

The Darke County Foundation is a community foundation dedicated to improving the lives of Darke County residents by receiving, managing and distributing charitable gifts.

Students Bring Joy to Retirement Home



BRC resident Jerrlyn Hart enjoys monthly visits with Tri-Village students.

Once a month, 60 second-graders from Tri-Village Elementary pour into Brethren Retirement Community, bringing enthusiasm, joy, and bags of books. Their task is to practice reading. The outcome is hard to put into words.

“Those visits just make my day!” said Jerrlyn Hart, BRC resident. “Hearing those little voices reading and talking with us really gives my spirit a lift.”

The monthly “book club” is made possible through a community grant from the Darke County Foundation.

A student’s visit is often the only interaction a resident may have that day from outside BRC. Resident Darlene Huffman lights up when she recalls her visits.

“I had the same little boy every time,” said Darlene. “He would look for me, race over, and give me a big hug. We made a connection. We became friends. I was like another grandma for him! At his last visit, the boy said, ‘I’m gonna miss coming to see you!’”

The visits last an hour, with students sharing storybooks and casual conversation.

“Sometimes the students get so excited talking about things other than reading that we need to direct them back to their book,” laughs Jerrlyn.

Darlene added, “Often youngsters just need to share their thoughts with someone. We are neutral friends who will sit and listen to them!”

Tri-Village second-grade teacher Karen Bietry said, “This program is mutually beneficial to the residents and the students by sharing the love of stories and friendship that spans generations.”

“The students want to do well for us,” said Jerrlyn. “They are good readers and we don’t have to help them.”

“I feel so happy when the kids come,” said Darlene. “They care about us.”



A Tri-Village student reads with BRC resident Darlene Huffman.

After 40 Years in Florida, Arcanum Native Leaves Entire Estate to Charities

Arcanum native Joyce Ann Miller lived in Florida for 40 years before moving back to her hometown in 2024. She was a quiet individual who lived alone and treasured her four dogs.

Joyce’s generous heart and love of her community became apparent after she died in 2025. Joyce left her entire estate to charitable organizations, including the Darke County Foundation. A scholarship fund in Joyce’s name will generate \$30,000 in awards every year.

Only investment income will be given away, leaving the original gift intact.

One of Joyce’s friends from Arcanum High School Class of 1964, Barb Garrison, said Joyce always had a kind heart and giving spirit.

“Joyce lived very simply, and she thought of others before herself,” said Barb.

Joyce graduated from Otterbein University with a music degree and taught music at Franklin-Monroe Schools for 4 years. She then worked at Rike’s Department Store selling records, until the blizzard of 1978 prompted her move to Florida.

“Joyce had had enough of snow,” laughed Barb.

When Joyce returned to Darke County, she visited the law firm Garbig, Schmidt & Pohlman in Arcanum to get her legal documents in order.

“Attorney Carrie Schmidt played a big part in helping Joyce become aware of organizations that do good things for our community,” said Barb.

The Foundation is grateful to donors like Joyce, whose selfless gestures are enriching and strengthening the lives of Darke County residents.



Joyce Ann Miller

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Address Service Requested

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Eldora Speedway Awards Scholarships to Eight Students

Eldora Speedway, the “World’s Greatest Dirt Track” in Rossburg, is helping local students get on track with their college education. The Eldora Speedway Foundation started a fund at the Darke County Foundation that provides a \$2,000 scholarship each year to all eight Darke County high schools. Many local students work or volunteer at Eldora, race cars there, or attend races.

“The success of Eldora Speedway is built on the people of this community,” said Levi Jones, Eldora general manager. “We’re honored to invest in local students and hope these scholarships encourage them to chase big goals while knowing they’ll always have a hometown cheering them on.”

Thank you, Eldora, for assisting students who are driven to achieve!



Eldora Speedway manager Levi Jones presents scholarships to Lydia Hahn, Ansonia, and Jordyn Longfellow, Mississinawa.

Scholarship Recipients:

Lydia Hahn (Ansonia)
Cheyenne Swisher (Arcanum)
Patrick Puthoff (Bradford)
Ian Norris (Franklin-Monroe)
Kya Howard (Greenville)
Jordyn Longfellow (M-V)
Elizabeth Poling (Tri-Village)
Samuel DeLand (Versailles)

Foundation Welcomes Trustee Justin Powell

DCF’s newest trustee is Justin Powell of Gordon. He is the founder and CEO of Huntington Billboards, one of the nation’s largest billboard companies. Passionate about developing principled leaders, Justin co-founded Forge Leadership, which equips young adults for leadership in public service and business. Alumni serve in

leadership roles across the country, including in state governments, Congress, and the White House.

Justin also founded the Atlas Institute, a summer entrepreneurship residency program for young Christian men. He is launching Heartland Clas-

sical Academy, a private Christian school, in Fall 2026. Justin earned his bachelor’s degree from Liberty University and master’s degree from Harvard University.



Justin Powell

How the Darke County Foundation Enriches Lives

Recovery and Wellness Centers

Many teens in Darke County struggle with mental health and face risky behavior like drinking and vaping. LEAD is a risk-prevention program led by youth for youth, coordinated by Recovery & Wellness Centers of Midwest Ohio. With a grant from the Darke County Foundation, 7th-12th graders participated in a retreat to learn leadership and listening skills to better assist vulnerable students in their schools, teach peer-pressure refusal skills, and promote positive, healthy behaviors.



Pittsburg Village

Residents of the Pittsburg community can now play pickleball on new courts, with help from the Darke County Foundation. The courts have fresh asphalt and striping, providing a safe surface for fitness and fun.



Darke County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Participants with special needs assembled sensory kits then presented them to local law enforcement and first responders, who carried the kits in their vehicles to have available for individuals with disabilities in emergency situations. The bag included noise-reducing headphones, weighted blankets, and tactile items to help provide reassurance and reduce anxiety in traumatic experiences.



Arcanum Public Library

The library constructed a gazebo with Wi-Fi, providing an inviting space for residents to connect, learn, and unwind. The project opened up internet access to all, including those with limited means. The gazebo also serves as a center for gatherings, creating a sense of belonging for the Arcanum community.

ACES Alternative School

ACES gives Darke County students the chance to complete their high school degree in a small, structured, and supportive environment. A DCF grant provided funding for an art instructor to teach an art class twice a week. Students enjoyed expressing their creativity while completing a required art credit.





Greenville City Fire Department

Greenville firefighters visited elementary students and daycares to teach children the importance of fire prevention and fire safety. Thanks to a Foundation grant, students received an activity book, fire-safety school supplies, and a fire helmet. The grant also helped purchase smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors that were distributed to the community.



How a \$100 Donation Benefits our Community

If you're like many Darke County residents, you get flooded with donation requests. How do you filter them when you have a defined charitable budget?

"There are lots of worthwhile charities in our world, and in our own community, that benefit great causes," said Reyna Shardo of Willowdell. "We get a lot of requests, so it's hard to decide where to give. I'm glad Darke County has one organization to support many programs that make our community strong," she said.

That organization is the Darke County Foundation. Since 2012, Reyna and her husband Jerry have made an annual \$100 donation to the Friends of the Foundation Fund.

"We donate because we know 100% of our money stays in Darke County," said Reyna. "We know our gift will be added to others to make a difference for people and programs we care about."

Over 200 Friends gifts are pooled together to fill grant requests from local organizations that are doing meaningful work. Whether it's revitalizing a public space, providing groceries to neighbors in need, or awarding scholarships to deserving students, the Darke County Foundation responds to the changing needs of our community – needs you may not be aware of.

"We trust the Foundation to use our dollars wisely to improve the quality of life where we live," said Reyna. "The Foundation tells us how our money is being spent."

As an option to allowing the Foundation to decide how your Friends donation can best serve the community, you can direct your gift to one of over 100 existing funds that have a specific purpose, such as a scholarship for a certain school or support for a charity that is close to your heart.

When it comes to bettering our community, you can count on the Darke County Foundation!

To donate by check:

Make check payable to Darke County Foundation. Mail to Darke County Foundation, P.O. Box 438, Greenville, OH 45331.

To donate by credit card:

Visit www.darkecountyfoundation.org.

SUNSHINE 5K

1-MILE OPTION

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19, 2026
GREENVILLE CITY PARK 8:30 AM**

BENEFITING: • AddieGirl for Cancer Assoc. of Darke Co. • Edison Foundation
• DeColores School • Final Bow Center • Darke Co. Pregnancy Help
• LifeWise Academy Greenville • Darke Co. Senior-Citizen Outreach

REGISTRATION
Includes shirt, homemade cookies, fruit, drinks, and award medals!

**REGISTER ONLINE
OR PRINT REGISTRATION FORM AT**
www.darkecountyfoundation.org

ENTRY FEE:
\$20.00 by Sept. 9 (includes shirt)
\$25.00 after Sept. 9 (shirt not guaranteed)
\$5.00 age 14 and under (no shirt)
FREE kids 400-meter fun run at 8:15am

GET THIS SHIRT!

