

Community Connection

Looking Forward,
Giving Back

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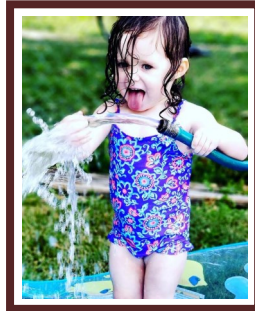
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CASA Establishes Endowment Fund



A new endowment fund at the Scott County Community Foundation will provide permanent operating support for a local nonprofit, announced Executive Director Jaime Toppe.

Court Appointed Special Advocates, better known as CASA, is a nonprofit organization that recruits, screens, and trains volunteer child advocates to work in

the court system in collaboration with other key agencies, legal counsel, and community resources to represent the best interest of children in juvenile court proceedings. CASA volunteers make recommendations regarding appropriate protective and rehabilitative services necessary to ensure a safe and permanent home for every child adjudicated as a child in need of services within the county.

CASA was first started in 1977 by Seattle Judge David W. Soukup, when he realized that abused and neglected children appearing in his court were often unintentionally re-victimized by overburdened courts and public social services. While lawyers typically represented the interests of the parent and the state, rarely did anyone speak exclusively for the child, who ultimately had the most at stake. Judge Soukup recruited and trained community volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem for those children entering the child welfare system to help fill this gap and better meet the needs of children. Volunteers came to be known as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers. CASA programs soon began to spring up nationwide.

Scott County Judge Roger Duvall was instrumental in getting the program started locally in 2007, and it was Judge Duvall who swore in the first class of five CASA volunteers on December 6, 2007. CASA is led by Executive Director Kelly Shelhamer, who oversees six full and part-time staff, as well as 25 volunteers.

According to the Indiana Youth Institute's Kids Count data, Scott County is number one in the state for the child abuse and neglect rate. While this is a staggering statistic, it confirms the need for CASA and its volunteers. In the last three years, CASA has made great strides to increase the served number of abused and/or neglected children who were waiting for a CASA to be their voice in court, shared Shelhamer. At their peak, they had 210 children waiting for a CASA. Because there is a limit on the number of children that a volunteer or staff can serve, there is always a need

for additional volunteers. With the help of federal, state, and local grants as well as donations, they have been able to decrease their wait list to 48 children. So far, in 2019 they have served 220 children.

"Unfortunately, grants fluctuate and we cannot always depend on the same amounts coming in from them each year," said Shelhamer. "This is the main reason we started our endowment fund. We chose the Scott County Community Foundation to establish the CASA Endowment Fund because of their years of support they have provided to the program. We hope to grow our endowment over the years to be able to help support our program to serve the children of Scott County."

It only takes one person to change a child's life forever. Shelhamer shared a story of the reunification of a mother and her child through the work and service of a diligent CASA volunteer, Julie Thomas. Julie's former CASA child Lakenzie had a difficult beginning upon entering the world. When she was born she was drug exposed and after birth remained in the hospital for nearly two weeks due to suffering withdrawal symptoms. Upon release she was placed in a foster home where she remained for the next 11 months of her young life. Julie made contact with Lakenzie at the foster home, ensuring that medical, physical, and emotional needs were being met. Brittney, Lakenzie's mom, was homeless, addicted and felt hopeless. She credits Scott County Health Department for the initiation of the needle exchange and increased community services in the county. Julie was determined to make sure that Lakenzie was given the opportunity to be reunited with her mother if Brittney was able to become sober and complete her goals. With CASA support and hard work from Brittney, that goal of sobriety was successfully met 11 months later. Lakenzie is now reunited with her mother. Brittney states that she is extremely thankful for her CASA worker, Julie and that she is now the mom that she has always wanted to be.

"The Community Foundation has believed in the importance of CASA since their very first year of requesting funding from us in 2008," said Toppe. "We are honored that CASA's Board of Directors has placed their trust in the Community Foundation, allowing them an additional stream of operating revenue to support their mission. Even better, they are able to take advantage of a matching grant opportunity from Lilly Endowment to grow their fund even faster. CASA is doing great things for our most vulnerable children, and I encourage the community to continue their support through volunteering and donating!"

Over \$135K Awarded in Grants

We are excited to announce the awarding of over \$135,000 in grants to several local agencies during our 2019 Community Grants Program! The agencies were honored at a grants breakfast.

The organizations, the purpose of the request and amount awarded are:

- Align Southern Indiana: operations for the 5-county initiative which works to align resources, address needs and produce sustainable solutions, \$7,500;
- Austin High School: upgrade their telecommunications studio, \$2,598.95;
- Bree's Blessings: purchase iPads for operations as well as therapeutic music for kids with cancer, \$1,720;
- CASA of Scott County: recruiter/trainer of volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children, \$22,887.56;
- Child and Family Advocates: provide support groups to children of divorced parents, \$5,000;
- Community Action of Southern Indiana: Life Literacy Academy, \$2,924;
- Englishton Park: summer camp remediation program, \$2,000;
- Gleaners Food Bank: provide BackSacks of food for children every weekend during the school year, \$5,000;
- LifeSmart Youth: provide human growth and development curriculum to Austin elementary and middle school students, \$5,000;
- LifeSpan Resources: provide matching funds for a vehicle to transport elderly and disabled persons, \$5,000;
- New Creation Ministries: purchase laptop for operations and to use with recovery classes, \$1,713.17;
- Preservation Alliance, Inc.: create informational brochure on historical and Museum events for the Scott County Bicentennial, \$500;
- Scott County Fair Association: install new poles at fence around fairgrounds track, \$5,000;
- Scott County Partnership: AmeriCorps match for Clearinghouse, \$5,000;
- Scott County Partnership: Conquer the CHAOS poverty initiative, \$5,000;
- Scott County Sheriff's Department: purchase in-car radios, \$6,916.80;
- United Way of Scott County: provide free books for children from birth through age five through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, \$5,000.



The Donald R. Collins Sr. Family Fund provided funding for the grants to Bree's Blessings, Preservation Alliance Inc., and also assisted with funding to LifeSpan Resources. The L.L. and Juanita Lowry Unrestricted Fund provided funding for the grant to New Creation Ministries. Through the Collins and Lowry families' memberships in the Forever Tree Society, earnings from their family funds are able to support specific charitable projects in the community.

The grants were also made possible from the Borden Family Community Granting Fund, Laurence and Myrtle Bridge Memorial Fund, Terry Fewell Memorial Unrestricted Fund, Addie Mae Graham Memorial Fund, Lauren Graham Memorial Fund, Dale and Rosemarie Hobbs Fund, Hazel and Lowell Lowry Sr. Memorial Fund, John and Janice Martin Unrestricted Fund, Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fund, Dr. William and Diann Scott Unrestricted Fund, Dan and Mary Lou Slattery Fund, Wesbanco Fund, Scott County Immediate Response Fund, Scott County Memorial Fund and Community Enrichment Fund.

The Board of Directors also awarded \$46,945 from the Scott County CAPE Educational Endowment Fund to the Scott County Partnership to continue educational initiatives. These include LifeSkills and guidance activities at Austin and Scottsburg middle schools, coordinate youth summer feeding program in Austin, coordinate other educational programs including Reality Stores, Scott County Attendance Review Board, Youth/education Committee, Career Clusters, and more.

"Being involved with my community through the Scott County Community Foundation is such a rewarding experience," shared Grants Committee Chairperson Nancy Barr. "Many of the needs within the community are being met by so many wonderfully caring people, who fund the Community Grants Program."

"If you are passionate about your community, have a particular area of interest, or want to memorialize a loved one, I encourage you to contact the Foundation and become a donor. There is no better way to leave that legacy, and there is no better time to give than now with the matching grant from Lilly Endowment," said Barr.

Lilly Endowment Inc. values the importance of community foundations having the flexibility to meet changing needs, and is offering \$2 for every \$1 donated to any unrestricted fund. This matching grant opportunity is available until Dec. 31, 2020, or until the matching funds have been expended.

Scholarship Recipients Honored

We are happy to announce our 2019 scholarship recipients! More information on the individual scholarship funds and the recipients can be found on our website. Over \$221,000 in educational assistance was awarded this year, including \$150,680 to our 2019 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recipient, Madelyn Shelton of Scottsburg High School.

- Alice and Gerald Miner Memorial Scholarship, \$4,000: Olivia Reul of Scottsburg High School;
- Charles G. and Lois D. Nolan Memorial Scholarship, \$500; Olivia Miner of Austin High School;
- Christie Crafton Memorial Scholarship, \$500; Isabelle Duckwall of Scottsburg High School;
- Dale McNeely Memorial Scholarship: Eliza Mount, \$11,000, Emma Christoff, \$10,000, and Macy Colson, \$9,000—all of Scottsburg High School;
- Epply-Shields Memorial Scholarship: Abigail Banet and Isabelle Duckwall, \$2,250 each—both of Scottsburg High School;
- Lilly Scholar Endowment Fund, \$500 each: Erika Lee of Austin High School and Eliza Mount of Scottsburg High School;
- Mary Elizabeth & Virgil S. Miller Memorial Scholarship, \$2,300 each: Erika Lee of Austin High School and Lindsey Pfaffenbach of Scottsburg High School;
- Phyllis Calvin Educational Endowment Fund, \$1,000: Joseph Smith of Austin High School;
- Pilot Club Lifeline/Mary Allen and Jan Thompson Healthcare Scholarship Fund (for adult students), \$1,500: Shelly Campbell of Austin;
- Robert G. Comer Memorial Scholarship, \$500: Erika Lee of Austin High School;
- Scott Memorial Hospital Guild Brunton-Mumford Memorial Scholarship, up to \$5,000 each: Amber Marshall of Austin High School and Abigail Johanningsmeier of Scottsburg High School;
- Scott Memorial Hospital Indiana University Southeast Scholarship, \$3,500 each: Ashton Bowles of Lexington and Arianna Caudill of Scottsburg;
- Shelley Comer Akers Memorial Scholarship, \$500: Lindsey Pfaffenbach of Scottsburg High School;
- Timothy Michael Wolf Memorial Scholarship, \$5,000: Patrick Lincoln of Scottsburg High School;
- Walter S. and Clarice (White) Bridgewater Memorial Scholarship, \$500: Isabella Myszak of Scottsburg High School.





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Looking Forward, Giving Back.

YGC Awards Grants, Honors Helping Hand Recipient

The Scott County Youth Grantmaking Council (“YGC”), a program of the Scott County Community Foundation, awarded \$7,339 in grants to youth-related projects and announced the 6th annual Helping Hand Award recipient at an annual dinner held June 5 at Mid-America Science Park.

Austin Middle School received \$800 for “Life Skills in the Community.” Community Action of Southern Indiana received \$1,000 for “Life Literacy Academy.” EMPOWER received \$850 for “Prescription Drug Lockboxes.” Scott County 4-H received \$1,000 for “4-H Opportunity Scholarships.” Scottsburg High School received three grants. Teacher Susan Jerrell was awarded \$614 for “A Boost for the Booster”; teacher Jennifer Morris was awarded \$575 for “Fellowship of Christian Athletes Relaunch”; and Morris also received \$1,000 for the “PBIS/Hero Project.” Scottsburg Middle School received \$1,000 for the “Warrior Project.” Warrior Nation Touchdown Club was awarded \$500 for “Reconditioning and painting of helmets.”

“There was a lot of consideration and thinking into all applying organizations,” said grants committee co-chairperson Elle Fleenor. “It brought out the opinions of all YGC members, which is always extremely important. This process not only is helping organizations to better Scott County, but it also brought the YGC voting council together through a careful discussion and decision. I can say that in the end, we are all very proud of the organizations we decided to grant, and we can’t wait to see where they go.”

“All members of the YGC are very proud of where our money has gone, and



we can’t wait to see how those organizations give back to the community,” said grants committee co-chairperson Hannah Brown. “We are so thankful to help our community in this way, and give back in any way that may be possible. We are looking forward to seeing how each organization will take their ideas, and transform Scott County into the amazing place we call home.”

Vienna-Finley Elementary School outgoing fifth grader Marley Fleenor received the 2019 Scott County Youth Grantmaking Council (“YGC”) Helping Hand Award. She is shown above with YGC members Ryan Howser and Gavin Borden. Marley is active in many activities, but what sets her apart from others is what she started to benefit the Clearinghouse last fall. Through “Marley’s Mendings,” she made over 38 Christmas pillows and donated a portion of the profits to the Clearinghouse, which was then used to purchase 200 bars of soap for individuals in the community. Marley received a certificate and \$175 for her efforts.