Building Care Through Responsive Grantmaking

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"I THINK THE BEST OF US COMES WHEN WE ARE WORKING TOGETHER COLLECTIVELY."
— MARTIN LUTHER KING III

Our community is fortunate to have so many strong, established nonprofit organizations. Our responsive grants support immediate needs so that these organizations are better able to heal, feed, guide, serve, and give hope—all essential for building community.

Greater Stark County Urban League

The Greater Stark County Urban League has been a bedrock organization serving this community for more than a century. As a pillar of support providing culturally relevant resources for workforce development, education, health, housing, and social justice, the Urban League helps African Americans and others who are underserved to realize their life goals.

The Urban League has faced significant challenges over the years. Since 2019, the previous director, Diane Robinson, worked hard to implement high-quality programming and stabilize finances. In late 2023, she retired and turned the reins over to a new leader, Thomas West. As West and the board work to further strengthen the operations of this essential organization, Foundation support will help during the transition and will ultimately assist in building a stronger future for the Urban League, underserved populations, and our entire community.

Community Health Workers Partner with Canton City Schools

When a significant number of children have not received necessary immunizations, the result can be predictable—and tragic. That's why, in late 2022, the Foundation convened representatives from the Canton City School District (CCSD), the North Canton Medical Foundation, and Access Health Stark County to discuss ways to increase immunization rates among the 12 percent of CCSD students who were unvaccinated. While CCSD had planned on-site clinics, family engagement remained a barrier.

The North Canton Medical Foundation supported the creation of a plan to use community health workers (CHWs) to build relationships with families. Because the CHWs are from the same neighborhoods as the families and have similar lived experiences, a sense of community, trust, and understanding can enable meaningful collaboration. The Sisters of Charity Foundation is supporting implementation of that plan. CHWs employed by Access Health are reaching out to educate families about immunization, related health concerns, and social determinants of health. They also are inviting families to on-site immunization clinics hosted by CCSD. While the immediate goal is to halve the number of unimmunized students, the longer-term goal is to share outcome information with other school districts and eventually seek state support. This effort to build healthier futures for CCSD students was made possible by building strong partnerships and relationships with other funders and partners.

Supporting Victims of Violence

There may be no more vulnerable neighbors than those who have been victims of assault. The forensic nursing programs at Cleveland Clinic Mercy and Aultman hospitals provide specialized services in moments of acute need.

The hope instilled by a skilled forensic nurse can mean a brand-new start for a victim of violence who's feeling alone, uncertain, and terrified. Forensic nurses are specially trained to provide immediate medical care and collect evidence while creating a compassionate, confidential, and safe environment. They're gentle and discreet, especially when a patient is accompanied by a family member, partner, or friend. They're also instrumental in legal proceedings, providing testimony that enables prosecution of perpetrators. They collaborate with law enforcement and community organizations, and they reassure patients that these organizations are trustworthy to encourage follow-through in seeking needed assistance.

Tragically, because federal funding for crime victims has dwindled in recent years, the primary source of funding for these indispensable programs has significantly decreased. Foundation funding will help the programs weather the storm as the hospitals work to secure additional sources of support.