

pull up a *chair*

THERE'S
ONE FOR
EVERYONE.



**athens
county**
FOUNDATION



2024 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

director's report



KERRY PIGMAN
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

If you haven't visited athensfoundation.org recently, I invite you to do so – you'll see our updated website with our new look, our new logo, and easy navigation where you can find how to get involved. You'll also see words like collaborate, community, connect, and co-create. Co-creation was a big theme of 2024 at the Athens County Foundation.

Housing Security Co-Create Group

ACF plays a vital role in the Housing Security Co-Create effort as a convener, funder, and advocate for inclusive, community-driven solutions. Beginning in January 2024, ACF brought together more than 40 community organizations for ongoing meetings and collaborative work to address immediate and long-term needs for housing security in Athens County. Highlights include:

- Helping Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP) secure funding to purchase and rehabilitate the former Sunset Motel into a low-barrier shelter for individuals and families experiencing housing instability.

- Supporting an emergency motel voucher program, led by My Sister's Place.
- Launching an emergency warming center at the old fire station on Columbus Road, led by The Gathering Place and the City of Athens.
- Improving information about available housing and daily living resources, and educating the public about housing insecurity. This included a Grover Lecture featuring Matthew Desmond, author of "Evicted" and "Poverty, by America."
- Establishing the Housing Security Fund, which has already awarded more than \$16,000 to direct service providers.

New Funds

In addition to the Housing Security Fund, other new funds opened as of 2024 include the Athens City School District Support Fund, the Racial Equity Coalition of Appalachia Fund, the Dairy Barn Laufman Sub Fund for Education, the Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home Fund,

the Disc Golf Fund, the Redbud Fund (see page 8), and the Leadership Athens County Youth Support Fund. The total number of open funds administered by ACF is now 77.

Leadership Athens County

2024 was the inaugural year for Leadership Athens County Youth. Seventeen students from high schools around Athens County completed the place-based and asset-focused program intended to develop a corps of informed leaders now and in the future. The flagship Leadership Athens County program continued for its 19th year. Fifteen local leaders – including myself – participated, bringing the total of LAC graduates to nearly 400! LAC gave me a deeper appreciation for our community and a renewed sense of pride in supporting the work that makes this program possible.

Grantmaking

Along with our longstanding partners, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville, the Sisters Health Foundation, and the Rocky Community Improvement Fund as well as our donor-advised funds, we awarded \$811,108.57 to 211 community organizations. We launched our Flexible Microgrants (up to \$3,000) Program, an evolution of our previous Covid-era Response and Capacity Building Grants.

We appreciate each and every one of you who has supported us through your work with Co-Create, your financial contributions, and your participation in Leadership Athens County. We believe everyone has a part to play and that when we come together, we can effectively co-create our shared future.

Gratefully,

Kerry Pigman
Executive Director



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2024 AT
A GLANCE

211
grant recipients

over
\$811k
awarded

8
new funds
created

17
participants in
Leadership
Athens County
Youth

our staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President**
Cheryl Sylvester
- Vice President**
Julie Pagan
- Secretary**
Jessica Thomas
- Treasurer**
Geoff Morgan

MEMBERS

- Scott Robe
- Mayor Steve Patterson
- Randy Gonzalez
- Laurie Deal
- Jane Cavarozzi
- Otis Crockron
- Karoline Lane
- Therese Lackey
- Jen L'Heureux
- Tee Ford-Ahmed



KERRY PIGMAN
Executive Director



ELENI ZULIA
Director of Programs and Engagement



DANI ESPERANZA
Program Director



SHAYNE MAE LOPEZ
Manager of Operations and Special



CINDY STRAUSBAUGH
Finance Manager

about us

mission

Athens County Foundation builds on the strengths of our community by advancing participation and collaboration to address longstanding challenges in order to pursue extraordinary opportunities.

vision

Everyone in Athens County is engaged and working together to ensure a healthy, inclusive, thriving community for all.

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusion

The experiences and perspectives of the diversity of people in Athens County are the foundation of effective, meaningful action. We elevate the voices of those who have struggled to be heard, and we strive for diversity in our initiatives and within our organization.

Collaboration

Results that matter come from community members, nonprofits, and public and private organizations working and learning together, listening, and engaging in constructive conversations. We seek outcomes, not ownership.

Courage

Change requires us to be steadfast and bold in seeking solutions. We face difficulties, ask challenging questions, take feedback, and lead with kindness.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

At the heart of Athens County Foundation’s mission lies a commitment to fostering positive and lasting change within our community. Our Theory of Change serves as a guiding compass; it outlines the strategy and path we will follow to turn ideas into realities. Our Theory of Change shows the steps we take to drive social progress, address community needs, and boost the voices of those in Athens County.



Hope

Our community members make a powerful difference. Their ideas and expertise, their care and concern, their efforts and projects, their investments – these are strengths that inspire us to see opportunity in the face of challenging problems. We are unwavering in our belief that, together, we can make Athens County stronger.

Trust

Philanthropy and community engagement are built with integrity, authenticity, and accountability – by the ACF and by those we serve. The strength of our relationships will propel us toward our shared goals.



funds

The Athens County Foundation manages a variety of fund types established by donors for the benefit of our community. Choose the one that’s right for you. It’s a great way to always be involved with and remembered for your community investment.

AGENCY ENDOWMENT

helping local nonprofit organizations sustain and grow

An agency endowment is a simple and efficient way to build an endowment—and help create sustainability—for a nonprofit organization. Because it’s through the Athens County Foundation, the fund not only supports the organization but also provides planned giving and investment management services.

DONOR-ADVISED FUND

a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving

Establishing a donor-advised fund with Athens County Foundation is a way to stay actively involved by suggesting uses for your gift. You can work with staff to suggest grants from the fund – targeting the issues you care about most. Grants are made to organizations in the name of the fund (or anonymously if you prefer).

FIELD OF INTEREST FUND

connecting your values to high-impact opportunities

A field of interest fund targets grantmaking to an important area of community life. The ACF board awards grants to community organizations and programs that are making a difference in the area you select.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

meeting ever-changing community needs

An unrestricted fund addresses a broad range of local needs—including ones that may not be known when your gift is made. This flexibility enables the Athens County Foundation to respond to the community’s most pressing needs, today and tomorrow.

DESIGNATED FUND

helping local organizations sustain and grow

A designated fund supports the good work of a specific nonprofit organization. Because it’s through the Athens County Foundation, the fund not only supports the organization but also provides planned giving and investment management services.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

empowering future generations through education

Scholarship funds provide crucial financial assistance to students pursuing higher education. By supporting these funds, donors enable deserving students to access educational opportunities and achieve their academic and career goals.

total funds
77

new funds
7

BY THE NUMBERS

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TURNING RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS INTO CHARITABLE GOOD

If you are in your 70s and receiving minimum IRA distributions but do not need the extra income, you can make a significant lifetime gift that positively impacts the community!

It is possible to give individual retirement account (IRA) retired distributions to a charity, free from federal tax, annually.

Using IRA assets to make a gift during your lifetime, as opposed to giving via a bequest in your will, enables you to experience the joy of making a major gift.





NEW FUNDS

redbud fund

A new donor-advised fund created through the Athens County Foundation will support environmental resiliency, local economies, community wellness, and a diverse and equitable Athens County. “Investing locally with the Athens County Foundation means we’re really investing in people’s ideas. There is just an amazing synergy of creative ideas and people with visions,” says Katy Kropf, who along with her partner Nick Tepe, created the Redbud Fund in 2024.

Kropf earned her medical degree at Ohio University’s Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1998, then returned to Athens in 2008. She is now an assistant clinical professor at OU-HCOM. Tepe has been director of Athens County Public Libraries since 2016.

“For me, throwing myself into the community is what I do as a librarian,” Tepe says, “I came to know and love everything about Athens.” So when Kropf inherited securities from her grandparents, she and Tepe knew they wanted to make a difference with this gift. Tepe adds, “Athens County Foundation does essential work for our community, whether it’s the Housing Co-Create group, or Leadership Athens County, or the general support of other local nonprofits.”

Since the resource at hand was in the form of stocks and bonds, selling them would have incurred capital gains. If the couple had decided to manage the funds themselves to donate to local nonprofits directly, that would have amounted to a lot of hands-on work. The perfect solution was to donate the securities to ACF through a donor-advised fund.

It feels good to be
a part of trying to bring people
up, trying to be part of the solution.
There’s a lot of suffering in the world.
The Redbud Fund allows us to
tap into the creativity that exists in
this community, to support the assets
of this community.

-NICK TEPE

“When ACF manages the donor-advised fund, they get the management fees for it – instead of the fees going to brokers,” Tepe says, “Even the fees are put to good use. That’s super important to me.”

As for the name Redbud? Tepe advocated for the name. “Redbuds are absolutely my favorite thing about the Appalachian foothills,” he says. “It’s the spark that sets out the bloom throughout the forest. It’s a sign of hope, it’s a sign of renewal, and it’s unique to this area. I like the resiliency of the tree as well.”

To that end, the Redbud Fund supports environmental projects and economic development projects that counter the historic extractive industries in the county, like mining and logging. A third pillar that supports LGBTQ+, racial equity, and health and wellness projects is informed by Kropf’s work in family medicine over the past 14 years. “Helping to ensure equity of access for historically marginalized and disadvantaged groups is central to my work as a physician and our desire to build a healthy community,” Kropf

says. “It feels good to be a part of trying to bring people up, trying to be part of the solution. There’s a lot of suffering in the world. The Redbud Fund allows us to tap into the creativity that exists in this community, to support the assets of this community.”

While ACF does the legwork of awarding grants in the donor-advised areas to local nonprofits, donors like Kropf and Tepe can also proactively steer ACF toward organizations or programs that could be a good fit for the funding, provided they qualify to apply for the grants.

If there is one thing the couple wants others to know about setting up a donor-advised fund, Tepe puts it simply: “This is really easy to do. Setting up a donor-advised fund is a really good way to put that money to good work. And many thanks to the Athens County Foundation staff, they make it very easy.”



be a legacy giver

MAKE THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

You are invited to join a tradition of extraordinary generosity by adding your legacy to others who realize the importance of giving back to their community.

The simplest form of a legacy gift is a bequest to the Athens County Foundation in your estate plan. Decide what matters most to you. Consider your hopes and dreams for our area and the causes and organizations that inspire your passion. Then contact the Athens County Foundation. We can share knowledge of the needs of our community and the organizations working to meet our region’s priorities.

Talk with your professional advisor to determine which type of planned gift is best for you. Arrange your estate plan to create a personal legacy with a bequest or planned gift for the Athens County Foundation. We welcome the opportunity to work with you and/or your advisor at any time.

Please contact the Athens County Foundation for more information concerning any of the foregoing options.



list of funds

The Athens County Foundation is composed of a variety of funds established by donors for the benefit of our community.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

- Advance Athens County Fund (*Operating Fund*)
- Athens Bar Association Fund
- Athens Foundation Building Restricted
- Athens Foundation General Endowment Fund
- Athens Foundation Operating Endowed Fund
- Claire O. Ping Fund
- David A. Fidler Memorial Fund
- Dr. Bruce Paxton Fund
- Ismail and Barbara Ghazalah Fund
- John and Betty Laverne Peterson Fund
- Marjorie Ann and Paul Scott Malcom Fund
- Mary Carolyn Clutter Fund
- Mary Lee Malcom Sonander Fund
- Ohio Greek Community Fund
- Ohio Realty/Wharton Family Fund
- Susan, Bruce, and Will Mitchell Fund
- The Carlsen Family Fund
- William and Elizabeth Turman Fund

FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS

- Athens Jaycees Senior Fund
- BlueDot Coworking Restricted Fund
- Bobbie Britton Fund
- Disc Golf Fund **NEW**
- Housing Security Fund **NEW**
- Leadership Athens County Fund
- LAC Youth Support Fund **NEW**
- R. Craig Copeland Fund
- SEPAN Fund
- The Ann Fox Education Fund
- The Athens County Racial Equity Fund
- The Athens County Trails Fund
- The Dean and Alvi McWilliams Fund
- The Elizabeth P. Hollow Fund

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDS

- Athens County Habitat for Humanity Fund
- Athens Village Fund
- Birth Circle Fund
- Dairy Barn Arts Center Endowment Fund
- Dairy Barn Laufman Sub Fund for Education **NEW**
- Rural Action Fund
- Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home Fund **NEW**



list of funds (CONTINUED)

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

- Appalachian Children Coalition
- Athens Chinese American Fund
- Athens Professional for Philanthropy Fund
- Children Conservation League Fund
- Christine Knisely Fund
- Ethan Cooper Fund
- James and Sara Gilfert Fund
- Joe Burrow Fund
- John Glazer Impact Fund
- Keller J. Blackburn Fresh Start Fund
- Koshal Family Fund
- Laurie Deal Fund
- Mark and Rita Snider Family Fund
- Mathews Family Legacy Fund
- Redbud Fund **NEW**
- Robert E. Pitts Endowment for Appalachia Fund
- Rosanne Eigel Fund
- Shukla/Chase Fund
- Rocky Community Improvement Fund
- Solly and Sammy Foundation for Peace
- Thomas and Barbara Kostohryz Fund
- Tom and Vickie Davis Fund
- Women's Fund

DESIGNATED FUNDS

- Athens Area Stand Down Fund
- Howard M. Walton Fund
- Imagination Library Fund
- Racial Equity Coalition of Appalachia Fund **NEW**
- Rebecca Dale Fund
- Southeast Ohio Hope Fund

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

- Mary Elizabeth Lasher Barnette Women's Leadership Scholarship Fund



our commitment to community-based organizations

The Athens County Foundation (ACF) believes that thriving community-based organizations are the backbone of a resilient and equitable community. These organizations are our partners in creating community-driven solutions for a healthy, inclusive, and thriving Athens County.

In 2024, we deepened our investment in local organizations through capacity building, leadership support, and peer connection.



\$55,482

**GRANTED TO
NONPROFITS
SERVING IN
ATHENS COUNTY.**

investing in capacity

In 2024, ACF and our long-standing partner, Sisters Health Foundation, jointly announced \$52,000 in funding to support capacity-building efforts for nonprofits serving Athens County. Through flexible grants of up to \$3,000 per organization, we aimed to strengthen the internal operations and infrastructure that allow nonprofits to sustain and scale their impact. Applications were accepted on a rolling basis, with special attention given to smaller organizations with significant capacity needs. In total, \$55,482 was granted through this program.

LIST OF CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
ACENet Inc.	ACEnet Capacity Building	\$3,000.00
Albany Ohio Festivals, Inc.	Capacity Building grant for growth	\$3,000.00
Alexander Parent Teacher Organization	Social Media Campaign and Fundraising Support	\$2,900.00
Appalachian Behavioral Healthcare	Fitness Room for Staff	\$3,000.00
Athens Artist Memorial Project	Management, Leadership and Fundraising for a New Non-Profit	\$1,446.00
Athens County Food Pantry	Capacity Building Through Grant Writing for the Athens County Food Pantry	\$3,000.00
Athens County Humane Society	Athens County Humane Society 2023 Fundraising Initiative	\$3,000.00
Athens Food Rescue	Creating a Strategic Plan for Athens Food Rescue	\$3,000.00
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	Technology Upgrade Project	\$3,000.00
Federal Valley Resource Center, Inc.	Little Folk Camp	\$1,000.00
Integrated Services for Behavioral Health	Prevention, Safety and Trauma Informed Care Training for Youth Development Staff at the Hive	\$3,000.00
Latinx Service Coalition	Board Development & Training	\$2,136.00
Majestic Galleries	Transition Support: Grant writing + Social Media	\$3,000.00
Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society	Strengthening Mount Zion's reach and impact	\$3,000.00
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery	Discovery Lab Laptops for STEAM-based Activities and Workshops	\$1,500.00
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery	Preparing OVMoD for Future Financial Growth	\$1,500.00
Solid Ground School	Improving Financial Reporting Capacity	\$3,000.00
Southeast Ohio Hope Center	Peer-supported Recovery Programing	\$3,000.00
Tablertown People of Color Museum	Capacity Building through Accounting Services to Support Strategic Initiatives for Museum Operations and Expansion Project	\$3,000.00
Tablertown People of Color Museum	Capacity Building through Grant Writing for Museum Expansion Project	\$3,000.00
Tenderfoot Fair Trade Learning Lab	Accounting Support	\$505.00
Tenderfoot Fair Trade Learning Lab	Accounting Support	\$2,495.00
	GRAND TOTAL	\$55,482.00



support beyond the grants

BUILDING STRONGER LEADERS AND NETWORKS IN ATHENS COUNTY

ACF’s support for local organizations has always extended beyond grantmaking— through facilitation, convenings, the Leadership Athens County program, and targeted capacity-building workshops. In 2024, we deepened this commitment by formally launching our monthly **Strengths + Strengths** workshop series and strengthening the monthly **Executive Directors’ Lunches**, creating consistent spaces for learning, leadership development, and peer support across the sector.

STRENGTHS + STRENGTHS
WORKSHOP SERIES

The **Strengths + Strengths (S+S)** series brought together 98 nonprofit professionals from 53 organizations to engage in nine interactive sessions covering topics such as strategic planning, fundraising, and leadership development. The program was designed to build knowledge and relationships among attendees.

The program also surfaced new needs such as deeper training in human resources, board development, and nonprofit finance, which will shape future offerings in 2025 and beyond.

“I love
the opportunity
to discuss possible
collaborations.”

- S+S WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANT

“This was very
interesting, helpful, and
straight to the point. I
didn’t feel like a moment
of my time was wasted.”

- S+S WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANT

53
organizations

98
attendees

STRENGTHS + STRENGTHS
WORKSHOP TOPICS COVERED

- Marketing & Communication
- Leveraging the Power of AI
- HR Processes
- Non-Profit Lifescycles
- Board Training 101
- End of Year Campaign
- Nonprofit Budgeting
- Grant Writing
- Event Planning
- Board 201

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS’
LUNCHES

In the often-isolating role of nonprofit leadership, **ACF’s Executive Directors’ Lunches** provide a vital space for reflection, connection, and collaboration. Held monthly, these informal yet intentional gatherings bring together community-based organization leaders from across the county to share real-time challenges, exchange ideas, and foster a deeper sense of community and support.

These lunches are not workshops or training, they are facilitated conversations that offer nonprofit leaders a trusted space to share challenges, exchange insights, and support one another.

More than just dialogue, these conversations have sparked action—from collaborative initiatives, rethinking internal policies, or recharging one’s sense of purpose. The lunches have also inspired future planning, including a nonprofit leadership retreat and a community-informed training calendar.

In 2024, these lunches tackled
real-time issues like:

- Ethical staffing practices in the face of dwindling internship funding
- Organizational sunseting and regeneration, with leaders candidly discussing when and how to gracefully close programs that have served their purpose
- Power dynamics and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in leadership spaces, including the role of executive presence (or absence) in fostering equitable conversations
- Multigenerational workforce management, including volunteers with varying levels of experience
- Opportunities for collaboration, such as co-programming around shared themes like food access or community wellness

strategy in action

Our work in 2024 aligns with ACF’s core strategy of **Expanding Capacity**, as outlined in ACF’s Strategic Framework. Whether through funding, training, or connection, our goal is to ensure that local nonprofits are not only equipped to meet today’s challenges, but positioned for long-term sustainability and success.

We’re proud to walk alongside these organizations as they serve, lead, and build a better Athens County for all.

Because when local organizations and their leaders thrive, our community thrives.



project co-create

DESIGNING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

In the spring of 2024, ACF launched **Project Co-Create**, a strategic initiative to expand participatory problem-solving across Athens County.

Importantly, co-creation is not new to this region, nor is it new to ACF. For years, the Foundation has brought people together to shape solutions, offering not just funding but one of its most powerful assets: its ability to connect. ACF's role as a convener, collaborator, and community champion has long made space for inclusive dialogue and locally rooted action.

Project Co-Create is an evolution of this work. It formalizes what ACF has always done best—hosting meaningful conversations, aligning resources, and creating opportunities for community members, especially those with lived experience, to help lead the way forward.

Through this initiative, ACF is dedicating its programs, partnerships, and investments to lift up community voice, foster collaboration, and design solutions with those closest to the issues.

Project Co-Create is our promise to Athens County. To listen deeply. To act collectively. And to keep building, together.



HOUSING SECURITY

In December 2023, a series of conversations and connections sparked collective momentum among concerned individuals and organizations. Out of that momentum, housing security emerged as a clear and urgent priority for Athens County.

Since then, monthly gatherings have created space for open dialogue, trust-building, and collaborative visioning. Each meeting centers lived experience and a shared commitment: that everyone in Athens County deserves a safe, stable place to call home.

These conversations have already ignited new collaborations and community-led ideas. Organizations are working more closely than ever. Residents with lived experience and community leaders most proximate to the housing issues, are guiding the direction of emerging efforts. Possibilities once seen as out of reach are now being explored—together.

Since December 2023, the group has:

- Formed a coalition of over 60 organizations and individuals, with active committees focused on interim solutions, best practices, education and advocacy, and fundraising.
- Submitted a grant application to renovate the Sunset Motel into an emergency shelter.
- Released the Athens County Housing Report in partnership with the OHIO Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service.
- Launched a countywide community survey to gather input and elevate local voices.

2024 marks the beginning of this movement—one shaped by those who show up, speak out, and work together. As we continue the work of co-creation, we invite you to be part of it.

pull
up a
chair

THERE'S ONE
FOR EVERYONE.

leadership athens county

ELEVATING LEADERSHIP, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Seventeen participants gathered in the Hocking Hills in September 2023 to begin Leadership Athens County (LAC) as the Flagship Class of 2024, embarking on a nine-month journey of self-discovery, community engagement, and leadership development. Through site visits, expert-led discussions, and peer-led sessions, participants explored Athens County's assets and challenges, gaining valuable insight into local issues such as economic development, housing, public health, and social equity.

This year's class embraced action-oriented leadership, driving initiatives beyond the program itself. Inspired by their experience,

graduates of the Flagship Class of 2024 established a scholarship fund to ensure that the Youth Leadership Athens County program remains accessible to all students, regardless of financial barriers.

As graduates of the 2024 program, they join a network of almost 400 LAC alumni, continuing a legacy of civic engagement and leadership that strengthens Athens County.

The impact of the program was felt deeply by participants:

"I use the connections [made in LAC] all the time in my work and foster new connections when I learn of people that have gone through the program."

– LAC Alum



L to R, Back row - Ryan Everhart, Aaron Kirby, Steve Patterson, Chris Peyton, Therese Fierler-Lackey, Michaela Sommer, Jerricka Welsh, Maddy Penrod, Salome Brajot. **Middle row** – Dani Esperanza, Ariel Carver, Karoline Lane, Rae Lewis, Selena Cottrill, Anna Ezell, Ellie Hammond, Kerry Pigman, Billie Kariher, Prem Koshal, Brielyn Bycofski. **Front row** – Annabelle Lachman, Morgan Mitchell, Claire Abraham, Emma-Shea Van Dyke, Kerson Beaubrun.

Not pictured: Will Odenthal, Darius Pierce, Jessie Vaughn, Casey Price, Mike Redington

leadership athens county youth

CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Leadership Athens County Youth (LACY) continued to grow in impact and participation, engaging 24 high school students from Alexander, Athens, Federal Hocking, and Nelsonville-York, including three returning from the summer workshop focus group. Over eight months, students explored topics such as mental health, democracy, and equity, while forming meaningful connections with local leaders and peers.

Despite unforeseen challenges, including the cancellation of an April session due to flooding, the cohort remained engaged, demonstrating resilience and adaptability.

With 100% of participants reporting that the program met or exceeded expectations, LACY continues to serve as a powerful platform for emerging youth leaders to develop their skills and deepen their connection to Athens County.

The program's effect on participants was profound:

"I never thought of myself as a leader before this, but now I see that leadership doesn't always mean being the loudest. It can mean listening and knowing when to step up."

– LACY Participant



recognition of community leaders

The Athens County Foundation (ACF) recognized several community members for their contributions to the Athens County community, including Chris Knisely as Woman of the Year, Jeff Swaim as Senior of the Year and Sarah Adkins as the Foster B. Cornwell Award recipient. These individuals were recognized April 11 at Stuart's Opera House during ACF's A Celebration of Community event.

"The Athens County Foundation draws courage and inspiration from the strengths in this room," said ACF executive director Kerry Pigman, **"I'm delighted to celebrate them tonight."**

CHRIS KNISELY AWARDED WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Chris Knisely was awarded Woman of the Year for her trailblazing and leadership in local politics and community engagement. Knisely retired in 2023 after serving as the first female president of Athens City Council, a position she held from 2015-2023. Prior to that she served as an at-large council member from 2008-2014. During her time on council, she worked to strengthen city and university relations and to support affordable housing and senior services. She mentored fellow council members and she was an active and visible community volunteer.

Knisely has been active with the League of Women Voters of Athens County and other local organizations. She has mentored other women in the county to become politically active and involved.



CHRIS KNISELY

The Woman of the Year award honors outstanding women in Athens County who exhibit a courageous voice that has been – or needs to be – recognized and who make a difference to the lives of women or girls in Athens County.

The mission of the Women's Fund of the Athens County Foundation is to promote philanthropy among women and to establish a permanent fund that will provide funding to programs and projects in Athens County which empower women to achieve their full potential. Each year, the Women's Fund awards grants to Athens County nonprofits that benefit women and girls.



JEFF SWAIM AWARDED SENIOR OF THE YEAR

Jeff Swaim was recognized as Senior of the Year for his service in helping to combat financial fraud that is often targeted at senior citizens. Swaim was born and raised in Athens County and he is vice president and treasurer of Hocking Valley Bank, where he has worked for 32 years. He has been active in a wide range of bank-initiated community outreach efforts over his career.

In recent years, Swaim has been actively involved with senior and community organizations to educate seniors about identifying and responding to mail, computer and telephone fraud schemes targeting them. His local roots and family, plus knowledge of local people, places and events have fostered trust and comfort with the organizations, families and individuals he serves. Swaim often visits senior bank clients in their homes or assisted living facilities to balance check books, discuss financial strategies and to answer questions and share information.

JEFF SWAIM



The Athens Jaycees Senior Fund through the Athens County Foundation awards the Senior of the Year annually to a senior (65 or older) who has provided key leadership in our community, especially related to issues affecting the quality of life of seniors or in the area of philanthropy.



SARAH ADKINS



After completing her Doctor of Pharmacy in June 2010 from The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy, Adkins moved back to Athens in 2011.

Today, Adkins teaches pharmacy sciences at Ohio University's Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine and College of Health Sciences and Professions. She is passionate and dedicated to her communities in Appalachia, southeast Ohio, and Athens.

She founded Solly and Sammy's Fund for Peace to honor and remember her sons who died through gun violence. The fund, now held at the Athens County Foundation, supports projects and initiatives that promote healing, support and education. Some examples are paying for burial costs in cases where other funds aren't available, and grants to organizations such as Camp Lionheart, My Sister's Place, Osage Corral and Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence.

The Athens County Foundation Foster B. Cornwell Award was established in 1996 in honor of Foster B. Cornwell's legacy of care and commitment to Athens County and to recognize those with a similar vision and dedication to Athens County.

About Athens County Foundation

The Athens County Foundation builds on the strengths of our community, advancing participation and collaboration to address longstanding challenges and pursue extraordinary opportunities. Leadership award winners embody ACF's core values of inclusion, collaboration, courage, hope, and trust.

SARAH ADKINS EARNS FOSTER B. CORNWELL AWARD

Sarah Adkins was recognized with the Foster B. Cornwell Award for her work to improve the health of those living in Athens County and southeast Ohio. Adkins is founder and executive director of Athens-based Rising Suns Pharmacy, a nonprofit pharmacy that provides free medications to people who are uninsured or underinsured. Adkins credited ACF for being the first to give financial support to the pharmacy project, which to date has served some 600 patients, dispensed 6,000 prescriptions, and saved \$2.5 million in drug costs.

Adkins is a native of Athens County, where she attended Albany Elementary and then graduated from Athens High School in 1993.



donors

donors by fund

For gifts received October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

ADVANCE ATHENS COUNTY FUND

Anonymous

Arlene Baasel

Arthur & Kathleen Marinelli

Athens County Foundation

Ben & Kim Jordan

Benjamin Bates & Elizabeth Morley

Berry Dilley

Bob & Lynn Garbo

Bruce & Marilyn Wentworth

Bruce & Susan Mitchell

Carey Schmitt

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Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center Inc

DAIRY BARN LAUFMAN SUB FUND FOR EDUCATION

Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center Inc

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grants

GRANTS BY FUND

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Athens Bar Association Fund		
Athens Photographic Project	17 Blue Line Drive - Purchase and Renovation	\$1,447.31
Athens City School District Support Fund		
Athens Middle School PTO	Support for 8 th Grade trip to Washington DC	\$8,040.00
Athens Foundation Building Restricted		
Bluedot Coworking	Athens Armory Support	\$100,000.00
Athens Foundation General Endowment Fund		
Albany Ohio Festivals, Inc.	Albany Fall Festival and Christmas in the Village	\$2,500.00
Alexander Parent Teacher Organization	Funding for equipment for the Alexander Inclusive Playground Project - Phases P + L	\$20,822.93
American Red Cross	Preparedness and Resiliency in Athens County	\$3,754.33
Athens County Area Firefighters Association Inc.	Firefighter Emergency Response Equipment	\$4,164.86
Athens County Children Services	Holiday and Emergency Food Boxes	\$432.81
Athens County Foundation	RECA 501c3 Application	\$2,500.00
Athens County Historical Society, DBA Southeast Ohio History Center	Lighting Enhancements for the Southeast Ohio History Center	\$13,000.00
Athens County Land Reutilization Corporation	Remodeling 11 Maple Street in Glouster.	\$6,742.15
Athens HOPE	Causey for strategic plan implementation support	\$1,300.00
Athens Middle School	Black History Month Sponsorship	\$1,000.00
Athens Photographic Project	17 Blue Line Drive - Purchase and Renovation	\$1,052.69

Thank you for your generosity. Every effort was made to include all gifts made this year. If there is an omission or error, please contact the foundation for corrections to be made and please accept our sincere apologies.

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Athens Photographic Project	Peer-to-Peer Expressive Photography Workshops	\$7,500.00
Community Food Initiatives	AAFN Support - Aligning Assets and Access for Sustainable Food Security	\$9,542.29
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD)	Advocacy: Shared Function Pilot	\$8,100.00
Crafty Art Bus	4th Annual Community Juneteenth Celebration	\$300.00
Hocking Athens Perry Community Action	Bounty on the Bricks Sponsorship	\$5,000.00
Hocking College Foundation	Cares Closet	\$259.18
Hope Hollow	Direct Services for Athens County Cancer Patients	\$2,500.00
LifeCare Alliance	Central Ohio Diabetes Association	\$161.60
Ohio University Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT)	Ohio University Basic Needs Program Support 2023-2024	\$5,000.00
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery	"Thirsty for Knowledge" at OVMoD	\$1,970.40
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery	4th Annual Community Juneteenth Celebration	\$250.00
Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter	Accessible Home Modification Grant	\$3,000.00
Passion Works	4th Annual Community Juneteenth Celebration	\$2,500.00
Southeast Ohio Independent News	Yodel Implementation- grant 1 of 2	\$1,200.00
Southeast Ohio Independent News	Yodel Implementation- grant 2 of 2	\$900.00
Tenderfoot Fair Trade Learning Lab	Sustainable Living Residencies - Spring & Summer 2023	\$2,853.03
The Birth Circle, Inc	Prepared Parents Workshop 2024	\$972.81
United Campus Ministry-Center for Spiritual Growth & ScI. Jst.	Reaching out to Mothers and School-Aged Children in Southeastern Athens County	\$1,772.00
Village Productions Performing Arts Inc.	2024 Amesville Writers Workshop	\$288.41
WOUB	Radio Underwriting	\$2,500.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Athens Foundation Operating Endowed Fund		
Ohio University	Athens County Foundation Support 22-23: grant 2/2	\$26,800.00
Athens Jaycees Senior Fund		
Athens County Department of Job and Family Services	Senior Emergency Assistance Program (SEA)	\$10,000.00
Athens County Historical Society, DBA Southeast Ohio History Center	Lighting Enhancements for the Southeast Ohio History Center	\$9,944.28
Habitat For Humanity of Southeast Ohio	Senior Essential Home Repairs	\$10,000.00
Lutheran Social Services	LSS Food Pantries in Athens County	\$5,000.00
OhioHealth Foundation	Discovery Kitchen Classes for Seniors in Athens County	\$6,000.00
Southeast Ohio Free Pharmacy DBA Rising Suns Pharmacy	New Dispensing Software	\$10,000.00
The Athens Village, Inc	Transitional Health Care	\$4,000.00
United Seniors of Athens County	General Support; grant in honor of Jeff Swaim (Senior of the Year)	\$500.00
Athens Village Fund		
The Athens Village, Inc.	Organization fund annual allocation	\$1,001.25
Birth Circle Fund		
The Birth Circle, Inc	Organization fund annual allocation	\$2,657.89
BlueDot Coworking Restricted Fund		
Bluedot Coworking	Fund disbursement: Preliminary budget for hiring operations manager, software development and misc. consultant fees	\$30,000.00
Bobbie Britton Fund		
Ronald McDonald House Charities Of Central Ohio Inc	2024 Helping Hands Program	\$2,104.27
Christine Knisely Fund		
Athens County Children Services	Holiday and Emergency Food Boxes	\$3,500.00
Community Food Initiatives	AAFN Support - Aligning Assets and Access for Sustainable Food Security	\$4,000.00
Lutheran Social Services	LSS Food Pantries in Athens County	\$2,500.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Claire O. Ping Fund		
Hocking College Foundation	Cares Closet	\$740.82
Dairy Barn Arts Center Endowment		
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	Organization fund annual allocation	\$1,381.60
David A. Fidler Memorial Fund		
Community Food Initiatives	AAFN Support - Aligning Assets and Access for Sustainable Food Security	\$457.71
Disc Golf Fund		
Athens County Public Libraries	Disc Golf “putting” course at Athens Library	\$3,898.86
Dr. Bruce Paxton Fund		
Alexander Parent Teacher Organization	Funding for equipment for the Alexander Inclusive Playground Project - Phases P + L	\$4,177.07
Ethan Cooper Fund		
Athenian Berean Community Players	“Tiny Beautiful Things” Sponsorship	\$650.00
Athenian Berean Community Players (ABC Players)	Sponsorship for Glen Gary Glenn Ross Play	\$650.00
John Clem Recovery House	Operational Support	\$1,000.00
Stuart’s Opera House	To support sending the Nelsonville York High School Drama Club to New York. Stuarts Opera House is the organizer.	\$500.00
Howard M. Walton Fund		
Herbert Wescoat Memorial Library	Library Support; Howard M Walton Fund annual allocation	\$10,483.44
Sylvester Memorial Wellston Public Library	Library Support; Howard M Walton Fund annual allocation	\$10,483.45
Ismail and Barbara Ghazalah Fund		
Athens City-County Health Department	Accessible Beach Entrance at Strouds Run State Park	\$337.31
LifeCare Alliance	Central Ohio Diabetes Association	\$188.4
James and Sara Gilfert Fund		
Athens County Community Singers	ACCS: Making Music for Our Community	\$1,200.00
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	The Dairy Barn’s Summer Art Camp	\$2,000.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Majestic Galleries	Upcycled Art Show	\$1,750.00
Ohio University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	Athens Community Music School Cadet Strings Program	\$2,500.00
Village Productions Performing Arts Inc.	2024 Amesville Writers Workshop	\$2,711.59
John and Betty Laverne Peterson Fund		
Athens County Area Firefighters Association Inc.	Firefighter Emergency Response Equipment	\$5,835.14
John Glazer Impact Fund		
Athens Photographic Project	17 Blue Line Drive - Purchase and Renovation	\$5,000.00
Community Food Initiatives	AAFN Support - Aligning Assets and Access for Sustainable Food Security	\$5,000.00
Habitat For Humanity of Southeast Ohio	Habitat Campus Expansion Project	\$10,000.00
Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service	Keeping it Native:Impact Measurement and Management Analysis	\$2,500.00
Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service	SROI for Serenity Grove	\$5,000.00
Ohio’s Hill Country Heritage Area	Ohio’s Winding Road: Seed Grant program	\$1,500.00
Rural Action	Appalachian Social Enterprise Summit’s pitch competition finalist pool	\$2,700.00
Southeast Ohio Hope Center	Southeast Ohio Hope Center: PT 4hr/week peer counselor for recovery community meetings	\$3,000.00
Southeast Ohio Independent News	News Support VISTA, Host Site Match	\$7,455.48
Koshal Family Fund		
American Legion Auxiliary KT Crossen Unit 21	Support for 2024 Buckeye Boys State	\$300.00
EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA INC	General support for Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota	\$1,000.00
Illuminate India	General Support	\$4,000.00
Ohio University Foundation	Performing Arts Series sponsorship	\$500.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Pragati Foundation USA	General Support	\$500.00
The Athens Village, Inc.	General Support	\$5,000.00
WOUB	Radio Support	\$1,000.00
Marjorie Ann and Paul Scott Malcom Fund		
The Birth Circle, Inc	Prepared Parents Workshop 2024	\$1,027.19
Mark and Rita Snider Family Fund		
Athens County Foundation	Celebration of Community 2024 Sponsorship	\$700.00
Mary Carolyn Clutter Fund		
Athens City-County Health Department	Accessible Beach Entrance at Strouds Run State Park	\$2,439.78
Mary Elizabeth Lasher Barnette Women’s Leadership Scholarship Fund		
Ohio University	Mary Elizabeth Lasher Barnette Women’s Leadership Scholarship: Waetcher, Abigail	\$2,000.00
Mary Lee Malcom Sonander Fund		
Tenderfoot Fair Trade Learning Lab	Sustainable Living Residencies - Spring & Summer 2023	\$1,546.97
Mathews Family Legacy Fund		
Athens County Land Reutilization Corporation	Remodeling 11 Maple Street in Glouster.	\$7,000.00
Ohio Greek Community Fund		
Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery	“Thirsty for Knowledge” at OVMoD	\$329.6
Ohio Realty/Wharton Family Fund		
Athens County Land Reutilization Corporation	Remodeling 11 Maple Street in Glouster.	\$257.85
R. Craig Copeland Fund		
Appalachian Family Center for Autism and Disability Resources and Education	Safe Swim for All	\$336.95
Birdielight	Engage, Educate, Empower Athens	\$1,094.24
Rural Action	Youth Leadership for Climate Resilience	\$8,515.06
The iBelieve Foundation	2024 Youth Leadership Workshops	\$3,000.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Rebecca Dale Fund		
Center for the Creation of Cooperation	Operating support; Rebbeca Dale Fund annual allocation	\$4,117.15
Rural Action Fund		
Rural Action	Org Fund distribution from principal: van (recoverable)	\$65,000.00
Rural Action	Organization fund annual allocation	\$3,653.63
SEPAN Fund		
Appalachian Family Center for Autism and Disability Resources and Education	Safe Swim for All	\$1,663.05
Susan, Bruce, and Will Mitchell Fund		
Athens County Children Services	Holiday and Emergency Food Boxes	\$5,367.19
The Ann Fox Education Fund		
Rural Action	Youth Leadership for Climate Resilience	\$901.81
The Athens County Racial Equity Fund		
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	Adopting Stories Pilot Workshop	\$2,500.00
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	Racial Equity Fund: Kelly and Kyle Phelps Exhibition	\$2,000.00
The Athens County Trails Fund		
Athens City-County Health Department	Accessible Beach Entrance at Strouds Run State Park	\$4,524.79
The Carlsen Family Fund		
Athens City-County Health Department	Accessible Beach Entrance at Strouds Run State Park	\$198.12
The Elizabeth P. Hollow Fund		
Rural Action	Youth Leadership for Climate Resilience	\$2,583.13
The Redbud Fund		
Southeast Ohio Free Pharmacy DBA Rising Suns Pharmacy	General Support	\$2,000.00
The Solly and Sammy Foundation for Peace		
Athens County Children Services	The Clean Clothes for Kids Project 2.0	\$2,500.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Birdielight	Engage, Educate, Empower Athens	\$4,000.00
Ronald McDonald House Charities Of Central Ohio Inc	2024 Helping Hands Program	\$2,895.73
Thomas and Barbara Kostohryz Fund		
2020 Vision Sports Corp.	General Support; on behalf of Ray Kostohryz	\$1,000.00
Alexander Parent Teacher Organization	Alexander Inclusive Playground Project	\$2,500.00
Allenspark Fire Department	General Support	\$1,000.00
Art Center of Estes Park	General Support	\$500.00
Athens Conservancy	General Support	\$1,000.00
Athens County Children Services	The Clean Clothes for Kids Project 2.0	\$2,850.00
Athens County Foundation	General Support	\$5,000.00
Athens County Historical Society, DBA Southeast Ohio History Center	General Support	\$500.00
Bobbie Merritt Foundation	General Support	\$1,000.00
Carousel of Happiness	General Support; in memory of Ray Sheriff	\$500.00
Centre LGBTQA Support Network	General Support; on behalf of Katie Kostohryz	\$1,000.00
Crossroads Ministry of Estes Park, Inc.	General Support	\$1,000.00
Dairy Barn Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center, Inc	General Support	\$500.00
Esselstyn Family Foundation, Inc.	General Support	\$500.00
Fireside Project Inc	General Support; on behalf of Ray Kostohryz	\$500.00
Fort Worth Education Center	Julie Rowe Education Fund	\$1,000.00
Friends of Athens Public Library	General Support	\$500.00
Friends of Strouds Run	General Support	\$1,000.00
Friends of the Shelter Dogs Inc.	General Support	\$500.00
Good Works	General Support	\$1,000.00
LifeCare Alliance	Central Ohio Diabetes Association	\$2,150.00
Mully Childrens Family USA Inc	For general school needs	\$2,500.00
National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force	General Support; in memory of Robert E Sheriff	\$500.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
OhioHealth Foundation	Lovelights Project; in memory of Kristin Kostohryz	\$500.00
Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia	Baileys Trail; for general use	\$2,500.00
Parkersburg Art Center	General Support	\$500.00
Passion Works	General Support	\$500.00
Project Plant	General Support	\$500.00
Rocky Mountain Conservancy	General Support	\$500.00
Rural Action	Live Healthy Kids Program	\$5,000.00
Stuart’s Opera House	General Support	\$1,000.00
The Autism Community in Action (TACA)	General Support; in memory of Jim Prohaska	\$500.00
The Old Gallery	General Support	\$500.00
The Wild Animal Sanctuary	General Support	\$1,000.00
Town of Estes Park, Colorado	For Mrs. Walsh Garden in memory of Raymary Sheriff	\$500.00
William and Elizabeth Turman Fund		
American Red Cross	Preparedness and Resiliency in Athens County	\$1,245.67
Women’s Fund		
Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio	250 Ensuring stable and affordable access to sexual and reproductive health care for Athens County patients	\$5,000.00
The Birth Circle, Inc	Prepared Parents Workshop 2024	\$2,000.00
United Campus Ministry-Center for Spiritual Growth & Scl. Jst.	Reaching out to Mothers and School-Aged Children in Southeastern Athens County	\$4,228.00
Women for Recovery	General Support	\$500.00



ROCKY COMMUNITY
IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANTS

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
FALL 2023		
ACENet Inc.	Kitchen Toolbox	\$5,500.00
Athens City-County Health Department	Accessible Beach Entrance at Strouds Run State Park	\$5,000.00
Athens County Department of Job and Family Services Community Cares Fund	Operation Full Belly	\$7,000.00
Athens-Meigs Educational Service Center	Project RISE Internships	\$3,000.00
Hocking Athens Perry Community Action	Trimble Township Community Center Equipment and Supplies	\$2,000.00
Hocking County Board of Developmental Disabilities	Hocking County Diaper and Formula Bank	\$5,000.00
Integrated Services for Behavioral Health	Parent Support Program at the Hive	\$5,000.00
Logan Hocking Local School District	Helping Families Be Healthy Families	\$3,000.00
Southeast Ohio Hope Center	Tabeling and Meeting Needs	\$2,000.00
Southern Local School District	Feeding the Falcons	\$3,000.00
The Athens Village, Inc.	Senior Social Transportation	\$2,000.00
Trimble Local School District	THS Healthy Snacks	\$3,500.00
u4meme4u	U4MEME4U Empowering Our Youth	\$4,000.00
TOTAL		\$50,000.00

GRANTEE	DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
SPRING 2024		
Alexander Parent Teacher Organization	Increasing child wellbeing through inclusive playground equipment	\$6,000.00
First Presbyterian Church	Hygiene products for Presbyterian Food Pantry	\$1,500.00
First United Methodist Church of Nelsonville	Feed My Starving Children	\$10,000.00
Habitat For Humanity of Southeast Ohio	Nelsonville Fall Build 2024	\$5,000.00
Integrated Services for Behavioral Health	Summer Splash 2024	\$10,000.00
Logan Hocking Local School District	Helping Families Be Healthy Families	\$4,000.00
Meigs County Farmers Market	Donation Station	\$4,500.00
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Athens County	NAMI Programming Expansion	\$4,500.00
Nelsonville-York City Schools, MS/HS Cross Categorical Special Education Classroom	I Can Be Clean	\$600.00
THE KATHRYN MCCOY RESOURCE PROJECT	Hygiene for Back To School Bash	\$7,987.00
The Ohio Association of Student Leaders	2024 OASL Programming Nelsonville Students	\$3,950.00
Tomcat Bridgebuilders	Youth Drug Prevention Messaging and Support	\$1,500.00
Truth Food Pantry, Inc. (agape)	Safe Food	\$1,000.00
Women for Recovery	2024 Meditative Yoga and Writing	\$3,825.00
TOTAL		\$64,362.00



Learn more at athensfoundation.org