

Newsletter

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Fall 2025



Honoring a Beloved Teacher Through a Lasting Legacy

A new scholarship fund, the **Claire Siegenthaler Proto Scholarship Fund**, was established at the Richland County Foundation to honor the memory of an extraordinary educator, mentor, and community member whose life left a lasting mark on Mansfield City Schools and beyond.

It is a heartfelt reminder that one life, lived with kindness and purpose, can uplift a community.



The scholarship was created in loving memory of Claire Siegenthaler Proto, by her parents Pam and Tom Siegenthaler. Claire was a dedicated teacher who spent over 20 years shaping young minds with compassion, patience, and perseverance. Known for her unwavering support of her students, she had a gift for encouraging them to see their potential and believe in themselves. Her colleagues remember her as a quiet force—always kind, determined, and willing to lend a helping hand.

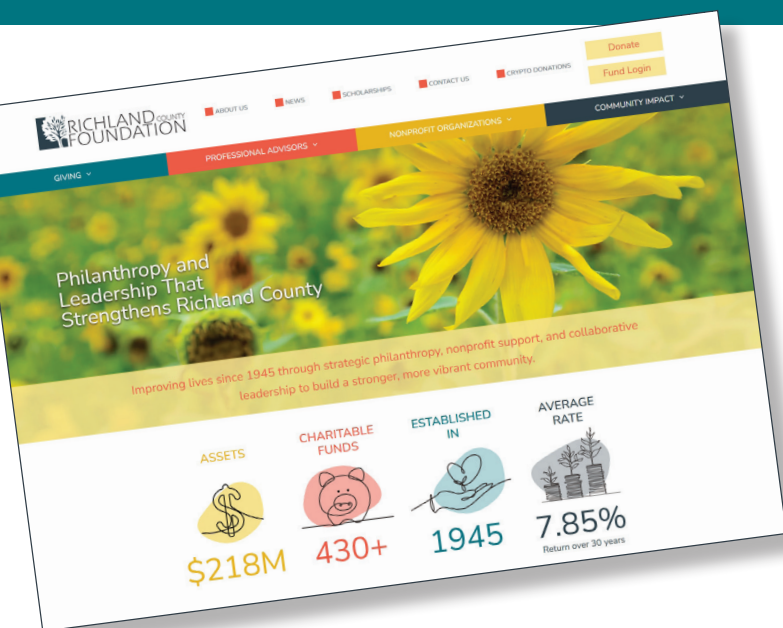
Claire passed away in the fall of 2024, surrounded by family and friends who loved her dearly. Her legacy now lives on through this scholarship, which will support graduates of Mansfield City Schools as they pursue college degrees or accredited career technical education certificates. It is a fitting tribute to a woman who believed deeply in the power of education.

Claire, along with her sister, Geneva Siegenthaler Cummins, grew up in a neighborhood filled with laughter, community, and many summer days swimming and playing.

From an early age, Claire stood out—not only for her accomplishments but for her warmth and generosity. She was Co-Valedictorian of the Mansfield Senior High School Class of 1990 and was an exceptional student and gifted musician. She played violin, viola, piano, and clarinet in both the school's orchestra and band, as well as the Mansfield Symphony Youth Orchestra. She was also a dedicated member of the high school swimming and tennis teams.

Her academic journey continued at Denison University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. She later completed her special education certification at Ashland University—where she also met the love of her life, Jefferson Proto. Together, they built a life raising two sons, Frederick and John, who were the light of her life.

Through this scholarship, Claire's legacy of learning, compassion, and perseverance will continue to inspire students for generations to come. It is a heartfelt reminder that one life, lived with kindness and purpose, can uplift a community.



A Fresh Look for a Stronger Community

We are excited to announce the launch of our new website. We have redesigned it with you in mind—our donors, professional advisors, nonprofit partners, and scholarship recipients. Our goal was to create a user-friendly experience that makes it easier to connect with the resources and information you need.

Smart Ways to Give

Whether you are looking to support a cause you care about or plan your legacy, our website provides clear guidance on the best ways to give. You will find information on a variety of giving options, including gifts of cash, stock, and even cryptocurrency. Did you know that donating appreciated cryptocurrency or stock directly to the Foundation may allow you to avoid capital gains taxes? Our site makes it simple to understand the benefits of each option and make a smart financial decision while making a meaningful impact.

Enhanced Tools for Fundholders

For our fundholders, the new fund advisor portal is a game changer. Integrated directly into the site, this secure portal gives you instant, real-time access to everything you need, including:

- Fund balances
- Account statements
- Grant history
- Important documents

This convenient tool lets you stay connected to your fund's activity from any device, anytime.

Resources for Nonprofits and Students

Nonprofits applying for grants and students seeking scholarships will find a streamlined experience. The new site makes it easy to find detailed information on how to apply, eligibility requirements, and important deadlines.

We invite you to explore the new website and see all the ways we are working to build a stronger, more vibrant community together.



The **Osborne Meese Academy** supported nonprofits this year with individual sessions with consultants. Haley Bedocs and Mary Frankenfield of the Mansfield Shakespeare Company met with Vinyl Marketing President Colleen Cook.

The Osborne Meese Academy (OMA) is a training program designed to enhance the capacity at local nonprofit organizations. The OMA was established in response to a community need to build capacity, serve as an informational resource, and act as a catalyst to encourage stronger collaboration among nonprofit organizations. The learning series is named after Osborne Meese, who is considered the founding father of the Richland County Foundation.



The Foundation awarded a grant to the **Mansfield Police Department** for Charlie, a therapy K9, to comfort students, teachers, and staff at Mansfield Senior High School. His handler is MPD School Resource Officer, Matthew Brewster.

RCF Senior Community Investment Officer Siera Marth-May plays with Charlie.



“The Richland County Foundation has been instrumental in our growth, providing resources, guidance, and support. They helped us establish an endowment fund, ensuring a sustainable future for The Visual Bucket List Foundation. They are an incredible resource for all non-profits in our area and make it easy for donors to support organizations that are improving our community. Their partnership strengthens our mission, allowing us to create lasting visual experiences for children losing their sight.”

Local teachers receive grants from Richland County Foundation



The Richland County Foundation Board of Trustees approved education grants totaling close to \$67,000. Funding was provided from the unrestricted grant budget as well as field of interest funds.

Education grants are selected by a committee made up of board members and people from the community for creative and innovative supplemental programs not covered by school funding. The grants are given to K-12 teachers in public or private Richland County schools to encourage them to develop new programs for their classrooms.

The following programs received funding:

Clear Fork

- Fact Fluency Fun
- Iditarod Race Project
- Field Trip

Crestview

- Metal Detecting Club
- Ukulele Module
- Racing Minds

Discovery School

- Literacy Launch
- Mathematicians
- Discovery Artists

Lexington

- Pathology of Bones
- VEX Robotics
- Motivating with Measurement
- Daily Reading

Madison

- Schoolwide Literacy
- Science and Social Studies
- Madison Market Place

Mansfield Christian

- Journaling

Mansfield City

- Cat Kid Comic Club
- Solids and Liquids
- Dirt Camp

- Learning A to Z

- Resource Room

- Mathematics

- Real World Skills

- Scholastic News

- IXL Math/Spanish Program

- Social Emotional Skills

- Scholastic News

- Future Scholars Fund

- Step Up to Higher Reading

- Pirate Camp

- Scholastic News

- Native American Cultural Regions

- STEM in The Arts

- Nature Journaling

MOESC

- Bridge Gaps

MOESC - Abraxas

Art- Self Expression

MOESC - F.I.R.S.T. School

- Fitness Program

Ontario

- Experience Culture w/ Food Project Based Learning

- Intervention

- STEAM Club

- Reading Intervention

- I'm Done. Now What?

Plymouth-Shiloh

- Literature Integration

- Calming Corner

- Learn with Play

Renaissance Performing Arts / Mansfield City

- Kennedy Center Partners in Education

Richland School of Academic Arts

- Learn the Alphabet
- Drama/Theatre Club
- Exploring Habitats
- Building Stories
- Wild About Learning
- Creative Projects
- Robot and Friends
- Fractions Space

St. Peter's

- Trade Books
- Sensory Room

Temple Christian

- Science Experimentation
- Dancing Through the Dewey (Decimal System)



A Lasting Commitment to Traffic Safety

The **Traffic Safety Fund** was created by the former **Richland Alternate Program (RAP)** Board of Directors to continue their mission of promoting traffic safety in Richland County. Although RAP is no longer an active nonprofit, its legacy lives on through this fund, which will provide grants to local schools and nonprofits for traffic safety education programs.

RAP was an alternative to jail for first-time driving under the influence offenders. Its core was an intensive program focused on driver intervention. The program was more than a series of lectures; it was a time for reflection and personal growth. It gave individuals an opportunity to evaluate their relationship with alcohol and other drugs, improve their decision-making skills, and develop the tools needed to live a more productive life.

The establishment of the Traffic Safety Fund ensures that the important work started by the RAP board continues to benefit the community for years to come.

The former members of the RAP Board of Directors included President Laura Pond as well as Tracee Anderson, Joe Cinadr, Mindy Dumbeck, John Kastelic, Wendy Gunder, Brian Gunder, Doug Laser, Matt Malone, Jason Murfield, Stewart Ryckman, and John Yatko.

Former Richland Alternate Program Board of Directors members John Kastelic, Laura Pond, and Wendy Gunder.

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Life Insurance Beneficiary

Life insurance provides a simple way for you to give a significant gift to charity, with tax benefits that you can enjoy during your lifetime. By naming the Foundation as beneficiary, you retain ownership of the policy and have access to the cash value as well as the right to change the beneficiary. This type of contribution allows you to give to your favorite charity after you die, even if you don't have liquid assets right now. While you retain ownership of the policy, there is no charitable deduction for the value of the policy when you designate the Foundation as the beneficiary or for subsequent insurance premiums. However, any proceeds payable to the Foundation at your death will not be subject to federal estate taxes.

Leave us a gift in your will or trust

When you make plans for a gift to Richland County Foundation through your will let us know so you can become a member of the Legacy Society. A gift to Richland County Foundation can easily be made through a simple designation in a will or trust to establish a fund or add to an existing fund. You may also establish a fund in your name that will go into effect after your lifetime.



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The Richland County Foundation is recognized for having organizational and financial practices that are in compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations.



RichlandCountyFoundation.org

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Holly Dawson, Kenny Ousley, Cassie Brumfield and Nyasha Oden at last year's Richland Gives Leader Board Watch Party.

Richland Gives helps local nonprofits fundraise operating revenue

Richland Gives, an online giving event, will start at 7 a.m. on November 17 and culminate at 7 p.m. on December 2.

The day is designed to encourage everyone to contribute to local nonprofits they care about through a single giving platform/website. The Richland County Foundation (RCF) hosts the giving event to build capacity, grow philanthropy and make the community stronger.

Richland Gives allows Richland County nonprofit organizations to raise funds and awareness as well as cultivate new donors and reinvigorate lapsed donors.

Thanks to the generosity of RCF donors, \$80,000 in incentives will be awarded as grants to participating organizations, beyond what they raise from online donations. New prizes this year include early giving golden tickets, a marketing plan prize, and a social media award.

This year donors will notice low fees at 2.9%. The RCF Board of Trustees voted to cover the 4% platform fees. Donors can use their donor advised funds or IRAs for fee-free giving during Richland Gives.

For more details or to donate go to richlandgives.org.