



Economic metrics focus of community dashboard

A new website has been launched to track the economic health of the local community. RichlandVitalSigns.com is a key piece of the Richland County Foundation's five-year transformative economic development strategic plan.

The website is part of a plan developed by community leaders to focus on traditional economic development: business retention and expansion, workforce development, and entrepreneurship.

The goal of Richland Vital Signs is to inform and inspire economic growth and opportunities. It is a dashboard to provide data and statistical analysis to track outcomes.

Focusing on existing businesses and helping them grow will expand the county's economic base. Workforce is critical because people are the greatest economic nutrient required to boost future growth. At the same time, supporting entrepreneurs will ensure that the economy of the next generation is stronger than the current one.

Foundation President Brady Groves said, "Our local economy is at a pivotal point. Local leaders need metrics in order to make calculated investments and take action in this arena."

The website tracks local, state and national metrics for economic

development, workforce and entrepreneurship.

Each metric has additional information including analysis of performance, metric definition, its importance and benchmark information. The metrics are color coded green, yellow or red to indicate if it is in a desired range.

The Foundation also created a Richland County Resource Guide for Entrepreneurs. Links to richlandvitalsigns.com and the resource guide are available on several community websites including richlandcountyfoundation.org.

Honor someone special for Mother's Day

The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation is offering people a way to honor special women in their lives with a Mother's Day gift to benefit women and girls in this community.

Donors can make a gift to honor a special woman or in memory of a loved one. Donations will support the Women's Fund's grant-making.

To make a Mother's Day gift to the Women's Fund go richlandcountyfoundation.org and click the donate button or if you would like to write a check note the enclosed envelope.

The Women's Fund was formed in 1996 to promote philanthropy among women to provide funding to programs and projects that empower women and girls to achieve their full potential.



Donors establish a fund to support local law enforcement

Two donors are huge fans of law enforcement. To show their support, they established a designated fund to benefit the Ontario Police Department.

The donors said “Police are an integral part of our society. Considering the way things are going in our country, we think it is important to recognize the police and the job they do. I support and respect law enforcement.”

Ontario Police Chief Rodney Smith is amazed by the donors’ generosity and support of local officers.

According to the fund language the Ontario Chief of Police will direct how the earned income from the fund will be utilized.

Chief Smith’s first project from this fund is a memorial to police officers. Two granite stones will stand in front of Ontario City Hall as a tribute to current Ontario Police officers as well as U.S. officers killed while serving their communities.

Because it is a designated fund, anyone in the community can donate to the fund for the Ontario Police Department. Donors will receive a tax deduction.

The donors hope the fund will spur more support for all law enforcement.

What is a donor designated fund?

It will provide annual support to the charities selected by the donor. They offer the added benefit that if the organization(s) cease to exist; the Foundation has the responsibility to ensure that the donor’s original intent is met in seeking new suitable organizations.



Photo: Connections Fund Co-Chair Cristen Gilbert, Junior Achievement of North Central Ohio President Michael Gaffney and Connections Co-Chair Dr. Amy Staker-Breitinger at the reception.

Connections Fund awards over \$20,000 in grants

The Connections Fund of the Richland County Foundation announced its 2017 grants during its Winter Reception. The Connections Fund donors approved \$20,000 in grants this year.

The following organizations and programs were funded by Connections.

- **Altrusa International Foundation of Mansfield**, Tools for School
- **Culliver Reading Center**, Boys Literacy Program
- **Junior Achievement of North Central Ohio**, Mansfield City School District program
- **Kingwood Center Gardens**, Peacock Playhouse, The Kingwood Sensory Center
- **Lucas Community Center**, After School Tutoring Program
- **Mansfield Area Y**, Malabar School Safety Around Water Program
- **North End Community Improvement Collaborative**, Youth Small Grants Program
- **Ohio State University at Mansfield**, Science Saturdays
- **Ontario School District**, Getting All Students Moving Project
- **Parent Aide**, Family Action Nights
- **Mansfield Richland Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation**, Young Entrepreneurs Academy

Foundation President Brady Groves said, “The Connections Fund is a great way for younger donors to get involved in philanthropy and community leadership.”



Since 2005 the Connections Fund has awarded almost \$89,000 to nonprofit organizations in Richland County. The mission of the Connections Fund of the Richland County Foundation is to foster and retain leaders and professionals in Richland County and to promote a philanthropic identity and involvement in the community.



Foundation welcomes a new community investment officer

Alan Mitchell II has been named the community investment officer at the Richland County Foundation.

Foundation President Brady Groves said “community investment officer is a new position and was necessary to better meet the grant making needs of the Foundation. With Alan on board, we will be able to collaborate on additional projects.”

Before joining the Foundation, Mitchell was the executive director at the Zion Community Development Corporation in Oberlin, from 2014 to 2016. He also was employed from 2012 to 2016 as the program coordinator of Food Distribution at Oberlin Community Services.

Mitchell organized the building of safe, sanitary, sustainable and affordable housing while at the same time worked toward ending hunger in Lorain County.

He was the dean of students at the Arts Academy in Lorain from 2005 to 2011. Mitchell served in the United States Navy from 1999 to 2004 as a Spanish linguist and a general military training coordinator.

Mitchell earned his bachelor’s of science degree from Excelsior College. He and his wife, Tiffany, have two daughters, Aliya and Alana, and they reside in Mansfield.

Elementary education is the focus of a new fund

“I have had an extraordinary life!”

This is what Betty Martin said when asked about being alive for more than a century.

Betty established a field-of-interest fund to support elementary education in the Mansfield City School District. She taught at Carpenter Elementary School for 28 years and was passionate about educating children.

Her daughter Cheryl Cummins suggested setting up the fund as a way to contribute to the community while creating a permanent reminder of the good work Betty did as a teacher.

Betty’s former students stayed in touch with her and many told her she was the best teacher they ever had. A few years ago, her former students organized a reunion in her old classroom at Carpenter Elementary School.

In addition, throughout her decades-long career, Betty served as a mentor to many new teachers.



“I enjoy life and I have a family that matters,” she said. “I love people, they love me and I am a big proponent of hugs.”

(Betty passed away March 25, 2017, just three days prior to her 101st birthday. She was interviewed for the newsletter a few months before her death.)



Over \$2.4 M in grants approved to nonprofits

The Richland County Foundation Board of Trustees approved grants totaling \$1,382,549 during its February meeting.

During the April meeting, the Trustees approved grants totaling \$1,073,665. Of that total, almost \$174,000 went to fund youth in the community over the summer including 24 paid interns at Richland County nonprofit organizations from the Fran and Warren Rupp Donor Advised Fund.

To see a list of the grants approved during the meeting from donor advised, donor designated and agency designated funds go to richlandcountyfoundation.org.

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Richland County Foundation Receives National Recognition

Richland County Foundation again received accreditation with the nation's highest standard for philanthropic excellence. National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations® establish legal, ethical, effective practices for community foundations everywhere.

"Meeting the National Standards benchmarks is a rigorous, comprehensive process," said Randy Royster, Chair of the Community Foundations National Standards Board. "This accreditation is a significant accomplishment that indicates the Richland County Foundation demonstrates a commitment to transparency, quality, integrity and accountability as it carries out its mission."



Women's Fund Hosts Free Lectures



Women's Fund Chair Paula Cohen, right, facilitated a round table discussion about civility.

The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation hosted a series of free community lectures.

The first one was a round table discussion held in January entitled "What Happened to Civility." It was facilitated by Women's Fund Chair and Ohio State Mansfield Lecturer Paula Cohen.

Human sex trafficking of women and girls was the topic of a lecture held in February. Susi Maiyer of Mansfield, an Ambassador of Hope for Shared Hope International, was the speaker. She also showed a documentary called "Shadow on the Heartland" which was produced locally by Gunther Meisse and Humanitarian Solutions.

A Self Defense class was held in March at the Mansfield Richland County Public Library. Mansfield Police Department and SWAT Team Sergeant Joseph Soehnlen demonstrated how to resist an attacker, escape tactics, choke holds and general defensive awareness.

A lecture about Mindfulness and Meditation was held in April at Mind Body Align, 20 North Mulberry Street, Mansfield. MBA Founder Annamarie Fernyak lead the discussion.

The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since its inception the fund has awarded over \$307,000 in grants including 29 scholarships to non-traditional female undergraduate students attending area colleges.