

# STRATEGIC *Collaborations*

The Sisters of Charity Foundation focuses its Strategic Collaboration grantmaking in three key areas: **CAPACITY BUILDING, OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME EDUCATION,** and **AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** We partner with organizations to improve or streamline community services. The following stories highlight our efforts in 2024 in two of these areas.

# Capacity Building

Our capacity-building grants make nonprofit organizations more robust, nimble, and fiscally sound by enhancing their operations and sustainability. These grants lift up our hero organizations and can be transformational. We encourage all grantees to participate in round-table discussions once projects are complete to share lessons learned and best practices with fellow nonprofits. This year, we shine the spotlight on two grantees, AHEAD and Stark Community Support Network.

## AHEAD

AHEAD has worked in partnership with Massillon City Schools for 29 years to reduce academic and non-academic barriers to learning. It supports students and family members through after-school programs and family outreach. AHEAD coordinates community resources in collaboration with programs within the school buildings, such as a CARE Team, mental health services, and substance use and violence prevention programming. This hero organization is also a replication partner for the SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) kindergarten readiness program, serving families from Franklin Elementary in Massillon.

On the brink of its 30th year, Foundation funding is helping AHEAD to develop a new website and professional brochures. These marketing and communication tools will ensure that more Massillon families have access to the heroic resources provided by this grassroots organization. [MASSILLONAHEAD.COM](http://MASSILLONAHEAD.COM)

## Stark Community Support Network

The Stark Community Support Network (SCSN) is a community-based agency dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families in need or in crisis. SCSN provides culturally relevant assistance, programs, and services that empower underserved, low-income, and minority community members to improve the quality of life for them, their families, and the community. This year, the Foundation supported the heroic efforts of SCSN through a capacity-building grant that helped the organization build a fundraising program and improve its communication and outreach methods.

“The capacity-building grant provided by the Sisters of Charity has been transformative for Stark Community Support Network. This significant support has enabled us to partner with a professional fund development specialist, whose expertise is working to greatly enhance our technological capabilities and communication strategies,” said Tiffany Skillern, executive director of SCSN. “As a result, we will be able to showcase our impact more effectively to current and potential funders, demonstrating the tangible results of our services.” [STARKSUPPORTNETWORK.COM](http://STARKSUPPORTNETWORK.COM)

# Out-of-School-Time Education

The Foundation is dedicated to standing behind the amazing out-of-school-time (OST) providers in our communities. These heroes swoop in to save the day by filling a gap in academics and care. They provide programming before and after school, and often during the summer months, to both support classroom learning and combat what educators refer to as “summer slide” or learning loss that can occur between the end of one school year and the beginning of another. The YMCA of Central Stark County (YMCA) is one of these champions.

## YMCA of Central Stark County

This local YMCA affiliate has served the Stark County community since the 1860s in various capacities, focusing on programming that supports healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility. In the OST arena, the YMCA operates seven different summer programs, serving more than 800 children each day – talk about heroic! Through this effort, the YMCA serves all families, including low-income households and provides scholarship opportunities so that no family is turned away due to inability to pay.

Its Canton, Alliance, and Plain Township summer camp sites serve children with the most need, and the Foundation provided funds specific to these sites to support curriculum, supplies, and staffing costs to implement programming for summer 2024. Children in kindergarten through sixth grade participated in hands-on learning activities to strengthen reading and math skills, often mimicking play to keep students engaged.

Each child was able to select several age-appropriate books to keep and a backpack full of school supplies to start off the school year. Armed with these resources, these students must’ve felt like superheroes themselves – ready to conquer the world. [YMCASTARK.ORG](http://YMCASTARK.ORG)

