

2023-2024



# YEAR IN REVIEW





# BVEF and JCCC Celebrate a Five-Year Partnership with Career-Ready Programs

## Exploring passions cultivate real world skills in BV students

When BVEF initially partnered with Johnson County Community College (JCCC) in 2019 to create career-ready programs, the Foundation was hoping to provide high school students the opportunity to explore a variety of career paths. Another goal was to sustain and increase their options via annual financial support which would ensure any out-of-pocket expenses would be covered. Since that time, the Foundation has invested \$200,000 into this initiative, and the programs have expanded from four to 11.

One of the most recent additions is the Culinary and Hospitality program. Ella Hibbard, a BV High graduate, turned her passion for baking into an opportunity to explore a career in this field beyond the traditional high school classroom. She applied to JCCC's Culinary and Hospitality program, specifically the pastry and baking certificate program, which only accepts 16

students each academic year. After completing the program, Hibbard says she is grateful for the unique experiences and connections facilitated by the program.

"I helped bake 500 pastries for a JCCC event; I helped serve at a James Beard Beneficiary dinner; and I ran a farmer's market booth last summer at Parkville Coffee," she said. "I have a two-year start on pretty much everyone I've talked to, so I am getting these connections and meeting people in the industry just because of the opportunities in this program."

BVEF is proud to support students like Ella and all those who are exploring post-high-school opportunities as they discover new paths to success and gain real-world skills in a variety of fields.

*Source: BV Today Summer 2024*

### BY THE NUMBERS:

**423** BV students have participated in Career-Ready Programs

BVEF Investment: **\$200,000**

#### 11 Programs Offered:

Automotive Technology  
Automation Engineering Technology  
Culinary and Hospitality Management  
Cybersecurity

Dual Degree  
Electrical Technology  
Electronics Technology  
Emergency Management and Fire Science

HVAC  
Plumbing Technology  
Welding and Metal Fabrication





**DONOR  
SPOTLIGHT**

# BVEF Receives \$250,000 Grant from Stanley Masonic Lodge

## Members leave legacy & celebrate local connections through Blue Valley Schools

When the members of Stanley Masonic Lodge #444 made the decision to merge with another area lodge, they also decided to sell the building that had been their meeting space for decades. The building sale provided proceeds and an opportunity to invest in the local community. Giving back to the school district that served the Stanley, Kansas lodge seemed to be a natural place to invest.

At the BVEF Board Meeting on November 14, 2023, Jeff Staten and Andrew Moreau, members of Stanley Masonic Lodge #444, presented a check for \$250,000 to the Foundation, which created a student scholarship, support for the performing arts, and grants for the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) in perpetuity. Staten and Moreau are graduates of the Blue Valley School District, as are many of the organization's members.

Moreau said, "The sale of our lodge was very emotional for our members because we have a great deal of history in Stanley. However, investing the proceeds into supporting the students and educators of the Blue Valley School District seemed like a perfect way to stay tied to the city of Stanley. Our members and our families are products of the Blue Valley Schools and the wonderful educational opportunities here seemed like a good fit for our organization's mission and values. It is exciting to know our gift will continue to support local

public education way past our lifetimes."

BVEF Board President and BV parent Katie Bruels says this gift is going to do a lot of good. "The Mason's gift will annually provide thousands of dollars to support our music, theater, and debate students and the District's CAPS program. It will also annually provide a \$2,000 scholarship for a student in our district

planning to pursue continued education after high school."

According to BVEF Executive Director Susan Tideman, this generous gift is a powerful example of the impact of philanthropy. She says, "There are many organizations worthy of financial support and we are honored to be the fortunate recipients of the Masons' generosity. Supporting the district is a wonderful way to invest in the community that means so much to them and enrich educational excellence in our schools now and into the future."

“  
...this generous gift is  
a powerful example  
of the impact of  
philanthropy.”

*Susan Tideman*  
BVEF Executive Director







## BVEF Partners with BV Schools to Provide a \$131,400 Grant for 10 Special Education Para-to-Teacher Scholarships

### Rea Family Foundation Presents First Full Scholarship

When the BV School District committed to finding additional ways to recruit and retain teachers, one of their visits was with the BVEF Board of Directors. Especially difficult to fill are special education positions in high incidence classrooms. To that end, BVEF launched a unique scholarship program to provide 10 full scholarships to fill this need, with the Rea Family Foundation gifting the first at \$13,140.

The Para-to-Teacher initiative is a way to mitigate the cost of tuition for BV paras who have already worked a minimum of one year in special education classrooms but have a college degree in something other than education. Applicants who are accepted to this program complete a 36-hour graduate program that will result in a Limited Apprentice License (LAL) for special education and allow those candidates an opportunity to start teaching in Blue Valley prior to completing a full LAL program.

At the 2023 Community Breakfast, Michael Rea explained, “Ensuring the district has sufficient special education teachers is and continues to be a true challenge. At times, there isn’t a large enough pool of qualified special education teachers to fill positions. Working alongside the district’s recruitment efforts is the Blue Valley Educational Foundation. It is our

pleasure to announce, with financial support from the Foundation, the district will launch a Special Education Para-to-Teacher tuition program. This tuition program will support Special Education paras interested in pursuing a license to teach. Offering up to \$13,140 per educator, the Foundation approved a total investment of \$131,400, which means the cost of tuition will no longer be a deterrent to becoming a special education teacher in Blue Valley.”

After completing the LAL, these teachers commit to a four-year teaching contract within the district. BVEF, with the Reas and the district, is proud to curate and fund innovative programs like the Para-to-Teacher scholarships, which create opportunities for those continuing along the path of special education and lead our students to their full potential.

“  
...the cost of tuition will  
no longer be a deterrent  
to becoming a special  
education teacher in Blue  
Valley.

*Michael Rea*  
Rea Family Foundation





# BVEF Volunteer of the Year

Each year, the Foundation recognizes someone who goes above and beyond expectations as the Volunteer of the Year. This special award was established in 2006 in honor of a former board member, Julie Miller, who dedicated many hours volunteering for BVEF. This year's recipient was an obvious choice – Karen Kopischke!

Karen has spent more than 20 years supporting BVEF in a variety of ways including serving on the Grant Committee, a position that includes reading and scoring thousands of teacher grant applications whose winners are awarded during Surprise Squad each November.

She has also participated in Women's Giving Circle and given generously through the annual Community Breakfast and through campaigns like school registration. She is a proud mom of Blue Valley graduates. We are very grateful for Karen's support over the years and proud to recognize her as the 2024 Volunteer of the Year!



*Karen Kopischke*  
Volunteer of the Year





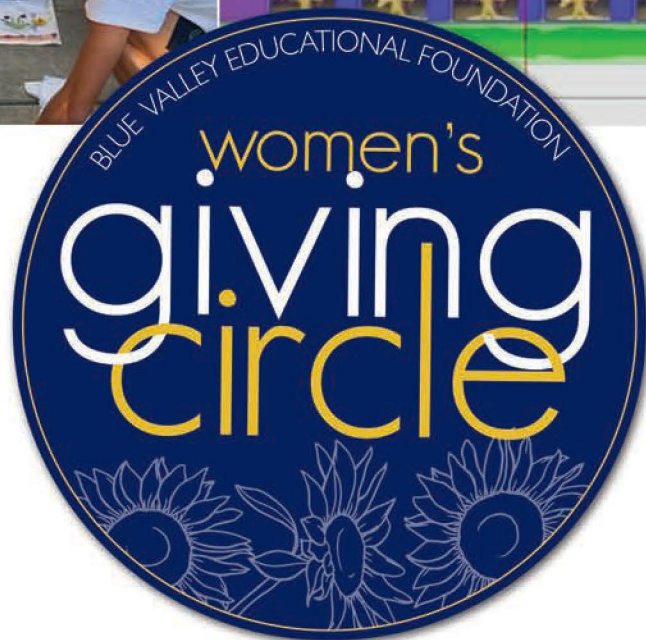


# In Four Short Years, Women's Giving Circle Grants Total More Than \$100,000

Women's Giving Circle is a participatory philanthropy that offers Blue Valley area women of all ages a chance to come together and decide collectively how their individual \$100 donation funds will be spent. It's an evening of networking in a happy hour environment where three grant proposals from educators, or a team of educators are presented, and up to a \$15,000 grant is awarded to one of them before the evening is over.

These large grants support special academic programming, author and artist visits, and guest lecturers. They can be used to double the impact of an existing program or to support new initiatives across an entire grade level district wide, across district departments, or used for collaboration with other schools.

Women's Giving Circle evenings are held twice a year in October and April, and all women in the community are welcome to come make a difference in the lives of our BV educators and students.



Since launching in October 2021, BVEF has awarded more than \$100,000 in Women's Giving Circle Grants including:

- Girls' Garage at BVN
- Suicide Prevention Speaker at BVHS
- Stop Motion Editing Software for all BV middle schools
- Green House Aquaponics System at BVHS
- Wolves in the Garden at BVSW
- Automotive Repair Studio at BV Academy
- Blue Valley High School STEM Library
- Starting Strong: Building Social and Emotional Skills Birth to Five for Parents as Teachers

**JOIN US:**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024**  
Meadowbrook Park Clubhouse



**THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025**  
Vista 154 at Ironhorse Golf Course





## BVEF Funds \$26,500 for “English for Speakers of Other Languages” Endorsement Program

With an astounding 110 languages spoken by BV students, the district has seen a growth in the number of students benefiting from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction. To meet this demand, the ESOL team submitted a grant requesting funds to increase the number of licensed educators with an ESOL endorsement.

Following the successful pilot program in 2023, funding was expanded to pay for training for nearly 50 non-ESOL educators in 2024 who teach in BV middle and high schools with the highest need. This program, which includes PRAXIS and licensure credentials, provides strategies for general education classroom teachers to teach students who speak various languages. The benefits are that these additionally trained educators can support ESOL teachers within their buildings and enhance learning opportunities for an increasingly diverse student population.

## Performing Arts Takes a Bow

BVEF was thrilled to award a grant totaling \$27,000 to support all nine middle schools across the district. These funds are being used to enhance performing arts technology and productions, and they were happy to put these funds to good use!

### Aubry Bend Middle

Projector and cyclorama for the stage

"A projector would make things so much easier during our productions, because we wouldn't have to work so much on sets." - Evie Kumar, 8th grader

### Blue Valley Middle

Costume rental for Beauty and the Beast, Jr. production

"Thank you to BVEF for the financial support this season!" - Christa Danner, Speech and Drama Teacher

### Oxford Middle

Cyclorama

"We invested in a Cyclorama, which is the back curtain on stage. Now we can create different moods and scenes for all the stage shows." - Mark Maasen, OMS Theatre Director

**\$5,000**  
for Robotics  
Programming at  
Blue Valley West  
& Blue Valley  
North  
POWERED BY BVEF...





# BOB Makes History as Sold-Out Event Rocks, Rolls and Raises Funds

Battle of the Bands 2024 was a huge success and raised \$104,000 — the highest amount in event history — to support BV's Performing Arts programs. The annual February adult night out features bands made up of BV parents who perform live sets and compete for bragging rights to be Best in Blue Valley, plus a \$1,000 grant for the winners to award to the school of their choice.

Thanks to the following bands who participated this year:

**WINNER:**

Young Medicine - Lakewood Elementary



Modern Thieves - Mission Trail Elementary, Leawood Middle, Blue Valley North

4-Track Mind - Blue River Elementary

Wednesdays at Herman's - Cedar Hills Elementary, Prairie Star Middle, BV North, BV West, BV Northwest

Besides featuring live music, a wine and whisky pull, food, and a robust silent auction, this signature event is such a success because BVIP Ambassadors compete to sell tickets, field auction items, and secure corporate and individual sponsorships.



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS:

Rob and Becky Alfred  
Bank of Blue Valley  
Baron BMW  
CBIZ  
DLR Group  
Equity Bank  
Farmers Insurance- The Wertzberger Agency  
FNBO  
Fry-Wagner

Garmin  
JE Dunn  
Mike and Christy LaHood  
McCownGordon  
Prestige Worldwide  
Brooks and Carol Sherman  
snuddlecloud  
Sunflower Bank  
Temp-Con  
Whataburger





## Sensory Path

**Amount:** \$1,370 **School:** Aspen Grove Elementary

**Author:** Carol Schneeberger and Korey O’Roarke

“The objective of our grant was to foster optimal learning, promote self-regulation and coping, and to help students refocus their energy as needed. Every student in the school was introduced to the sensory path and given an opportunity to try it during a counselor lesson. On a regular basis, we have students requesting to take a break and use the path. We believe the sensory path is definitely fulfilling these objectives.”



## Little Husky Holiday Book Read and Connections Field Trips

**Amount:** \$3,000 **School:** Blue Valley Northwest High School

**Author:** Cindy Campbell-Barnes

“Thanks to this grant, our BVNW Connections students were able to go to Oak Hill Elementary and read to the 1st graders in December and give them a gift which included the book we read to them. Additional field trips included a visit to a local escape room, helping with a field day at another elementary school, and a trip to Worlds of Fun. These students had a great time!”



## Graphic Arts Product Design

**Amount:** \$8,765 **School:** Prairie Star Middle

**Author:** Tara Barnes

“Once I got the Cricut machines and shirt press from the BVEF grant, I decided to collaborate with the FACS teacher to create 8th grade shirts, celebrating their time here at PSM. Because of this idea, we had a lot more students that participated in designing and producing a product! The supplies you gave us allowed us to have the option to design with several colors on our t-shirts, and other grade levels are asking if they get to do this project next year. Thank you so much for supporting this idea for a second time! BVEF has brought joy and engagement to the classroom at PSM!”





# BVEF Empowers Educators with Mental Health Training with a \$100,000 Grant

In a powerful initiative to support BV students' mental health, the Foundation funded an opportunity for hundreds of educators across the district to gain life-saving tools for students in mental health crisis situations. Like CPR training, where someone who is not a medical professional can perform the first steps to save someone's life, Youth Mental Health First Aid training empowers educators to address and navigate conversations about mental health with students and notice the signs of a student in crisis.

Coaches and club sponsors, who spend a significant time building rapport with students, were the first to receive training. Katie Lesando, Blue Valley Southwest chemistry teacher and color guard coach said, "We're teachers, not trained psychologists, so we don't necessarily have all the tools and tricks in our tool bag. When you're in that life-or-death situation sometimes it's scary, and you don't know what to do. This training really builds your confidence and equips you with essential steps to getting a student professional help."

Training events of this magnitude have required trainers to be brought in from all over the state- until now. Kelly Wessel, Blue Valley's Director of Retention and Recruitment, explains that BV has become a

nationwide pioneer as one of the first districts to increase its internal capacity of trainers. She said, "With 17 Youth Mental Health First Aid instructors, the district- thanks to the \$53,000 funding from the Blue Valley Educational Foundation- can now use these

individuals to offer the courses in September and April for the next three years, resulting in approximately 300 trained staff members per year. Even if you just train one more person or 10 more people, it's worth it because you have no idea who that person is going to help."

BVEF is proud to support our students and educators with an influential initiative like Youth Mental Health First Aid training, and the district hopes to serve as a beacon of light across Kansas, encouraging other districts to replicate this kind of training for their staff.

Source: BV Today Spring 2024

*"...When you're in that life-or-death situation sometimes it's scary, and you don't know what to do."*

*Katie Lesando*  
Teacher  
Blue Valley Southwest



**Mental Health**  
**FIRST AID**

**More than  
500 BV Staff  
trained in Mental  
Health First Aid  
as of June  
2024**  
POWERED BY BVEF...





# BVEF Celebrates Bright Futures for Students at the 2023 Community Breakfast

“Our Future’s So Bright” was the theme for BVEF’s annual Community Breakfast which highlighted the strategic direction of the district for the 2023-24 school year, recognized those who have been long-time supporters of the Foundation, and celebrated positive BVEF-funded initiatives for students and teachers.

Special segments included superintendent of BV Schools, Dr. Tonya Merrigan, moderating a panel of area business leaders on the economic impact of BV schools, and the SPEAK UP Foundation’s induction into the BVEF Hall of Fame for their impactful contributions to our students and the community. BV students played a large role as ambassadors, speakers, and musical performers as well as lending a student perspective to such important topics as academic achievement, social and emotional wellbeing initiatives, and the importance of peer support in special education programs.

Highlights included a generous donation from the Rea Family Foundation for the Para-to-Teacher scholarship program, remarks from Rev. Adam Hamilton, and the announcement of BVEF funding for the Youth Mental Health First Aid training throughout the district.

The 2023 Community Breakfast raised a record \$397,000 to support teachers, classroom and district-wide grants, ensuring educational excellence for all students.



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 SPONSORS AT THE \$5,000 LEVEL & ABOVE:

AdventHealth	Keep the Spark Alive Foundation
Bank of Blue Valley	Mainstreet Credit Union
Blue Valley Schools' Parent Organizations	McCownGordon
Capitol Federal Foundation	Menorah Medical Center
Durham School Services	Dr. Tonya Merrigan
Garmin	Midwest Trust/FCL Advisors
Hellas	Michael and Brandy Rea Family Foundation
Hollis + Miller	Resurrection, a United Methodist Church
Holmes Murphy	Dianne Shumaker
JE Dunn	SPEAK UP Foundation
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation	





# Surprise Squad Gives Away \$427,500 to Make Teachers' Dreams Come True

Surprise Squad was in full swing on Thursday, November 7, 2023, as BVEF was thrilled to support teachers and students with classroom grants and district-wide initiatives that turned dreams into reality. The day began with a pep rally with staff and administrators at the District Office as excitement built across the district as teachers waited to see whether their grants would be funded.

On this special day each year, Board of Education members, BVEF Board members and staff, and generous volunteers, board school buses and fan out across the district visiting almost all 40 buildings to present checks and Surprise Squad banner decals and give special presentations to grant-winning educators. On hand to spread the cheer were special emcees John Holt, FOX 4 News anchor; Joel Goldberg, Voice of the Royals; BOE member Tom Mitchell; Andy DiOrio, Amazon and BVEF Board member; and Kevin Timmons, owner of Nick and Jake's restaurant.

"We are thrilled to be able to give away more than \$427,500 in grant money to teachers and district-wide programs, which is the largest give-away we do in one day," according to BVEF Executive Director Susan Tideman.

"New this year, BVEF presented checks of \$59,800 to Sources of Strength's suicide prevention program plus \$5,000 for Counselor Appreciation; \$58,400 for Mental Health First Aid Training for Blue Valley educators, sponsors, and athletic coaches; special funding for Entrepreneurial Board Games and Simulation for all five high schools; and a grant to support Performing Arts.

BVEF empowers teachers to go beyond traditional classroom limits which enables students to innovate, lead, and learn for a successful future. For more than 33 years, the Foundation has supported Blue Valley schools with over \$8.8 million in grants, scholarships, and special programs.

## Year Two Yields Big Results for Raffle for a Reason

BVEF loves supporting our schools and one special fundraiser sent lucky winner Ellenore Romero on an Alaskan cruise. Ellenore, a proud family member of BVHS students, bought tickets to Raffle for a Reason and had eight exciting packages to choose from.

The 2023-24 Raffle for a Reason package offered the BV community incredible options from Taylor Swift concert tickets to various trips around the country.

BVEF's 300 tickets sold out quickly but if you didn't have a chance to purchase this past year, don't despair! Raffle for a Reason will run again in March 2025, so watch for exciting details and YOU might be the lucky winner. Proceeds support teachers and classroom grants and mental health and wellness programming provided through BVEF.





15000 Merrill Avenue  
Overland Park, KS 66209  
913.239.4053  
Funding only

2023-24

Date: 11/9/2023

Pay to the order of: LKES/LES \$5,335.20

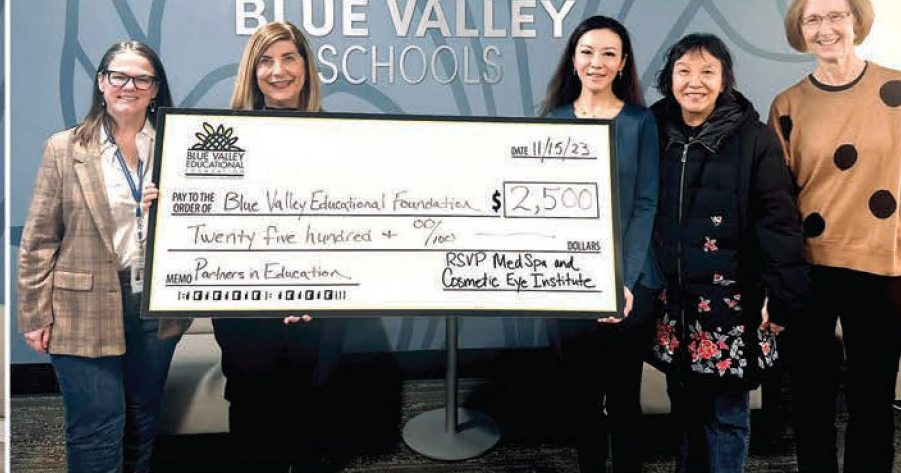
Five thousand three hundred thirty five and 20/100

Grants of Excellence  
Memo: 00114 R 11/09/2023 001140000000

Susan Tideman  
Susan Tideman, Executive Director

**\$250,000**  
Classroom &  
District-Wide  
Grants; 138  
grants funded  
POWERED BY BVEF...





# Partners in Education

BVEF loves to support not only our educators but also community businesses. Our popular Partners in Education program provides local businesses the opportunity to invest in our schools and market directly to all BV families with our unique e-blast system. These Partners receive benefits associated with BVEF's signature events in addition to reaching a specific audience with their business offerings.

Thanks to our newest Partners in Education this year! They are: Club SciKidz, Hosanna Flower Farm, Multi-Sport Summer Camps, RSVP Med Spa, Snuddlecloud, and Vital Roots Chiropractic.

We are extremely proud to partner with these outstanding community businesses and grateful for their support.

The following are 2023-24 Partners in Education:





# BVEF invests in Mental Health and Wellness initiatives for BV students, educators and families

Blue Valley Schools are committed to supporting mental health and wellness at every stage in school and life. From a comprehensive and effective K-12 mental health and wellness curriculum, to Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for staff, to BV Well programing for parents and adult caregivers, BVEF is proud to invest in this vital work.

## Student Wellness and Suicide Prevention Programs: Sources of Strength and #GiveMe20

Thanks to generous financial support from the Keep the Spark Alive and SPEAK UP Foundations, the Sources of Strength program is offered in all BV middle and high schools. Sources of Strength strives to connect teens with trusted adults and trained peers to break codes of silence with at-risk students.

Keep the Spark Alive also funds #GiveMe20 workshops developed to provide teens with tools and resources to get them through dark moments. The LifeBoxes students make through #GiveMe20 are filled with activities and mementos to remind them that they are loved, and that life is worth living.

In 2023-24, Keep the Spark Alive and SPEAK UP invested \$59,800 in social and emotional wellness and suicide prevention programs that truly make a difference in the lives of our most precious resource - our students.

## BV Well Programs for Parents

BVEF works with parents and community members to provide BV Well programs and resources to support and educate parents as they navigate mental health and wellness with their families. In 2023-24, BV Well supported 20 programs for parents and adult caregivers across the district in which more than 1,000 community members participated.

A highlight of the year included the launch of the Starting Strong series, sponsored by AdventHealth, that provides programs to address needs of parents at key transition points for students and families, such as beginning Kindergarten and moving up from elementary to middle school. Based on feedback from both parents and educators about the challenges and impacts of screentime, BVEF and BV Well partnered with Screen Sanity and Children's Mercy to deliver Starting Strong programs on managing our digital lives – as parents and with our families – in a manner that supports mental health and wellness.

In Spring 2024, BV Well began offering the Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course to parents and adult caregivers in the BV community. To date, more than 40 BV parents and adult caregivers have completed the Youth MHFA course, further extending mental health awareness and support for youth across our community. Upcoming BV Well events as well as resources can be found at [Fundbv.org/BVWell](https://fundbv.org/BVWell).







## GIFT GIVING

2023-2024 Fiscal Year\*

### \$250,000 & UP

Stanley Masonic Lodge #444

### \$75,000-\$249,999

Keep the Spark Alive Foundation  
SPEAK UP Foundation

### \$30,000-\$74,999

AdventHealth  
Michael and Brandy Rea Family Foundation  
Regnier Family Foundation

### \$10,000-\$29,999

Anonymous  
Capitol Federal Foundation  
Frank and Kris Cappo  
G3  
Garmin International, Inc.  
Tom and Mindy Herzog  
Holmes Murphy & Associates  
JE Dunn Construction Co.  
McCownGordon Construction  
Midwest Trust & FCI Advisors  
Resurrection, A United Methodist Church  
Dianne Shumaker  
Sylvan Learning Center

### \$5,000-\$9,999

Bank of Blue Valley  
Centegix  
Commerce Bank  
DLR Group  
Durham School Services  
Equity Bank  
Fore the Kids Foundation  
Hollis + Miller Architects  
Master's Tae Kwon Do Academy  
Mathnasium of Blue Valley North & South  
Dr. Tonya Merrigan  
Dr. Roy Moss Foundation  
TJ and Emily O'Neill  
Peggy Rose  
Kenneth Selzer and Deb Grimes  
Neal and Angela Sharma and Family  
Brooks and Carol Sherman  
Spencer Fane LLP  
Tortoise Advisors  
Whataburger

### \$2,500-\$4,999

All Point Transportation, Inc.  
Ash Grove Charitable Foundation  
Brett and Sarah Baker  
Baron BMW Mini  
BCI Mechanical, Inc  
College Readiness, LLC (Class 101)  
CommunityAmerica Credit Union  
First National Bank of Omaha  
Gracie Barra Overland Park  
Henderson Engineers, Inc.  
imageQUEST  
KO Martial Arts  
Leawood Rotary Club  
Major Saver  
McConnell & Associates  
Olsson Associates  
John and Janice Rea  
RSVP MedSpa  
SnuddleCloud LLC  
Universal Construction Company Inc.  
Validity Screening Solutions  
Vital Roots Chiropractic LLC



\*July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024



## \$1,000-\$2,499

Rob and Becky Alfred  
Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C.  
AT&T  
Blue River Elementary PTO  
Blue Valley High School PTO  
Blue Valley North Booster Club  
Blue Valley West PTO  
Kevin and Amy Boehringer  
Building Controls and Services  
Courtney Carlson and Tony Lee  
CBIZ, Inc.  
Central Bank of the Midwest  
Children's Mercy  
City of Overland Park  
Club SciKidz Kansas City  
Clint and Dr. Katie Collier  
Country Club Bank  
Delta Dental of Kansas  
Farmers Insurance - The  
Wertzberger Agency  
Freedom Interiors  
Fry-Wagner Relocation & Logistics  
Gilmore & Bell, PC  
Rev. Adam and Lavon Hamilton  
Laura Harrington and Xinglei Shen  
Heartland Elementary PTO  
Andrew and Molly Hermreck  
Hosanna Flower Farm  
Derrick Jackson  
Dustin and Kristen Johnson  
Johnson County Mental Health  
Center  
Kansas City Audio-Visual  
Jeremy and Michelle Kay  
KC Architects LLC  
KVC Health Systems  
Mike and Christy LaHood  
Karen J. Layton Trust  
Geoffrey and Jamie Ley

Mike and Kate Mahoney  
Mazuma  
Merrill Companies, LLC  
Meyer Music  
Music House LLC  
My City Allstars Overland Park  
Newkirk Novak Construction  
Partners  
Overland Trail Elementary PTO  
Page Farms  
J. Elizabeth Parks  
Stephanie Peters  
PGAV Architects  
Pleasant Ridge Middle School PTO  
Brenda Pozek  
Production Source, Inc.  
Nicholas and Joleen Reitzler  
Robert Runser  
Saint Luke's Health System  
Katie Schwiebert  
Stand Up Blue Valley  
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company  
Stilwell Elementary PTO  
Straub Construction Co., Inc.  
Sunflower Bank  
Sunset Ridge Elementary PTO  
Surency Life and Health  
Temp-Con, LLC  
Thomas McGee, L.C.  
Curt and Susan Tideman  
University of Kansas Health System  
WaterOne of Johnson County  
Josh and Emily West  
Julie Wellner  
Tarah Wilson  
Hedda Winetroub



## Silver Society

The Silver Society endows annual awards to students, staff members, schools and programs of the Blue Valley School District. The Silver Society allows donors to create and name an award or scholarship designed with their interests and criteria. Upon receipt of a \$25,000 gift to the BVEF Endowment Fund, BVEF commits to give a \$1,000 annual award in perpetuity to a BVSD student, staff member, school or program of the donor's choosing.

2023-24 members include the SPEAK UP Foundation and the Stanley Masonic Lodge #444.

**\$49,145**  
**for Food Pantry**  
**serving 2,229**  
**community**  
**families**  
**POWERED BY BVEF...**



# 2024 Community-Funded Education Awards

The **Benson Teachers of the Year Award** was created in 2004 to honor retiring BV Superintendent Dr. David Benson and was expanded in 2010 to include the Master Teacher of the Year finalists. Since 2005, Commerce Bank has generously funded these important recognitions, giving \$1,250 to each outstanding educator.

## Dr. Benson Teachers of the Year

Dan Freeman - Oxford Middle  
Sherry Kenny - Cottonwood Point Elementary

## Master Teachers of the Year

Kale Mann - Blue Valley High  
Bre McGranahan - Blue River Elementary

The **Innovative Educator of the Year Award** was created with BVEF by BV North parents and BVEF Hall of Fame winners Ken Selzer and Deb Grimes to honor classroom educators using innovative and creative teaching practices. In 2014, the \$2,500 award was expanded to honor two recipients.

## Innovative Educators of the Year

Brooke Karr - Overland Trail Middle  
Ariel Puccetti - Overland Trail Elementary

## Champion for Students Award

In 2024, the Blue Valley Educational Foundation, in partnership with the Neal and Angela Sharma Family, announced a new Champion for Students Award to celebrate three educators who foster transformative impacts on their students' lives and leave an enduring legacy of excellence. The winners of the Champion for Students Awards each receive a generous \$2500 prize, which can be used as a personal cash gift, a grant for their learning environment, or a tuition reimbursement for continuing education/graduate hours.

## Champion for Students Award

Chris Brodersen - Overland Trail Middle  
Taryn Gervais - Blue Valley Southwest  
Amanda Wambold - Hilltop Learning Center







# 2024-2025 Board of Directors

**Patrick Wertzberger, President**  
Farmers Insurance- The Wertzberger Agency

**Emily West, President-Elect**  
FCI Advisors

**Dr. Katie Collier, Secretary**  
Blue Valley Schools

**Molly Hermrick, Treasurer**  
JE Dunn Construction

**Katie Bruels, Immediate Past President**  
HCA

**Christy LaHood, Advisor to the Board**  
MHA Management Consultants

## Board Members

**Becky Alfred, Parent Coaching LLC**

**Kristin Bechard, Ewing Marion**  
Kauffman Foundation

**Laura Berger, Saint Luke's Foundation**

**Page Burks, Black & Veatch**

**Clifton Carney, Internal Revenue Service**

**Andy DiOrio, Amazon**

**Mike Fahey, DLR Group**

**Maneesh Gauba, Gensai.Tech - AI Solutions**

**Michael Graham, Commerce Bank**

**Sara Holmes, McCownGordon Construction**

**Season Lentz, Sun Life Financial**

**Stephanie Meyer, Leawood Chamber of Commerce**

**Leah Mountain-Neece, AdventHealth**

**Fariha Shafi, University Health and UMKC**  
School of Medicine

## Ex-Officio Members

**Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Blue Valley Schools**

**Carrie Myers, Blue Valley Education Association**

**Jan Kessinger, Blue Valley Board of Education**

**\$51,877**  
**raised in**  
**the Employee**  
**Giving**  
**Program**  
**POWERED BY BVEF...**





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Overland Park, KS 66223  
913-239-4053



## Blue Valley Educational Foundation Staff

Susan Tideman, Executive Director

Cindy McAlister, Business Manager

Lisa Austin, Communications Manager

Courtney Carlson, Program & Development Manager

**Interested in learning more or helping support BVEF? Visit [FundBV.org](http://FundBV.org)**

All efforts have been made to make this report as accurate as possible. If you find an error or omission, please accept our apology and notify the Foundation office at [bvef@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:bvef@bluevalleyk12.org) so corrections can be made. Thank you.

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