



HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL PROJECT GRANTS

In our fall cycle of **Special Project Grant** funding, the Community Foundation awarded \$320,000 to support the good work of local nonprofit organizations. Find all the details at cfsjc.org/special-project.

DON'T FORGET: SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES MARCH 1

Do you know any bright, hardworking students who could use some help paying for college? The Community Foundation has dozens of scholarship funds, including our popular **Laidig Community Service Scholarship** and the **Charles Martin "Touch a Life" Scholarship**. The deadline for these two scholarships—which include paid summer internships—is March 1. By applying for these scholarships, students may be eligible for additional scholarship awards.

MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER

Clare Ramel is joining our staff as a Program Associate. She'll be working with the Program team on a variety of tasks related to grants and scholarships. Clare is relocating to South Bend from Fort Wayne, and her work experience includes time with a real estate leasing company, public television station WFWA, and Fort Wayne's History Center.



Clare Ramel, Program Associate



Rose Meissner, president of the Community Foundation, speaks at the Library's ribbon-cutting event on Monday, Nov. 15, 2021.

St. Joe County Library Opens Renovated Main Branch

The Library has opened the doors to its renovated and expanded Main Branch, and the view inside is absolutely stunning.

When the St. Joe County Library broke ground for its construction project on March 21, 2020, no one realized that a global pandemic was just around the corner. Through it all, the work on Wayne and Michigan kept moving forward. Now, 19 months later, the project is complete, and we're celebrating a fabulous new resource that will benefit our community for generations to come.

It's a resource that pushes the boundaries of what people expect when they think of libraries. In addition to traditional assets such as books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials, the renovated Main Branch and the new Community Learning Center provide inspiring spaces and resources for meeting, learning, creating, and gathering—a state-of-the-art tech

studio, a 250-seat auditorium, expanded and enhanced areas for children and teens, an updated Local History collection, and a beautiful civic green space, to name only a few.

The Community Foundation has worked closely with the Library administration team on this project from its inception, raising more than \$10 million to support the renovation and new construction.

"This is the single largest fundraising commitment that we've ever made to a local capital campaign," says Rose Meissner, president of the Community Foundation. "That underscores how firmly we believe that libraries are essential to creating vibrant, thriving communities."

Within the next few weeks, the Community Foundation will be moving into our new office suite on the third floor of the Community Learning Center. Just like you, we can't wait to take advantage of everything this exceptional new facility has to offer!

What is the Leighton Award?

To recognize the work of our community's best nonprofits, the Leighton Foundation endowed the Leighton Award for Nonprofit Excellence in 1999. Every other year, the Community Foundation presents the award to a St. Joseph County nonprofit organization that demonstrates superior leadership, management, and programming. Take a look at the "All Stars" on our list of past Leighton Award winners: cfsjc.org/leightonwinners.

Leighton Special Recognition Awards

As part of the 2021 Leighton Award process, we've named two Special Recognition winners, each of which will receive an award of \$10,000. Special Recognition awards shine a spotlight on inspiring examples of service and performance.

The first 2021 Special Recognition Award goes to **Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County**, whose promising new STRIVE Program builds on its strong foundations as a provider of supplemental education to address the learning loss suffered by local students during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Foundation's second 2021 Special Recognition Award goes to **St. Margaret's House**, honoring the organization's 30-year commitment to caring for women in our community with staff trained in trauma-centered care and the principles of restorative justice.

Congratulations to both of these exceptional local nonprofits!



Community Foundation President Rose Meissner, La Casa de Amistad Executive Director Juan Constantino, and past Executive Director Sam Centellas

La Casa de Amistad Named 2021 Leighton Award Winner

Congratulations to La Casa de Amistad, winner of the Community Foundation's \$150,000 Leighton Award for Nonprofit Excellence.

As the region's only comprehensive bilingual center serving the Latino community, La Casa de Amistad provides more than 1,000 families with services that include programming for children from preschool through high school, a food pantry, social services and referrals, English language classes, legal support, technology training, advocacy, and more.

La Casa's talented, committed leadership team and staff have made the organization a highly trusted resource within the Latino community and beyond. Local, regional, and national organizations look to La Casa for guidance in working with the Latino community, and programs La Casa has developed, including its South Bend ID program and its onsite COVID-19 vaccination program, serve as models for others.

"The Leighton Award couldn't be more timely for us," says Juan Constantino, La Casa's executive director. "We just moved into a new center, five times the size of our old building." In the new, 40,000 sq. ft. space on the southern edge of South Bend, La Casa has ample room to expand its services and programming.

As the 2021 Leighton Award winner, La Casa receives a \$150,000 endowment challenge grant and must raise \$150,000 in matching funds. The resulting \$300,000 will be added to La Casa's endowed fund with the Community Foundation, providing additional annual resources to support the organization's mission.

"The Leighton Award cements our community's commitment to what La Casa de Amistad does and stands for," says Constantino. "¡Gracias!"

You can help La Casa make its Leighton Award match! Each dollar you give draws a matching dollar from us. Visit cfsjc.org/give.

Smart Year-End Giving Strategies

Community Foundation President Rose Meissner offers suggestions for smart, effective year-end giving.

The end of the year is a perfect time to count our blessings and give back to charities we care about. Here are a few tips to consider as you plan your philanthropic contributions for 2021.

Bunch your annual giving. Higher standard deductions (\$12,550 for single filers; \$25,100 for joint) make it harder for many taxpayers to itemize. Creating a Community Foundation donor-advised pass-through fund allows you to double up your giving this year but grant the gifts out to charities over two or more years. (*Minimum donation for new donor-advised pass-through or endowed fund is \$10,000*).

Provisions to promote charitable giving extended to 2021.

Single taxpayers who do not itemize deductions can deduct up to \$300 for contributions to qualifying charities (\$600 for couples). Taxpayers who do itemize may deduct cash gifts up to 100% of their 2021 adjusted gross income.

Gift appreciated stock. The stock market has had another great year. Consider gifting appreciated stock you've owned more than one year to avoid capital gains taxes. You can use the cash you would have given to charity to buy the stock back at a higher cost basis.

If you're over 70½, consider making your gifts directly from your IRA to the Community Foundation or other charities.

Gift directly from IRAs to charity.

If you're over 70½, consider making your gifts directly from your IRA to the Community Foundation or other charities. This counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) and you won't pay income tax on the amount transferred. (*Donor-advised funds are excluded*).

Stretch the value of your gift with matching opportunities.

Gifts to the La Casa de Amistad Fund and the 21st Century Success Fellowship Fund will be matched (*see sidebar*).

For more information, give me a call at (574) 232-0041. Enjoy the holiday season!



CURRENT MATCHING OPPORTUNITIES

LEIGHTON AWARD WINNER

La Casa de Amistad is the winner of the 2021 Leighton Award for Nonprofit Excellence (*see story p. 2*). All gifts to La Casa's endowed fund at the Community Foundation will be matched up to \$150,000.

21ST CENTURY SUCCESS FELLOWSHIP FUND

This new \$5,000 fellowship, awarded to low-income 21st Century Scholars attending college in our region, provides professional development and leadership opportunities (*see Spotlight below*). Fellows serve as role models, inspiring their younger peers to earn college degrees. All gifts will be matched dollar for dollar, thanks to the generosity of the Leep Family Foundation and Lilly Endowment Inc.

You can make a credit card gift at cfsjc.org/give or give by check, noting the opportunity you wish to support in the memo line. Mail to P.O. Box 837, South Bend, IN, 46624.

Spotlight: 21st Century Success Fellow Reagan Ayala

Reagan Ayala, a 21st Century Scholar enrolled at Indiana University South Bend and an Adams graduate, is one of 12 students selected as part of our first cohort of 21st Century Success Fellows.

This new fellowship program is a centerpiece of our larger **21st Century Scholar Success Initiative**, a large-scale, coordinated effort to dramatically increase the number of St. Joseph County students who complete post-secondary degrees through the 21st

Century Scholars program and then secure local, well-paying jobs.

As a Fellow, Reagan enjoys sharing her experiences in the 21st Century Scholars program with younger students.

"I love trying to encourage other students to enroll," she says. "If you qualify, go for it!"

Learn more about the fellowship and watch a short video about Reagan at cfsjc.org/fellowship.





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Continuing Support for Local Arts

It's a challenging time for local arts organizations. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on all aspects of their operations—fundraising, ticket sales, education programs, and more.

Through our ArtsEverywhere competitive grants process, we've continued to provide support to these organizations as they adjust to the "new normal." In our spring grants cycle, we awarded \$150,000 to support annual programming, like the South Bend Symphony's popular "Home for the Holidays" concert at the Morris Performing Arts Center on Dec. 18 and 19.

In difficult times, we all need the inspiration and joy that the arts provide. We're glad to be able to support them, too.



Foundation staff Becky Malewitz and Katelyn Firestein at the annual Cops & Goblins Halloween event

Imagination Library Grows

Numbers continue to climb for the Imagination Library here in St. Joseph County, with nearly 10,000 children enrolled in this wonderful early literacy program.

That's more than half of the preschoolers in our county—but ideally, we'd like *all* eligible children to benefit from this remarkable program. Working with our community partners, we've been doing additional outreach to help register children so that they, too, can receive a free, new book by mail

every month until they turn five.

Since we began this program in May 2018, we've mailed more than 350,000 books to local children. With your help, we can inspire a love of learning from the very beginning for these precious little ones—and that's a gift that will last a lifetime.

Will you help us sponsor the Imagination Library? Each gift of \$360 sponsors a child for a full year! Visit cfsjc.org/dpil.