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Scott County Community Foundation Community Connection

Blake Lortie Named 2026 Lilly Scholar



We're excited to announce our 2026 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recipient, Blake Lortie! Lilly Endowment Community Scholars are known for their community involvement, academic achievement, character and leadership. He joins 44 other Lilly Scholar recipients from Scott

County since 1998.

Each Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship provides for full tuition, required fees, and a special allocation of up to \$900 per year for required books and required equipment for four years of undergraduate study on a full-time basis leading to a baccalaureate degree at any eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit college or university.

Blake, a senior at Austin High School, is the son of Brian and Ashley Lortie of Austin. He played soccer, serves on Academic Bowl teams, is a member of Kindness Krew, the Art Club, participates in Jobs for America's Graduates, is active in his church's youth group. He also owns a resale business. He is undecided on where he plans to attend college, but will major in communications and marketing.

"Opening the door to the surprise of the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship revealed countless new possibilities for me," said Blake. "I am truly honored to be selected as the Scott County recipient and deeply grateful for the support of the Scholarship Committee and the members of the Community Foundation. This opportunity not only eases the financial stress of college but also motivates me to strive for excellence in my academic and personal goals. I am so excited to begin my college journey and eager to

grow as a student and leader. I look forward to using this opportunity to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of those around me."

"Selecting this year's recipient was incredibly difficult because every candidate was truly exceptional," said Tinisha Bowles-Densford, chair of the Scott County Community Foundation Scholarship Committee. "Each student brought something special to the table through their academics, service, and leadership. Blake's passion for his community, strong work ethic, and entrepreneurial drive was evident throughout the process, and he represents the very best of what the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship celebrates. We are so proud of all our applicants and excited to see the positive impact they will have in the future. Congratulations, Blake!"

Students were judged based on community involvement, extra-curricular activities, work activities, academics, financial considerations, honors and awards, letters of recommendation and three essays. Seven students advanced to the interview portion as finalists. After the scholarship committee narrowed the field, nominees were submitted to ICI for the selection of the Scott County recipient. ICI is the statewide administrator of the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program, which approves the final selection of scholarship recipients.

Since its inception in 1997-98, Lilly Endowment has supported this program with tuition grants totaling more than \$505 million, benefiting over 5,400 Indiana students. The program's primary purposes are to raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana; to increase awareness of the beneficial roles Indiana community foundations play; and to encourage and support Lilly Scholars' engagement with Indiana leaders to improve quality of life statewide.

GIFT IX Community Support Grant Awarded

We are thrilled to share that we have been awarded a grant for \$750,000 from Lilly Endowment Inc. through the Community Support Grant component of the ninth phase of its Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT IX) initiative. This is one of 92 Community Support Grants being awarded through GIFT IX, a statewide Lilly Endowment initiative designed to support the efforts of community foundations to strengthen the quality of life in the communities they serve.

The Community Support Grant is designed to provide Scott County Community Foundation with flexible funding to enhance our grantmaking capacity to address compelling, near-term needs in Scott County. We will have up to three years to use this grant to address community-driven priorities.

"Thanks to Lilly Endowment Inc.'s generous \$750,000 Community Support Grant, we will be able to address critical community needs and help fill gaps created by state and federal funding cuts," said SCCF Executive Director Jaime Toppe.

"This investment in Scott County strengthens our ability to support the organizations and people who rely on these es-

sential services."

To ensure these funds have the greatest impact, SCCF will be hosting two community listening sessions to gather input from local organizations and community leaders. Feedback from these sessions will help guide grantmaking decisions aimed at strengthening organizational capacity across Scott County. The Community Support Grant will be distributed over a three-year period ending Dec. 31, 2028. Funds are in addition to SCCF's annual unrestricted grantmaking.

Lilly Endowment created the GIFT initiative in 1990 to help local communities in Indiana develop the philanthropic capacity to identify local needs and challenges and work with other organizations and residents to help their communities thrive. Through GIFT IX, Lilly Endowment has allocated up to \$271.5 million to support Indiana's community foundations in growing their financial resources and further strengthening their ability to address their community's highest-priority challenges and opportunities.

SCCF Announces Matching Gift Program

Our Board of Directors has kicked off 2026 with a new matching gift program for eligible endowment funds. Through the program, we will provide 50 cents for every dollar donated, up to \$100,000 in matching funds. The matching period runs January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026, or until matching funds are depleted. All endowment funds are eligible except unrestricted, as gifts to those funds will be matched through a separate opportunity from Lilly Endowment Inc. Each fund may receive up to \$5,000 in matching dollars. Non-profits and schools are invited to participate.

"When donors give, they are making a lasting investment in Scott County," said Executive Director Jaime Toppe. "This matching program increases the impact of every gift while

building permanent resources that will support our community well into the future."

Endowment funds at SCCF support a wide range of community priorities, including education, youth, older adults, health, community beautification, agriculture, faith, arts and culture, historical preservation, and more. Earnings from these funds provide ongoing support to meet local needs today and tomorrow.

Donors may contribute to an existing fund, or create their own permanent fund to support Scott County for generations to come. SCCF has about 130 funds to benefit a variety of causes. A fund listing can be found at www.scottcountycfoundation.org.

GIFT VIII Goal Reached!!

We're proud to share that we successfully met our matching grant requirements through Phase VIII of Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT VIII), an initiative of Lilly Endowment Inc. that was announced in the fall of 2023.

As part of the matching fund component, Scott County Community Foundation raised \$306,937 in unrestricted gifts, which were matched with \$613,873, generating a total of \$920,810 in unrestricted funds. These flexible dollars are especially powerful, allowing us to respond to changing community needs and invest where impact is greatest.

In addition, we raised \$132,127 for a special community project benefiting the Scott County Family YMCA, which was fully matched for a total of \$264,254. These funds will support the construction of a new daycare facility, expanding access to quality childcare for families in our community.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the partnership of Lilly Endowment Inc., every dollar given through this initiative delivered a strong return on investment—strengthening both our community foundation and critical local projects for years to come.

Women's Philanthropy Group Hosts Soap Class

Our Women's Philanthropy Committee is hosting its third event for the new women's philanthropy initiative. The group is designed to foster connection among women as they come together to champion causes that

matter to them. Women will meet quarterly to socialize, learn, and inspire one another. The special event features a soap making class with Rachel Bryant with Bryant Skincare, and presentations from local nonprofits on community needs.

Bryant Skincare is a small business that offers a variety of skin care products that nourish and protect your skin. Their products are made from locally sourced tallow, including their soaps. All their whips, creams, balms and soaps are



made in small batches to ensure the highest quality products to meet skincare needs. Women will learn about cold process soap making and creating perfume oils at the class. Attendees will take home their own essential oil perfume and a bar of handmade soap.

In addition, attendees will hear from grant applicant finalists. Women pool their membership contributions to make a greater collective impact. This year, \$2,825 is available for the community. Members will listen to the project requests and vote for the recipient.

This special event will be held Thursday, Feb. 19 from 6-8 p.m. at The 82 Building in Scottsburg. The cost is \$25 for members, and \$30 for non-members, with registration due by Feb. 12. Dinner will be catered by Country Classics Catering. For the online registration link, please contact the Scott County Community Foundation at 812-752-2057 or email info@scottcountycountyfoundation.org.

Generational Giving to the Community



Joe Wolf, Sonya King, Tammy Wolf, Becky Wolf, and Michael Wolf present a check for **\$3,000** to CRADLE Family Resource Center Executive Director Erin Manton, board member Paula Baldwin, and Associate Director Hailey McClain.

Many families are looking for meaningful ways to give back—while also passing along their values to the next generation. A donor-advised fund (DAF) is a powerful tool that allows families to do both.

A donor-advised fund is a charitable giving account that enables individuals or families to make a contribution, receive an immediate tax benefit, and recommend grants to nonprofit organizations over time. But beyond its financial advantage, a DAF can serve as a shared family project—one that encourages conversation, learning, and collaboration across generations.



Delayne and Harper Stallings present a check for **\$650** to Johnson Elementary School teachers.



Marilyn Evans, Matthew LaMaster and Becky Snowden present a check for **\$500** to Oard Springs Community Center board member Ashley Stallings.

When families create a DAF, they create an opportunity to involve children, grandchildren, and future generations in philanthropy. Parents and grandparents can invite younger family members to help identify causes they care about, learn about community needs, and participate in decisions about where grants are made. These experiences encourage thoughtful conversations about generosity, responsibility, and the importance of giving back.

A permanent DAF can be created with \$5,000. With our matching gift program, your fund can grow even faster!



Scott County Community Foundation

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Looking Forward, Giving Back.

Moments That Matter



Scott County
Chamber of
Commerce Director
Kelly Dulaney
presents a check for
\$1,000 to EMPOWER
members. The grant
was awarded from
the Chamber's
Educational
Endowment Fund and
will support The
Amazing Shake for
Austin and Scottsburg
middle school
students.



SCCF Board Treasurer Shari Baumann presents a check for \$355 to Scottsburg High School business teacher Ian Schlosser and students. The grant was awarded from the Philip Glenn Martin Memorial Fund and will be used to support the Maverick Challenge for Austin and Scottsburg high school students. Maverick Challenge is a business planning competition where students can win cash prizes for their ideas. The competition will be held this spring.



YGC members were very busy this holiday season with service projects! Thirty-four members rang bells this winter to raise money for the Clearinghouse!