



New Foundation funds quickly provide aid to COVID-impacted organizations, individuals

What a difference a few months can make. Last November, the Union County Foundation was marking a record year in asset growth, grants awarded and participation in our programs.

And then – just as it has for everyone – our “normal” routine seemingly disappeared overnight with the arrival of COVID-19. Along with the medical threat of an unknown virus came the economic blow to our community as businesses and schools closed. The Foundation felt the impact of cancellation after cancellation: no live scholarship presentations at area high schools, no fund-raising events like the covered bridges bike tour and annual dinner celebration and auction.

Like every other organization, UCF “typical” activities have become anything but typical. Our board and committees meet via zoom, our scholarship winners were announced on pre-recorded YouTube videos. Our staff continues to alternate shifts between home and the office.

Definitely not business as usual. And yet, the business of the Foundation goes on. Our vision – to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Union County – is more vital than ever. This spring, the Foundation agreed to administer two new funds to support our home town businesses and families hurt by the pandemic.

In March, UCF created the Union County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund and the local United Way joined this effort. The organizations have been working in cooperation with the Mass Critical Care Unit of the Union County Emergency Operation Center.

In April, a number of city and county entities developed and funded a new initiative: the Union County 3R Small Business Relief Grant Program. Aimed at providing financial aid to small companies in our community, the program also received contributions from the private sector.

Both these funds show the value of having a community foundation in place to react quickly – and be a vehicle for collecting and distributing dollars to those in need. Thanks to many donors, Union County residents have been assisted in a myriad of ways.

We’re proud to be part of this positive, proactive work. And we hope that our supporters, past and present, will consider helping UCF cover operating costs by becoming a 2020 “Friend of the Foundation.”

Our own fundraisers may be “COVID-canceled,” but our commitment continues!

FOUNDATION FRIENDS MORE VITAL THAN EVER

Our events are canceled – but our need is not!

Like most community activities this year, the UCF Annual Celebration dinner – which last September had nearly 200 guests – has been canceled for 2020. The celebration was a key fundraiser for the Foundation, helping offset costs in managing the organization’s 117 Named Funds.

If you’d like to make, or increase, a contribution to cover operating expenses, please join **The Friends of the Foundation.**

Introduced in 2018, “Friends” is an annual campaign that has rallied UCF supporters past and present. We thank this year’s generous participants:

- David & Lynne Allen
- Craig & Erica Baker
- Daniel & Melanie Behrens
- Dennis Blumenschein
- Kenneth & Susan Boehm
- Michelle Cramer
- Oscar & Ella Decker
- Robert & Patricia Degroot
- David & Teresa Goins
- David & Judi Green
- Thomas Guy & Gail Degood-Guy
- Pat Halaiko & Cathy Conlon Blackford
- John & Janet Hanby
- Barbara Holcomb
- John & Christina Horan
- Chip & Staci Hubbs
- David & Mary Irish
- Bill Laurenson & Karla Ezerins
- Mark & Shirley Leibold
- John & Sharon Merriman
- Meg Michel
- Ryan & Kelly Mickelson
- James & Carolyn Mitchell
- Drs. Matthew & Jennifer Morrison
- Roger & Barbara Nicol
- Shirley Ormeroid
- Fred & Rita Lou Parker
- Thomas & Donna Rausch
- Jeffrey & Carol Reinhard
- Mike & Chris Schmenk
- Alan & Cheri Seymour
- Eric & Carmen Shields
- Dr. Mark & Rene Stover
- Scott & Holly Underwood
- Jim & Marlene Vandre
- Dave & Jane Vollrath
- David & Andrea Weaver
- Dwight & Dawn Youngkin
- Jeffrey & Melanie Ziegler
- Ron & Kelli Zimmerly

Board photos, Pre- and Post-COVID

Members in last year’s UCF board photo all continue to serve in 2020, with the exception of long-time director **David Allen (right)**. They are (from left) Secretary-Treasurer **Jim Vandre**, Vice Chair **Roger Nicol**, **Holly Underwood**, **Judi Green**, **Gary Lee**, Chair **Chris Schmenk**, Executive Director **Dave Vollrath**, **Mark Stover, M.D.**, **Cathy Blackford**, **Alan Seymour** and **Ryan Mickelson**.



At a recent Zoom board meeting, they were joined by new directors **Christina Horan (center, left)** and **Andrea Weaver (center, right)**. Not pictured are directors **Chip Hubbs**, **Jennifer Morrison, M.D.** and **Ron Zimmerly**.

To make a Friends contribution, use the donation envelope that is enclosed with this newsletter, or visit the UCF website, unioncountyfoundation.org.

Local pandemic funds housed at Foundation

The two new COVID response funds housed at the Foundation are:

The Union County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund

Created as a joint effort by UCF and the United Way of Union County, the initiative was launched in cooperation with the Mass Critical Care Unit of the Union County Emergency Operation Center. The fund was designed to help families with critical social services. To date, it has made allocations for food pantries, emergency shelter, rent assistance and first responder equipment needs.

“The intent is to have an easily-accessed, locally-based charity to accept contributions from our neighbors, for our neighbors,” said Chris Schmenk, Foundation board chair. Schmenk is part of a local committee that reviews requests for support. She noted that, by July, \$44,156 had been distributed through this fund, donated by individuals and local firms.

The Union County 3R Small Business Relief Grant Program

This program, developed and funded by several government entities and private organizations, aimed to provide financial aid to small businesses that sustained economic loss from the pandemic and related closures. Managed by the Union County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), the fund recently announced grants totaling \$196,500 for 43 area applicants. Recipients were able to receive up to \$5,000 each from the 3R program, which stands for, “Reconnect, Rebuild, Recover.”

While a significant portion of the awards came from re-directed government sources such as county bed tax revenue and the Marysville façade improvement program, they also included gifts from individuals and companies, according to Dave Vollrath, Foundation executive director. “Our UCF-housed fund collected and disbursed \$25,384,” he said. “It is a point of building public awareness for the local small business grants.”

To learn how you can create a charitable fund through the Union County Foundation, contact Vollrath at 937-642-9618 or info@unioncountyfoundation.org.

FOUNDATION FUND FEATURES

Even in our “new normal,” UCF donors keep making a difference

The new UCF funds started in response to COVID join a number of existing initiatives housed at the Foundation, now in its 27th year serving the community.

Currently, there are 117 “Named Funds” being managed by the organization – supporting causes as diverse as college scholarships, special needs camps, veterans activities, church programs and wellness campaigns. Many Named Funds reflect the passion of their founders, like the two featured below.

The Bob and Eula Jean Davis Memorial Scholarship

Created by: Ann Davis

Focus of support: North Union High School graduating seniors

Background: Ann Davis created the scholarship in 2017 to honor her late parents, dairy farmers who graduated from high school in the Richwood area (Eula Jean from Richwood High School and Bob from York Center High School) and raised their three children there. To date, five North Union graduates have received a Davis Scholarship. Ann considers it an ideal legacy, noting that education and a sense of community were important values of her parents. A former math teacher and girls basketball coach, Ann spent her 35-year career in the Buckeye Valley and Worthington school districts.

Founders' comments: “My parents were truly a farm couple, working side by side. They were very involved in their community. My dad was a Richwood Fair Board member and a township trustee, and my mom served on the local elections board.” Ann said they supported the sports programs at North Union High School long after their children graduated: “Even late in their lives, they still would drive over to watch the girls play softball.”

Ann Davis, seen with her older sister, Sue and their parents around 1960, created the Bob and Eula Jean Davis Memorial Scholarship to honor her late parents' commitment to education and the Richwood area community. The Davis's had been married for 65 years when Eula Jean died in 2014, followed by Bob in 2017.



The Stritmatter Family Fund

Created by: Jack and Nancy Stritmatter

Focus of support: Youth programs at the First Presbyterian Church, Marysville

Background: Jack and Nancy Stritmatter were newlyweds when they moved to Marysville in 1960 for his new job at Scott's. Jack worked in finance – 35 years at Scott's and 10 years as Treasurer of the Marysville Public Library – and Nancy spent her professional nursing career at Memorial Hospital. Along with raising their sons, Andy and Joe, the Stritmatters' most valued commitment was (and is) their membership in the First Presbyterian Church of Marysville. The foundation fund they created in 2018 is meant specifically to support youth programs at the church, such as Vacation Bible School, summer camp, retreats and the popular “Midweek” – a family-friendly event that combines free dinner, fellowship, Bible study and worship.

Founders' comments: “Nancy and I were involved for years at our church, especially focused on activities for the ‘K through 12’ age group. We both taught Sunday School at one time or another and have always wanted to see youth programs grow and continue. We created this fund to be sure that they do – even after we're gone.”

When creating their Named Fund at the Foundation, Jack and Nancy Stritmatter wanted to support a decades-long passion of theirs: youth programs at the First Presbyterian Church of Marysville. Seen with their sons, Joe (left) and Andy in the 1970s and in a recent church photo, their involvement at First Presbyterian spans six decades.

