



CONTACT: Steve Borchers
Phone: 765/962.1638

Foundation Giving Surpasses \$10 Million

The Wayne County Foundation used the occasion of its annual Holiday Open House to announce it has awarded more than \$10 million in grants and scholarship awards since its founding in 1979. In addition to its “community” or discretionary grantmaking, this total includes distributions from donor advised funds, agency designated funds, and scholarships under the Foundation’s management.

“This is a significant highlight in the life of the Foundation and its position in the community,” said Alan Spears, chair of the Foundation’s Board. “Moreover, it speaks to the tremendous foresight and generosity of many, many people who understood the Foundation’s unique ability to make a difference over time.”

The first grants were awarded in 1980, and included distributions to the YMCA, the YWCA, Richmond Civic Theatre, the United Way, and Sunrise, Inc. “The largest award that year was \$2,500,” said Steve Borchers, Executive Director. “The others ranged between \$500 and \$1,000. Though small, I imagine they had a meaningful impact at the time.”

Most of the Foundation’s support over the years has been directed toward educational initiatives, including scholarships. “Scholarships are perhaps the easiest kind of fund for most people to relate to,” said Borchers. “They lend themselves to memorial gifts and people can see a direct benefit.” The bulk of the Foundation’s distributions, however, go to local agencies and charitable organizations.”

The Foundation’s Board of Directors approves all distributions. It also relies on grant and scholarship committees to review the dozens of applications it receives each year. These committees are comprised of volunteers from throughout the county in addition to some of the Foundation’s board members. Rob Quigg, grant committee chair, notes how important it is to have a diverse perspective. “The Foundation needs to reflect the interests of the entire community it serves, so the more people we can involve in our grantmaking, the more successful we will be. Making decisions about distributing dollars is more difficult than one might think, because we’re not ‘giving it away’ as much as we are ‘investing’ it in the community.”

Information about the Foundation’s community grantmaking cycles can be found on their Web site at www.waynecountyfoundation.org. Awards from these cycles are triggered by applications from local charities. Generally speaking, information on scholarships managed by the Foundation is available from area high schools or colleges. Persons interested in establishing a fund should contact the Foundation office at 962-1638.

“This is not so much a milestone as it is a stepping stone,” said Borchers. “And we look forward to many, many more in the years ahead.”