

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

Family Establishes Fund to Benefit Darke County Residents

What do you give your dad for his birthday when he has everything he needs and nothing he wants? A common dilemma for many adult children turned into the perfect gift for a Greenville man celebrating his 84th birthday.

Jim Buchy opened his package to reveal a plaque that read, “Jim and Sharon Buchy Fund, permanent endowment that provides annual gifts benefiting the Darke County community.”

The fund was established at the Darke County Foundation by Jim’s children Kate and Kevin Kerg and John Buchy as a way to honor a couple who has meant so much to them and to the community they call home.

“I was speechless,” said Jim. “I couldn’t believe it. Darke County is not only home; it’s the best place in the world to live. Now I have the opportunity to give my community a gift every year to make it even better.”

In sharing their story, the Buchys hope to inspire other local families to support meaningful, charitable causes through the Darke County Foundation.

“Our parents’ service has shown true passion for the values and opportunities in Darke County,” said Kate. “The Jim and Sharon Buchy Fund illustrates their lifelong commitment and generosity.”

Throughout their careers with Buchy Food Service and Jim’s 24 years as a member of Ohio’s House of Representatives, the couple maintained a passionate commitment to Darke County residents. Sharon, who died in 2021, is remembered for her selfless spirit and dedication to worthwhile causes.

Each year, investment income from the fund will be awarded to a charitable purpose that Jim suggests. The first award will be a scholarship for a Greenville High School graduate pursuing a career as an agriculture teacher. Jim has been a champion of education and agriculture throughout his life.

Greenville High School seniors may apply for the scholarship starting Feb. 15 at www.darkecountyfoundation.org. Deadline is March 31.

The Darke County Foundation is honored to assist the Buchys and other families in supporting causes they care about, creating lasting legacies for years to come.



Jim and the late Sharon Buchy



Ansonia Elementary students attend Dayton’s Victoria Theatre.

Grants for School Programs Enrich Students’ Lives

Going to school means more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. At school, students learn life skills, gain social support, and enjoy programs that enhance their lives beyond the classroom.

Thanks to grants from the Darke County Foundation, schools can offer rewarding and enriching activities that are outside their school budget.

Ansonia Elementary is giving 340 students the chance to see a live performance at Dayton’s Victoria Theatre, many for the first time. Live shows offer extraordinary, cultural experiences that expose students to various artistic perspectives, sparking imagination and creativity.

“Students learn to demonstrate appropriate audience behavior, explore how music communicates feelings, moods, images, and meanings, and make connections between music and other subjects,” said Ansonia teacher Leslie Rhoades.

Franklin-Monroe Elementary formed a LEGO League team to improve students’ math and technology skills through robotic competition with other schools. The students engage in research,



(Schools cont. from p. 1)

problem-solving, and coding as they design and build LEGO robots that navigate the missions of a robot game.

F-M teacher Brian Happy said, “The DCF grant provided us with the resources to explore, innovate, and grow as young engineers, programmers, and scientists. Thank you for investing in our future and believing in the power of robotics education.”



F-M LEGO League engineers

Versailles Middle School received a grant to purchase groceries so students could assemble 800 lunches for the homeless, teaching them the value of serving others. Each quarter, the students make 200 hearty lunches that are delivered to the St. Vincent DePaul shelter in Dayton. Each bag contains a note of encouragement written by a student.

“The students learn how they can, at any age, have a positive impact on someone’s life through simple actions,” said teacher Jason Ahrens. “This is one of our most anticipated activities for the quarter. We appreciate that the Darke County Foundation has had a hand in making this successful.”

Greenville Elementary received a grant from DCF to purchase new playsets for its classroom serving young children with cognitive and physical disabilities.

“We want to make each student as independent as possible,” said teacher Jaime Stocksdale. “We work on life and social skills, how to take care of themselves, how to do ordinary chores. A lot of these skills are learned through play. Pretending helps develop speech skills and fine and gross motor skills.”



A grant from the Darke County Foundation helped Greenville Schools purchase kitchen play equipment, giving students a new opportunity to learn social and motor skills through play.

Arcanum Schools Hope Squad is a youth-led suicide prevention program for grades 6-12. The group focuses on improving mental health and wellbeing, self-care, and how to look for signs in someone going through a hard time. The student leaders act as the eyes and ears of the school and work with counselors, teachers, and staff to offer help to students in need.

“These leaders are an added safety net for our entire student body,” said teacher Megan Smith. “Students who are struggling are now seeking out Hope Squad members for advice.”

The DCF grant helped provide learning material, activities, and a motivational speaker to address students in grades 6-12.

The Darke County Foundation is proud to help local schools enrich the education of students. The generosity of donors to the Foundation makes these grants possible!



Versailles students pack lunches for a homeless shelter.



Hope Squad shirts identify Arcanum students who are ready to help others.

Graduating with Hope

In 2014, 10-year-old Hope Middlestetter was doing her best to navigate an overwhelming environment at Arcanum Elementary School. Living with Down syndrome, Hope often felt anxious and fretful at school.

When Linda Newbauer of Greenville learned of Hope's needs, she knew she had found the perfect purpose for her new fund at the Darke County Foundation, the Mike and Linda Newbauer Companion Dog Fund. Linda made her first grant from the fund to 4 Paws for Ability in Xenia, a non-profit that trains service dogs.

"Icon" soon joined the Middlestetters and stayed by Hope's side every day. The dog helped Hope focus on tasks, kept her from wandering, assisted in therapy, and calmed Hope in stressful situations. Icon accompanied Hope until she graduated from Tri-Village H.S. in 2024.

"It brings me great joy to see what Icon has done for Hope's life," said Linda. "Icon was like a teacher and parent for Hope, knowing what the little girl needed."

Congratulations to Hope, Icon, and Linda!



Linda Newbauer, Hope Middlestetter, Icon, and Hope's father, Ken.

DCF Welcomes New Trustees



Tammy Abell

Tammy Abell grew up in Greenville and attended college at Southeastern Academy in Florida, majoring in business. She returned to Darke County with a desire to work with people and strengthen the community -- an interest that still remains. Tammy worked for Darke County Youth for Christ for 17 years and coached volleyball for 18 years. She has served on numerous boards and committees that support youth programming and strengthen families, including the Darke County YMCA and Darke County Center for the Arts. Tammy works for Greenville Schools in the Treasurer's Department. She and her husband Mark have 2 grown children.



Amanda Baker

Amanda Baker grew up in nearby Champaign County and attended Graham High School. She graduated from Wright State University with a bachelor's degree in Accounting. Upon graduation, Amanda moved to Greenville and became a staff accountant at what is now Esarey & Associates, LLC. She obtained her CPA license and continues to serve businesses, non-profits, and individuals. In October 2023, Amanda became a partner with the firm. She has served her local church in board level capacities for over 20 years. She and her husband David live outside Arcanum and have two grown sons.

How to Start a Fund at the Darke County Foundation

1

Decide when you want to give.

You can make a tax-deductible donation now, later through your will or trust, or when you need tax savings.

2

Decide what to give.

You can donate cash, appreciated stock, required IRA distribution, property, or name DCF as the beneficiary of your life insurance or other account.

3

Choose a type of fund.

Your interest might be scholarships, unrestricted support for local non-profit organizations, a donor-advised fund, or designated fund for specific purposes.

4

Choose a name for your fund.

You might honor the name of a loved one or define a charitable purpose. Every distribution from the fund will carry this name.

5

Strengthen our community.

Enjoy a sense of reward as your fund grows through investment earnings and distributes to meaningful causes that are important to you.

For more details about starting a fund, contact the Darke County Foundation at (937) 548-4673 or dcf@darkecountyfoundation.org.



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Representatives of local non-profit organizations gather to receive community grant checks from the Darke County Foundation.

Friends of the Foundation Support Local Organizations

In 2024, the Darke County Foundation awarded community grants to 80 local non-profit organizations that provide valuable services to Darke County residents. The efforts of these groups enrich and strengthen the well-being of our community. Funding for many of the grants came from the Friends of the Foundation Fund that is bolstered every year by hundreds of generous do-

nors. Every dollar of our Friends' gifts went back into our community, reassuring donors that their contributions stay local and make a significant difference in the lives of their neighbors. Donate to the Friends of the Foundation online at www.darkecountyfoundation.org/donate. Or mail a check to: Darke County Foundation, P.O. Box 438, Greenville, OH 45331.