborhood celebrations that bring people together and create a sense of community.

Ross Middle School: \$3,200 for Jump Start Summer Band Camp which introduces instruments, and thereby the band program, to Ross Middle School students.

In addition to their first grants, the Ross Community Foundation also awarded their first scholarship! Congratulations to Ross High School graduate **Bella Vanderbilt**, Bella is attending Ohio University studying Pre-Med.



Harts For Hope trailer



Laura Hiler, Martha Mehl, Bella Vanderbilt, Wendy Feters, Joe Conrad

Thank you to the Founders of the Ross Community Foundation who embraced our mission of supporting the Ross communities. Every grant awarded in 2023 is because of you!

Platinum Level

Deron and Stacy Blaylock
Myron Bowling Family
Richard J. Fitton Family Foundation
Rolland (Butch) and Ruth Guenther
Dennis and Sherrie Klei Family
Dana and Martha Mehl
Pat and Debbie Pawling
Nancy Burns Strause (In memory of Fran and Wade Burns and Tom Wade Burns)
Sid and Karen Vance
Ron and Sue Watson
Dean and Susan Welsh
The Westerbeck Family

Gold Level

Gregory and Lisa Budd
Joe and Becky Conrad
Thomas and Melissa Dierking
Dr. Christopher French, Ross Dental Group
Laura Hiler
Steve and Mary Rigling and Amy and Bobby Smith
Rick and Sally Schwoeppe
Titan Mechanical Solutions, LLC
Charles C. Young Funeral Home, Inc

Silver Level

Amrein Diamonds
Brian and Catherine Chappell
Wendy Bridge Curran and John Curran
John and Wendy Feters
Flubs Dariette
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Mike and Julie Harris
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St. Aloysius Mens Society
Ray St. Clair Roofing
Richard and Thelma Westerbeck
Walter and Erin Wilson
Alan and Mary Lou Woods
Greg and Kim Young
Bob Zaenkert

Additional Generous Donors:

Anonymous (1)
Steven D Berry
Julie A. Burwinkel and Dan Burwinkel
AK Butler
Catholic Order of Foresters St. Aloysius #2172

Johnson Investment Counsel
Zachery and Molly Pierson
Ross Lions Club
Rita C Tabler
Sean and Amanda Van Winkle

BAND STUDENTS GO FROM NOVICE TO CONCERT READY IN JUST DAYS

Jump Camp is the brain child of Ross Music Teacher Andrew Morelock. The program offers students their first experience playing a musical instrument over the period of three days. Aspiring musicians are taught how to assemble instruments, read notes, count for timing and ultimately play with focus. During the three day camp students had break out practice sessions with professional musicians. At the conclusion of the three day, nine hour camp students performed a concert.

Jessica Jackson, parent of camp participant Landon, says she was in tears as she watched her son play the trombone. "Jump Camp was very special," she says, "and Landon came home every day really excited."

Jump Camp received funding from the Ross Community Foundation through a grant submitted by the Ross Band Boosters. The Foundation granted the program \$3,200. Fledgling trumpet player Mia Bailey says, "My brothers and parents played instruments and I wanted to do the same."

Mia and clarinet player Aurora Villalobos say that music teacher, Morelock, made the camp fun and inspired them to want to play better. Booster President Ron Meade says he hopes they can make Jump Camp an annual program.



LIFELONG RESIDENT OF ROSS GIVES FIRST LEGACY GIFT TO FOUNDATION

Bernice Huff Roop moved to Ross with her family when she was six years old. Her journey may have taken her out of Ross briefly, but she moved back permanently her freshman year of high school. She's been a Ross Ram ever since.

Ross is where Bernice lived and loved, raised her children and yes, even lost. After 25 years of marriage her husband passed away. She would marry again and create a career for herself as a lab technician at P&G. Bernice has the distinct honor of holding a patent through P&G with only her name attached.

When Bernice and her husband retired their investor encouraged them to start a charitable remainder trust.

"Giving back to the community was important to both of us," she says. "I've always been thankful for what I have and this way whatever remained of the Trust after my passing would go to charities we had chosen."

In addition to some other organizations Bernice has chosen to leave a portion of her trust to the Ross Community Foundation, the first Legacy, or estate gift, the Foundation has received.

"Estate gifts and bequests are critical aspects of a Community Foundation," says Jacob Stone-Welch, Director of Donor Services for the Foundation. "These gifts support the community in perpetuity. Bernice's gift literally leaves a legacy that will last forever and the community is the ultimate beneficiary."

For information about how to become a Legacy member of the Ross Community Foundation or how to support the Foundation, call Martha Mehl at 513-738-0909 or Jacob Stone-Welch at 513-341-6985.





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HARTS FOR HOPE INITIATIVE

Harts for Hope is a grassroots organization that serves families in the Ross community. By bringing birthday parties and holidays to neighborhood parks, children have the opportunity to celebrate themselves and others.

"This organization really caught our attention," says Martha Mehl, RCF Board Chair. "We as a board loved the idea of taking the celebration to families when they might not have the means to celebrate at home."

RCF awarded Harts for Hope a \$2,250 grant to support their efforts.



Excellence. Accountability. Impact.™

This is What Teamwork Looks Like:

YOUR ROSS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TEAM

The relationship between the Hamilton Community Foundation and Ross Community Foundation is a match made for success. As an accredited, well respected institution the Hamilton Community Foundation provides trusted experience and validity to the Ross Community Foundation. The RCF board has listened and learned and put their passion to work for the Ross community.

If you're interested in speaking to a board member about the Community Harvest Campaign, feel free to reach out to any of our volunteer members. If you'd like to talk about creating a new fund with the Ross Community Foundation to support your community today and in the future, call Jacob Stone-Welch, Director of Donor Services.

Ross Community Foundation Board
The Ross Community Foundation board is comprised entirely of volunteers.

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