Newsletter

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Fall **2026**

RICHLAND COUNTY FOUNDATION



Brian G. Smith Fund Celebrates a Legacy of Family, Service, and Soap Box Derby Tradition

Brian's family established the **Brian G. Smith Fund** to honor his life by supporting something he enjoyed: the North Central Ohio Soap Box Derby. Through the fund, Brian's enthusiasm for racing, hands-on preparation, and youth participation will continue to encourage young racers and families in the community.

Brian first experienced the sport as a child racing in the Indianapolis Soap Box Derby. Years later, when his three children began racing, Brian became involved with the North Central Ohio Soap Box Derby and went on to serve as its director.

That connection remains today, as Brian's son, Andrew, continues to volunteer with the NCO Soap Box Derby and help carry forward a tradition that meant so much to their family.

Brian also built a life rooted in dedication and service. He spent most of his career at Atlas Bolt & Screw Company in Ashland, where he worked for 35 years as a production scheduler. In Mansfield, he was an active member of the First Congregational Church, serving as a steward and regularly lending a helping hand wherever it was needed.

Outside of work and church, Brian enjoyed woodworking and, most of all, time spent with family. Each May, he looked forward to attending the Indianapolis 500 with Andrew. He spent many hours in the workshop with his son, Evan, and helped with Evan's construction business. He also enjoyed helping his daughter, Emily, with projects at her house and volunteering for events at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary. Brian and his wife, Karen, shared many treasured trips to Amish Country over the years.

Family was at the center of Brian's life, and he showed that love through a steady presence, practical help, and time together. Becoming "Grandpa" in 2024 brought him special joy, and he adored every moment spent with his grandsons, Greyson and Teddy.

With the creation of the Brian G. Smith Fund, his family is honoring his kindness, generosity, and community spirit by supporting an organization he loved.



How You Can Help

You can ensure Brian's dedication to the North Central Ohio Soap Box Derby continues. The Foundation invites everyone to donate to this fund.

To donate

- Online: Visit the Richland County Foundation website, click donate, and use the search function for the Brian G. Smith Fund.
- By Mail: Checks can be made out to the Richland County Foundation with the fund name in the memo line.



Chris M.



Alivia A.



Sonya G.



Sol H.

The Fran and Warren Rupp Fund helps develop professionals

The Fran and Warren Rupp Fund of the Richland County Foundation has supported numerous programs and projects including internships at local nonprofit organizations. Since 2013, the fund has granted almost $1.7M for close to 400 interns.

Earlier this year Chris M. was an intern at **Catalyst Life Services.**

This fall, Chris began his sophomore year at The Ohio State University, where he is majoring in Biology on a pre-dentistry track. As a Patient Care Assistant, Chris worked closely with patients, helping them connect with essential dental services and other community resources. His passion for improving access to care and serving others is helping build a strong foundation for his future career in dentistry.

Alivia A. was an intern at **Third Street Family Health Services**, supporting the Marketing Department. Alivia created social media content, assisted with community outreach events, and supported business development. She represented TSFHS at many networking events.

Two technical interns, Sonja G. and Sol H. gained comprehensive, well-rounded experience centered on the production of Guys and Dolls at the **Renaissance Theatre**.

Both interns were involved in every phase of bringing the massive show to life. Sonja focused on set construction and painting, while Sol focused on stage and production management. From building sets and hanging lights during early rehearsals to managing logistics, both helped drive the production through the intensity of tech week and into the live performances as part of the backstage crew.

The Foundation's investment remains vital in providing Sonja and Sol with the rigorous, real-world experiences necessary to thrive behind the scenes in the performing arts in Mansfield.

History of Warren Rupp

Warren E. Rupp (1920–1987) was a prominent Mansfield engineer, industrialist, and philanthropist. The son of Herbert E. Rupp (co-founder of the Gorman-Rupp Company), he is best known as the co-founder of Warren Rupp, Inc. and for his impact on the local community.

Industrial Innovation

- In 1965, he left Gorman-Rupp and partnered with Charles E. Young, Jr. to found Warren Rupp, Inc., launching a highly successful business with just $8,000 in equity.
- He pioneered the first all-bolted, air-operated double-diaphragm (AODD) pump in the global market.
- He developed the Sandpiper pump brand, naming it after his strong personal interest in birds.

Beyond his engineering feats, Rupp was heavily involved in supporting the region, particularly science and recreation.

- The Warren Rupp Observatory: He financed the construction of a major observatory in 1985 for the Richland Astronomical Society, which houses "Big Blue"— one of the largest amateur telescopes in the state of Ohio.
- Ongoing Corporate Citizenship: His company has continued his legacy of local civic engagement, repeatedly earning Mansfield YMCA "Hero" status for philanthropic programs like "Serving Up Summer" and the Y on Wheels initiative.







Main Street Improvements

A key project outlined in the **Mansfield Rising Plan** is to improve the main corridors leading into and out of downtown is close to completion.

Mansfield's Main Street Corridor Improvement Project will be finished this fall. It is a major $20.3 million revitalization project transforming downtown by converting Main Street to two-way traffic, upgrading water and sewer lines, sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping from First to Sixth Streets. These upgrades will create a more pedestrian-friendly, accessible, and vibrant center with historic charm.

The project is funded by a mix of federal, state, and local sources including grants from the Foundation.

Legacy Society



Legacy Society member Judith Stroup is pictured with RCF President Allie Watson, RCF Senior Community Investment Officer Siera Marth-May, and Judith's husband, Gary.

The **Legacy Society** was established by the Board of Trustees in 2000 to recognize individuals during their lifetime who have made plans to leave a gift to this community in partnership with the Richland County Foundation. The gift may be through their estate plans, written in their will, including the Foundation as a future beneficiary of their IRA, insurance policy, charitable remainder trust, or other similar planned gift.

The Richland County Foundation acknowledges the generous people who have planned a legacy to their community through gifts that will eventually come to the Foundation to benefit others.

If you decide to make a legacy gift, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Maura Teynor at mteynor@rcfoundation.org or call 419-525-3020.

Donate Now to the Community Fund

Supporting the **Community Fund** at the Foundation is one of the most effective ways to make a lasting, local impact. When you contribute, your dollars are pooled with other donations to maximize your giving potential.

Driven by deep local knowledge, the Foundation is uniquely positioned to understand local needs, ensuring your generosity goes exactly where it is needed most. Best of all, gifts offer maximum tax advantages and are carefully invested to grow over time, building a permanent endowment that will support our community for generations to come.

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"Partnering with the Richland County Foundation has empowered our team to deepen the impact of our work. Through the Foundation, we're able to support projects rooted in self-awareness, creativity, community wellness, and purpose. It's philanthropy with intention, and it's helping to plant the seeds of lasting transformation in our community."

— Annamarie Fernyak, Founder, Mind Body Align



RICHLAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

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CFNS ACCREDITED FOUNDATION
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

RICHLAND GIVES

Richland Gives, an online giving event, will start at 7 a.m. on November 16 and culminate at 7 p.m. on December 1.

Thanks to the generosity of RCF donors, $81,000 in incentives will be awarded as grants to participating organizations, beyond what they raise from online donations. Some of the grant prizes are golden tickets, leaderboard winners, fab freshman, and a marketing plan prize.

This year donors will pay lower 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. If you want to use a managed fund, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Maura Teynor at mteynor@rcfoundation.org for instructions.

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

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