

## **1945**

The Richland County Foundation was founded in 1945 by a group of seven community leaders. These original founders were inspired by local philanthropist Anna Scattergood, who had created a fund to benefit poverty-stricken elderly and terminally ill residents in Mansfield. It was with the guidance of D. Osborne Meese that the Foundation was established. The other founders were Paul Tappan, Norman Wolfe, Scott Coffin, George Stephens, John Finefrock and Robert Black.

The Richland County Foundation was modeled after the Cleveland Foundation and was created as an independent nonprofit organization that could accept and administer charitable gifts and bequests, regardless of size, for the benefit of the local community. The mission of the Richland County Foundation is to improve and enhance the quality of life in Richland County through strategic philanthropy and community leadership.

## **1947**

- Membership in the Foundation rose to 100. Trustees were investing some funds in government bonds.

## **1948**

- The first grant, \$45,000, was made to the Friendly House Association for a new building. Friendly House still serves a large segment of the community through its youth programs and camps, Hidden Hollow and Happy Hollow.

## **1950**

- The George W. Blymyer, Jr. Fund was established to provide individual assistance.

## **1952**

- Donations reached over \$600,000, \$150,000 of which was the Jessamine E. Lewis Fund, designated primarily to support United Community Service.
- The Foundation's first president, George W. Stephens, died. D. Osborne Meese became chairman of the board.

## **1953**

- The annual report recorded support to several key community organizations including the Friendly House, Boy Scouts of America, Salvation Army, YMCA and assistance to the Richland County Health Department to alleviate water and sanitation problems in the Hanna Road area.

## **1956**

- The Foundation made substantial contributions for a new YMCA-YWCA building and the Scattergood House, a residence for the indigent aged.

**1957**

- Mary Brinkerhoff Gilbert became the first woman trustee.
- The Board approved \$37.50 per month for office space in the Meese Agency, 405 Farmers Bank Building, \$30 per month to Betty Crawford for part-time secretarial services, and \$40 to D. Osborne Meese in the new post of executive director.

**1958**

- A Tappan scholarship fund was established at Case Institute of Technology (now Case Western Reserve University).

**1959**

- April 2, D. Osborne Meese, considered to be the primary force and inspiration for the Foundation, died.
- Twelve scholarship applications were received by the Scholarship Committee which was authorized to award up to \$8,000.
- Betty Crawford was given the title of assistant secretary and became a full-time employee.

**1961**

- The Foundation moved to an office on Marion Avenue with its own telephone.

**1962**

- The board awarded \$24,600 in scholarships from the Nell and Louis Olson Funds and the S. N. and Ada Ford Fund.
- A grant was awarded to start the Family Service Agency which today is a part of The Center for Individual and Family Services.

**1964**

- The Foundation participated in the start of the Ohio State University Mansfield branch by holding options on 530 acres of land for the new campus.
- The Olson and Ford funds granted \$40,000 in scholarships to 84 students.

**1965**

- A first donation was received from a former scholarship recipient.

**1966**

- In its first 20 years, the Foundation received more than \$2 million in gifts.

**1968**

- Foundation assets exceeded \$1.5 million.

**1971**

- Two former private foundations, the J. C. Gorman Fund and the Donald S. Black Philanthropic Fund, were established at the Foundation.
- A grant was made to The Store, a new organization that supplied clothes to needy school children.
- The Foundation accepted the deed from the Robert, Donald and Roger Black families for the (former) Sears Building on the Square and held title to the property until the Richland Community Service Center obtained its tax-exempt status to house nonprofit public agencies.

**1973**

- Sarah Barker Thomas, daughter of a freed slave and a graduate of Oberlin College, left her estate to the Foundation "To assist needy negro children to obtain an education, provided, however, that they are willing to work and to assist themselves; and to provide for the care, maintenance and assistance of needy, elderly negro men and women."

**1974**

- In the early morning hours of April 8, fire destroyed the Foundation office at 24 North Mulberry Street. Many records were either damaged or ruined. The Stander family donated new office space in the Park Building.

**1975**

- The Charles R. Underhill Trust, established at Cleveland Trust, provided income to the Foundation for discretionary purposes. At the time, this was the largest fund to benefit the Foundation.

**1976**

- Gifts for the year totaled \$1.25 million and grants awarded were \$214, 000.
- Assets were \$3.4 million.

**1977**

- The board awarded \$36,000 in scholarships. The largest gift to date, \$2 million, was received from the estate of Robert Sturges, a former Mansfield resident.

**1978**

- Assets of the Foundation reached \$5 million.

**1979**

- The Board of Trustees awarded Mansfield Memorial Homes a \$550,000 grant from the

Robert and Mary Mead Sturges Fund to help finance rehabilitation and capital improvements at the Geriatric Center.

#### **1981**

- A survey conducted by the Foundation revealed the number one concern in the community was employment followed by law enforcement and scholarships.
- Since the scholarship program began in 1959 over \$2.4 million was awarded.

#### **1984**

- A series of grants from 1984 through 1987 contributed to the initial modernization of the Renaissance Theatre.

#### **1985-86**

- Major grants were made to expand Mansfield General Hospital and a grant from the Rhea Stambaugh Fund to the Mansfield-Richland County Public Library to build the Plymouth branch.

#### **1988**

- Gifts to the Foundation were transferred to Richland Carrousel Park.

#### **1991**

- A staff and board retreat resulted in a new mission statement and a pro-active stance toward fund development and enhancing public awareness of the Foundation.
- The Development Committee set a goal to reach \$50 million in assets by 2000.
- The Fellows Program was introduced.
- The Foundation moved to more accessible offices in the Walnut Building.

#### **1992**

- Betty Jean Crawford, the Foundation's first full-time secretary, later executive director, retired after 37 years of service. Karen M. Benningfield was hired as President.
- The casework for individual assistance became more complex. A grant was made to Catholic Charities to manage individual assistance.

#### **1993**

- The Plymouth Area Historical Society Fund was created to provide funds for the Plymouth Historical Museum, later named the "Heritage Center of Plymouth." Eleanor Searle McCollum, a Plymouth native, provided a matching grant.

## **1994**

- Pamela H. Siegenthaler was named president of the Foundation.
- The first grants from the Paul R. Tappan Fund were awarded to Ashland University and Ohio State University for projects to make local industry more competitive internationally.
- "Summertime Kids" program provided grants to nine agencies which provided activities for about 780 children.
- The Ohio Brass Foundation was transferred into the Foundation and became the Kingwood Center Fund.

## **1995**

- The Richland County Foundation celebrated 50 years.
- Total assets grew to \$30.7 million while grants exceeded \$1.3 million.

## **1998**

- Assets of the Foundation reached \$50 million.
- The Community Health Access Project received a grant to conduct a need's assessment study, the creation of local partnerships for data collection and an impact analysis. The purpose of the program was to develop a long-term sustainable health care program to work with pregnant mothers and their children up to three years of age.
- The Richland Academy was awarded a multi-year grant for the Arts and Science Discovery Center in downtown Mansfield.

## **1999**

- The Mansfield Area Y received a grant from the unrestricted fund of Robert P. and Mary Mead Sturges to assist in the construction of a new facility.
- Nearly 225 Richland County full-time students received scholarships to attend the college of their choice.
- A Foundation survey found the highest areas of need were children, families, and youth as well as education.

## **2000**

- The Legacy Society was established by the Board of Trustees to recognize benefactors who made plans to leave a gift to the Foundation in their estate plans.
- The Board of Trustees made a series of grants to key after school programs throughout the county including to the new Mansfield Area Y for a childcare facility and teen room. Other grants were given to the Bellville Presbyterian Church for a full-time latchkey director, Big Brothers Big Sisters for a case manager and program support and to the Culliver Reading Center for a program instructor.
- Significant grants were awarded to provide environmental education at Gorman Nature

Center, Malabar Farm Foundation, Ohio Bird Sanctuary, Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center, Richland Rural Life Center, Shelby City Schools' Dowds Elementary, North Central Ohio Land Conservancy, and Mohican School in the Out-of-Doors Inc.

## **2001**

- Despite a difficult economy for financial investments, the Foundation awarded \$2.0 million in grants.
- Adopted and supported the National Standards for Community Foundations.
- The Board of Trustees committed \$400,000, over five years to the North Central State College Advanced Technology Training Center.

## **2002**

- The Foundation awarded 329 scholarships worth a total of \$321,000. These numbers set new records for both the total number awarded and the total value of those awards.
- MedCentral Health System received a \$450,000 grant for *A Healthy Investment Campaign*.

## **2004**

- The Foundation celebrated 60 years of grantmaking.
- Third Street Family Health Services received a \$100,000 grant for their capital campaign to increase facilities for health and dental services.

## **2005**

- The Foundation collaborated with a variety of funders to restore the historic North Lake Park.

## **2006**

- Shelby Senior Citizens Center Inc. received a grant for \$50,000 to complete the construction of the new Senior Center. The total cost was \$600,000.

## **2007**

- Renaissance Performing Arts received a \$250,000 grant for its capital campaign to renovate and expand the theatre, as part of a \$3.89 million construction project.

## **2008**

- Rehabilitation Service of North Central Ohio received a \$350,000 grant for the Rehab Renewal Campaign. The grant was made as part of a \$3.6 million campaign to restore and make vital repairs to the facility on Sterkel Blvd.

## **2009**

- Ohio Bird Sanctuary received \$33,000 toward a land acquisition. The grant will provide the

final funds needed to purchase 67 acres of Camp Avery Hand.

- Grants were made from unrestricted and donor-advised funds to the City of Mansfield to operate the public swimming pools for the summer.
- Third Street Health System received a grant to equip a mobile dental van to serve low income children in rural areas of Richland County.
- Mansfield Cancer Foundation received a grant to provide emergency financial assistance to clients suffering from cancer.

## **2010**

- The Foundation celebrated its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- North Central State College Foundation received a multi-year grant of up to \$500,000 for its Opening Doors Capital Campaign.
- Mid-Ohio Educational Services Center SPARC received a grant of \$100,000 to be paid over three years. SPARC “Succeed and Prosper through Education–Ashland, Richland and Crawford” was a 10-year education initiative focusing on increasing educational attainment from Pre-K through grade 12.

## **2011**

- Bradford S. Groves was named president of the Foundation.
- The Foundation awarded a grant of \$210,000 from unrestricted and donor-advised funds to the Ashland University College of Nursing capital campaign.

## **2012**

- Assets exceed \$100 million
- City of Mansfield/City of Mansfield Moving Forward Demolition /\$50,000
- Area Agency on Aging/Hawkins Corner Renovation/\$50,000
- Catholic Charities/Community Emergency Services Program/\$60,000
- The Salvation Army/Comprehensive Emergency Assistance/\$60,000

## **2013**

- Shelby Help Line Ministries received a grant for \$120,000 for its building project.
- Ohio State University Foundation was awarded a grant for its Learning Collaborative Classroom.

## **2014**

- Total grants awarded exceeded \$4.2 million, which included over \$411,000 in scholarships.
- Third Street Family Health Services opened its pediatrics office with the help of a grant.

## **2015**

- Richland Gives, an online day of giving to benefit Richland County nonprofit organizations, began.
- The first session of Osborne Meese Academy was held. The nonprofit capacity building program was named after the founder of the Foundation.
- The Foundation moved into a permanent home at 181 South Main Street. It was formerly known as the William Ritter house built in 1891.
- The Board approved a 5- year economic development plan that totaled \$1.1million.

## **2016**

- The Women's Fund of the Richland County Foundation celebrated its 20th anniversary and the fund's assets exceeded \$1 million.
- A grant was awarded to make extensive renovations to the Raemelton Therapeutic Center.

## **2017**

- Assets exceed \$150 million
- Blackfork Commons Amphitheatre in Shelby received a grant.
- Grants were made to local high schools to purchase Vex Robotics for STEM education
- A grant was made to help fund the Mansfield Y Splash Pad

## **2018**

- The Mansfield Rising Plan was written by 15 local citizens. It provided a road map of projects and opportunities for partnerships to continue the renaissance of Downtown Mansfield.
- The Foundation awarded \$1 million to Kingwood Center new visitor center.
- A grant was awarded to the Mansfield Art Center to build a new education wing.
- Richland Idea Audition was funded by the foundation. It was a pitch contest that provided prize money to local entrepreneurs.

## **2019**

- Imagination District received a \$1 million dollar grant. It was a collaboration between the Little Buckeye Museum and the Renaissance Theatre.
- The Richland Mental Health Board received a grant to help build an alcohol and drug detox center.
- The Women's Fund of the RCF made its largest grant in history to provide affordable, quality childcare.
- The Mansfield Rising project made progress on upgrading the city's main arteries. Mulberry Street was converted to two-way traffic.



## **2020**

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Richland County Foundation Board of Trustees redirected its Unrestricted/Community Fund to meet emerging needs. A Community Engagement Team made up of people working in the health and human services sectors made grant recommendations. Over \$778,000 was awarded in COVID relief grants in the community.
- The Foundation celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark the anniversary, the Board of Trustees awarded beautification grants to all the Richland County municipalities.
- The Women's Fund conducted a fundraising campaign entitled "Lifting Women Up." The fund exceeded \$2 million. The WF continued its initiative to improve childcare in Richland County.
- The Mansfield Rising team initiated a community branding campaign, façade improvement and public art projects began. The two-way conversion of Diamond Street by the City of Mansfield occurred.

## **2021**

- Richland Gives, an online giving event that began in 2015, topped \$500,000 this year. 86 nonprofit organizations raised money. Richland Gives is designed to encourage people to contribute to local nonprofits they care about through a single giving website. The Foundation hosts the day to build capacity, grow philanthropy and make the community stronger.
- Mansfield Rising Advisory Group continues to meet and monitor progress and emerging opportunities. Projects to date include finalization of a brand for downtown, a temporary linear park via an AARP grant, free public Wi-Fi funded by the city's license plate fee, a Public Art Commission created by the city and funding to recapitalize the façade improvement grant fund.
- Continued the COVID-19 Rapid Response grantmaking and community engagement team investing close to \$1 million through RCF and public dollars.
- The Women's Fund celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and recognized the founders.