



HIGHLIGHTS

FOUNDATION AWARDS \$375,000 IN GRANTS THIS CYCLE

The Community Foundation's Board recently approved our spring cycle of **ArtsEverywhere** and **Senior Living** grants, awarding \$375,000 to more than 20 wonderful local nonprofit organizations. You can read about the details of all these grants on our website: www.cfsjc.org/news.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Yes, it really *has* been 30 years since the **Community Foundation of St. Joseph County** was established. In early June, we gathered a group of our closest supporters and friends in the downtown library's new Community Learning Center to celebrate and reflect on our remarkable journey. We can't wait to see what the next 30 years bring!

ROSE MEISSNER INCLUDED IN INDIANA 250 LIST

Community Foundation President **Rose Meissner** has been included in the "Indiana 250," a list of influential state leaders compiled by IBJ Media, the firm that publishes *Indianapolis Business Journal*, *Indiana Lawyer*, and *Inside INdiana Business*. The honorees were chosen from hundreds of nominations made by business and community leaders across the state.



Foundation President Rose Meissner



21st Century Success Fellows, clockwise from back: Valeria Alvarez, Chloe Clayborn, Reagan Ayala, Julian Garcilazo, and Cameron Lidgard

Numbers Trending Upward for 21st Century Scholars

Our 21st Century Scholar Success Initiative is helping to increase percentages of enrollments and completions.

We knew it was going to take a lot of work to move the needle on the 21st Century Scholar program. In St. Joseph County, fewer than one out of three income-eligible eighth-grade students enroll in this state-funded scholarship program, and fewer than two out of three enrolled students complete the steps necessary to earn the scholarship. And data recently released by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education shows that only 53% of high school seniors in the state chose to pursue college or other postsecondary education in 2020—which makes this initiative more critical than ever.

But our news is good: With help from our coalition of community partners and our new Fellowship program, we're making measurable progress.

"The commitment from our partners is

exciting to see," says Malissa Ayala, senior program director, education, at the Community Foundation. "It's changing lives for area students."

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Close to ten percent more eligible students from within the South Bend Community School Corporation enrolled in the 21st Century Scholar program this year than during the 2020-21 school year. We've also seen an increase in the percentage of 21st Century Scholars who complete the 12 steps they need to achieve the scholarship, with particularly impressive gains at Washington and Mishawaka high schools.

One element of the momentum has come from a new fellowship program developed this year by the Community Foundation: the 21st Century Success Fellowship. Each Fellow receives a \$5,000

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Following Mrs. Pollak's lead, choral students raise their arms along with their voices in this '80s-era photo.

Donor Spotlight: Helen S. Pollak

A professional pianist and educator, Helen S. Pollak moved to South Bend in 1963 when her husband Barth Pollak accepted a faculty position in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Notre Dame. Upon arrival in South Bend, with her B.A. in music from the New Jersey College for Women (now Rutgers University) and her M.A. in education from the University of Chicago, Helen eagerly joined the music teaching community.

Hired by the South Bend Community School Corporation, Helen taught in local elementary schools including Kennedy, Muessel, and Madison.

Determined to make sure that every child had the best possible experience with live music, Helen pushed the piano herself from room to room when necessary. In her nearly 30 years teaching in South Bend, she brought music to thousands of children and was named "Teacher of the Year" in 1988.

Her daughter Eleanor remembers her mother's skill balancing work while being a devoted wife and mother. "My mom would teach music all day in elementary school and then give private lessons from 4 until 6 p.m.," before feeding the family dinner. "And she never even complained!"

In addition, Helen participated as an adjunct faculty member at Saint Mary's College and taught music at Temple Beth-El's Sunday school.

Continuing to perform music herself professionally, Helen played keyboard with the South Bend Symphony. Eleanor says that she still smiles, remembering her mom's chiming celeste notes at the Morris Civic Auditorium when she hears "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.

When she retired, Helen delved into a new artistic challenge by creating pottery to share with family and friends. Eleanor remembers noticing her mother's incredibly heavy suitcase during a visit: "She had packed only a few basic items, really—a toothbrush, a nightgown. The weight was from all of the pottery she'd managed to cram inside to give as gifts."

The Helen S. Pollak Fund for Music Education grew from a desire to honor Helen. This designated endowed fund will provide The Music Village with annual support for its programming, complementing Helen's commitment to music and education.

Like Helen, you can create support for causes you care about through an endowed fund: Visit www.cfsjc.org/give.

Community Foundation Special Project Grant Improves Temple Park



New additions at Mishawaka's Temple Park

A \$45,000 grant is making this Mishawaka park a more attractive, welcoming place to play.

Located north of Jefferson Boulevard between Chestnut and Division streets, Mishawaka's Temple Park is getting some major upgrades. Soon, the park will have two half-court basketball courts, a new pavilion

with picnic tables, and ADA-compliant playground equipment with special amenities for visually impaired children. The Community Foundation's \$45,000 Special Project grant will also support the creation of a new bathroom and walking paths.

Mishawaka Parks plans a grand re-opening at Temple Park in late July, showcasing a once-outdated park that has become a neighborhood gem.



Last year, REAL Services's Meals on Wheels program delivered some 350,000 meals.

Grant Supports Volunteer Recruitment for REAL Services

Campaign helps REAL Services rebound from COVID's impact on its volunteer base.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for local nonprofits. REAL Services, an organization that serves vulnerable seniors in our community, has had to contend with a shrinking volunteer base. The majority of long-term REAL Services volunteers are retirees, and concerns about health risks and rising gas costs caused many to leave the organization.

Programs such as Meals on Wheels, which relies on volunteers to deliver food to homebound seniors, have struggled to continue services.

"Meals on Wheels volunteers are so important," says Madelyn Martinec, development director with REAL Services. "For many of our homebound clients, the only person they see all week is their Meals on Wheels volunteer. They really need

that social connection."

With help from a \$25,000 Community Foundation Special Project grant, REAL Services launched a volunteer recruitment effort featuring billboards that read "Give Something REAL," paired with photos of seniors.

Billboards are an apt fit for REAL Services: Since homebound seniors are a largely unseen population, putting their faces on billboards increases awareness of the challenges they face. These billboards "got the conversation started" about REAL Services, Martinec says. And it's made an impact: So far, REAL Services is about halfway to its goal of 160 new volunteers. Interested in being a REAL Services volunteer? Contact Volunteer Services Manager Sandy Chambers at (574) 284-7138 or sandra3@realservices.org.

To learn more about our competitive grants programs and award process, visit www.cfsjc.org/grants.

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stipend in addition to their state-funded tuition award. They participate in opportunities for personal leadership development, career preparation, and degree completion, and also serve as role models to middle school and high school students, helping them enroll in 21st Century Scholars and successfully navigate the program.

These "near-peer" interactions make a uniquely powerful impact on younger students—and Fellows, too.

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Reagan Ayala, a Fellow who's a sophomore at IU South Bend, met a high school student at an event earlier this year. The young woman told Reagan that she didn't think she'd go to college, despite being enrolled in the 21st Century Scholar program—she simply wasn't interested. But after listening to a Fellows panel discussion and talking with Reagan about her experiences, she decided to tour the IU South Bend campus. Now, Reagan says, that young woman plans to apply to IU South Bend for the fall semester.

"That knowledge almost brought me to tears," Reagan says. "I think often how about our stories encouraged someone to take a better foot forward for themselves."

As we look ahead to the start of another school year, we're maintaining our focus on this initiative because we know that it's creating better futures for St. Joseph County students.

Learn more about the 21st Century Scholar Success Initiative and Fellowship at www.cfsjc.org/21stcentury.



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Community Foundation Performing Arts Series

All events in this FREE Saturday evening series begin at 7 p.m. at the Chris Wilson Pavilion in South Bend's Potawatomi Park.

- Jul. 30 Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival's Touring Company** performs *All's Well That Ends Well*
- Aug. 6 Southold Dance Theater** performs an evening of ballet and modern dance
- Aug. 13 Lifting Our Voices: A Celebration of African American Music and Dance**, with choirs, a quintet, and UZIMA dance
- Aug. 20 The South Bend Symphony Orchestra** performs music of love and passion
- Aug. 27 Art 4** presents summer-inspired musical theater favorites

For full details, visit www.cfsjc.org/series.



From left: Tristan Badia, Lababah Hassan, Moriah Love, and Peyton Shrader

Foundation Names Laidig Community Service Scholarship Winners

At the Community Foundation, we help talented local students achieve their educational dreams. Our robust scholarship program includes more than 65 scholarship funds, providing close to \$1,000,000 in support to some 300 students each year. One of our most popular scholarship programs is the Jon and Sonja Laidig Community Service Scholarship.

This scholarship supports students on two levels. First, it provides each recipient with \$5,000 of annual tuition support. In addition, scholars have an opportunity to give back to their community through a \$3,750 paid summer internship, served with some of

our best local nonprofits. This year's Laidig Scholars are Tristan Badia, Penn High School, who will attend Ivy Tech Community College; Lababah Hassan, Penn High School, who will attend Indiana University Bloomington; Moriah Love, Riley High School, who will attend Alabama A&M University; and Peyton Shrader, Clay High School, who will attend the University of Notre Dame.

You can help support local students through the Foundation's scholarship funds. Learn more at www.cfsjc.org/scholarships.