



2024-2025
year in review

“

In today's environment, there are limited resources. The State is saying, 'we want to provide an adequate education...' Adequate is the baseline and I think we want something BETTER than that.

~ Bob Regnier

Former Blue Valley Educational Foundation Board Member
and Blue Valley School District Board of Education



surprise squad

When a day starts with a pep rally and marching band and ends with **giving away \$423,000** across nearly 40 district buildings, you know it's a good day.

Highlights include:

- 156 teacher grants totaling \$215,501
- \$21,010 towards ELS programs
- \$5,000 to advance career-ready programs
- \$5,000 for counselor professional development
- \$56,850 to support mental health and wellness programs

“

There isn't a more special day for the Blue Valley Educational Foundation than Surprise Squad! Four buses—filled with board members and enthusiastic community supporters—roll out across the District to visit Blue Valley schools. We deliver Excellence in Education grants that fund new equipment, literature collections, innovative programs, and unique opportunities for students.

It's a day full of joy, gratitude, and inspiration.

~ Susan Tideman
Executive Director, BVEF



teacher grant highlights

Sensory Motor Room Receives Additional Funding

\$2,970 Stanley Elementary
Katie Hammer-Tucker

"We received a grant for this Snoezelen-style sensory room back in 2009, which is still fully operational and functional, but there were equipment enhancements to be made."

Sphero Indi Coding Robots Impacts 2,500 Students

\$7,711.40
Cedar Hills, Leawood, Mission Trail,
Overland Trail & Prairie Star Elementaries
Amanda Schwabauer, Jody Mason,
Erica Hass, & Katie Geist

"The Sphero Indi Coding Robots will enhance problem-solving skills by allowing students to practice multiple areas of development at the same time. This includes social-emotional learning and executive functioning as students participate in the engineering process. The critical thinking skills developed with the Sphero Indi will allow students to be able to see problems with a different lens and tackle challenges as they come."

Putt Through Art History

\$3,000 Overland Trail Middle School
Crosby Jones & Vanessa Fernandaz

"Students will be completing their own research on artists throughout history and movements. Each group will share their findings with their peers through the mini golf course hole they design. By creating a hands-on kinesthetic learning experience students are able to immerse themselves into the work of artists. Research indicates that thinking and movement are connected in the brain. When students move while learning and playing golf, they activate both the sensory and motor areas of the brain, which can help them learn more effectively."

celebrating teachers



2025 Community-Funded Educator Awards Recognize the Best of Blue Valley

The Kansas Teacher of the Year Award was created by BVEF in 2004 to honor retiring BV Superintendent Dr. Benson. The award was expanded in 2010 to include the Master Teacher of the Year and the District's Kansas Master Teacher of the Year finalists. Since 2004, these \$1,250 awards have been generously funded by Commerce Bank for each of these outstanding educators.

DR. BENSON TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Alex Muniger	Cottonwood Point Elementary
Kim Vail	Aubry Bend Middle School

MASTER TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jill Bergee	Valley Park Elementary
Casey Engle	Blue Valley High School

CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS

Thanks to the Sharma Family for creating and funding the Champion for Students Award, which recognizes educators who foster a transformative impact on their students' lives and bring kindness and compassion to the forefront in their classrooms at each building level.

Courtney Cohen	Timber Creek Elementary
Allie Mason	Pleasant Ridge Middle
Tom Holland	Blue Valley North High

INNOVATIVE EDUCATOR AWARDS

The Innovative Educator Awards recognizes educators who go above and beyond to inspire, engage and innovate in the classroom by applying innovative teaching methods, fostering critical thinking, and igniting a passion for learning in their students. These awards are made possible through the generosity of Deb Grimes and Ken Selzer, Blue Valley North High School parents, who created the award 18 years ago.

Courtney Tegtmeier	Valley Park Elementary
Janie Hsu	Blue Valley North High



I appreciate all of you more than I will ever be able to say. Truly made my wildest dreams come true yesterday. I still am in shock that I make an impact in that way! Thank you for all you do!

~ Courtney Cohan
Intensive Special Education Teacher
Timber Creek Elementary



investing in mental wellness initiatives

BV Well, created in 2018 and powered by the Foundation, has supported and educated Blue Valley parents as they navigate mental health and wellness with their families. This year, BV Well offered seven programs to 500 parent participants, including over 30 parents who became Youth Mental Health First Aid certified. Sessions included:

- The Drug Talk (presented by the Blue Valley Drug and Alcohol Task Force)
- Starting Strong with Conscious Discipline (Elementary and Middle School Editions)
- Thriving Through Change: Guiding Young Adults and Families to Mental Wellness
- Youth Mental Health First Aid for Parents and Caregivers

In 2024-25, Keep the Spark Alive and SPEAK UP invested \$56,850 in social and emotional wellness and suicide prevention programs including Sources of Strength.

Sources of Strength, offered in all BV middle and high schools, 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.

“It was easy to accomplish and it made me more confident that I can help kids who need an adult on their side.

~ Blue Valley Parent
Spring 2024 Youth Mental Health First Aid Participant



bvef's investment in special education creates lasting impact



Courtney Cohan

Meeting the equipment and programming needs of Blue Valley's Special Education programs is a major fundraising priority for BVEF. Building capacity and enhancing services for students with special needs through targeted professional development and innovative programming directly aligns with our mission to enrich educational excellence and ignite innovation.

Women's Giving Circle - Fall 2024

A \$15,000 grant was awarded to purchase specialized equipment for students with learning and visual challenges. This technology is now used districtwide and is helping educators bring creative solutions to the classroom and their students.

Kiewit Corporation \$11,000 Grant Sponsorship

Funded multiple Excellence in Education grants, including the purchase of Sphero Coding Robots and STEAM kits for gifted education classrooms within the Blue Valley Special Education program.

Special Education Para-to-Teacher Scholarships

BVEF funded tuition support for five Special Education paras pursuing teaching certification. In total, BVEF has

committed \$131,000 to support ten paras in becoming certified special education teachers.

3rd Annual Middle School Job Olympics - Spring 2025
This unique event gave special education students the opportunity to learn, practice, and demonstrate job skills in a supportive, real-world environment before entering high school. It was made possible by a \$35,000 philanthropic gift from the Cocherl Family Foundation.

Excellence in Education grants to support Special Education programs across the district.

These grants funded a wide range of needs, including:

- materials for an artistic expression program
- LIFT Classroom supplies
- Hard-to-source food for the BV Food Pantry
- Literature and math manipulatives for secondary SPED students
- Therapeutic learning equipment.

These investments reflect BVEF's deep commitment to supporting inclusive, innovative learning opportunities for all students in Blue Valley.

celebrating

35 years

From the Blue Valley Educational Foundation's humble beginnings in 1990, where one part-time volunteer served as director, to 35 years later with a staff of four, the Foundation has so much to celebrate! Thank you to ALL those who worked, volunteered and financially supported BVEF through the years.

1992 Surprise!

First Surprise Squad awards
4 grants worth \$2,000 total

2024-25 BVEF gave
\$423,000 to schools!

We ❤️
BV Staff
Employee giving
campaign began in 1998

2012
Let's Rock!
Battle of the Bands debuts
and evolves into a sold
out event generating a
total of **\$727,279** for
performing arts

Good Morning. 1993
Inaugural Community Breakfast raises \$15,716

\$9.7 million
Total funds awarded
from 1992-2025

\$1.6 million
awarded to high school seniors in scholarships

Granted...
District-wide grants began 1995

2011
Welcome!
New Teacher Welcome program kicks-off distributing \$106,000 in gift cards

Mental Health Matters

BV Well launched in 2017 and BVEF began to fund district-wide initiatives around mental health and wellness totaling nearly **\$750,000**

Ready To Work... 2019

BVEF supports 584 students participating in 11 JCCC career-ready programs

\$205,000 has been awarded in grants

Bridge To Improvements

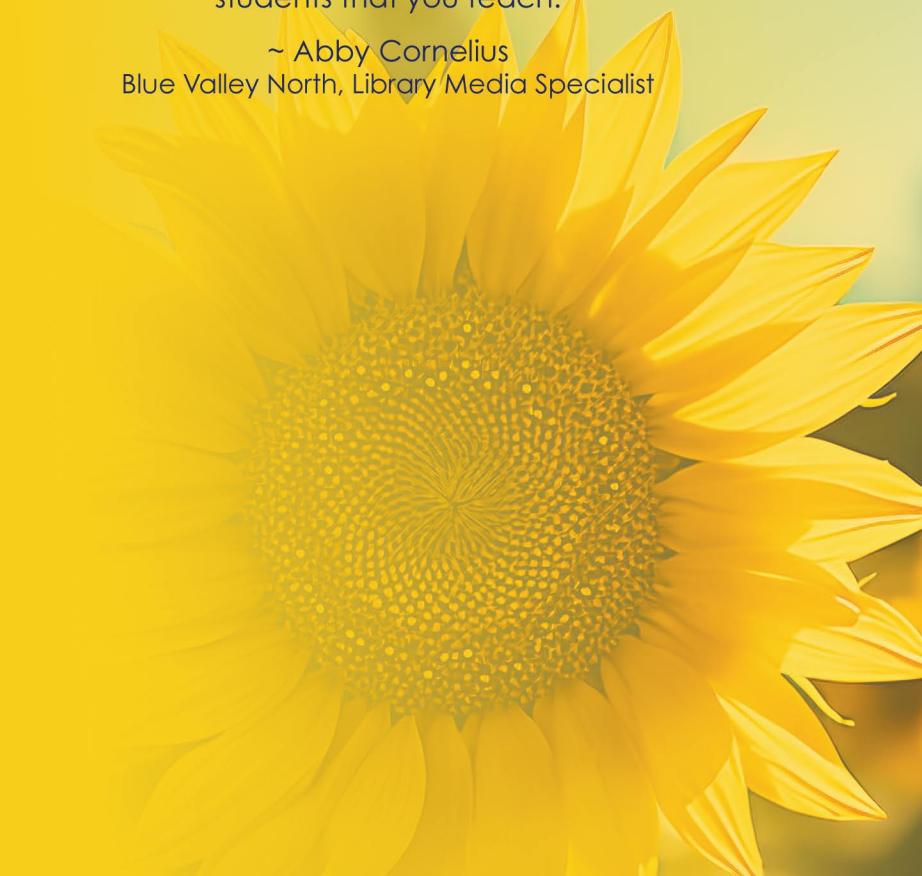
Widerness Science Center celebrates opening of new and improved foot bridges in 2023 made possible with \$300,000 BVEF grant

2023 Feeding BV

BVEF supports the opening of the Blue Valley Food Pantry, awarding a \$342,000 grant

Throughout my 20 years in Blue Valley, I've received so many grants for my wild and crazy ideas. As educators, we constantly work to make our teaching relevant to a rapidly changing world and as our students change, our practice must change too. BVEF allows educators to step outside the box and truly deliver an education beyond expectations. Their support doesn't just fund projects—it creates a culture of innovation, empowers teachers, and creates opportunities for students that wouldn't otherwise exist. When you receive a BVEF grant, the message is loud and clear: our community believes in you, welcomes your innovation, and is excited to support you as you work to make our world better through the students that you teach.

~ Abby Cornelius
Blue Valley North, Library Media Specialist





fall 2024

youngest students with visual impairments benefit from multi-modal learning grant

Congratulations to October 2024 Women's Giving Circle winner Nancy Gieseke. Her grant for "Multi-Modal Literacy and Learning" will support Blue Valley's littlest learners at Hilltop Learning Center with visual impairments and additional disabilities, who often do not have structured literacy and math opportunities and require a multi-modal approach to learning.

Her \$15,000 grant, awarded by the generous women at the Fall Women's Giving Circle event, will provide each of the five teachers who work with these children with materials to support learning within their early childhood and/or intensive classroom settings. Because of this grant, these students will be able to listen to stories and engage in activities that activate their senses in efforts to tie learning to real experiences.



12 | BVEF YEAR IN REVIEW



spring 2025

grant supports CAPS students in pollinator conservation and fighting food insecurity

Thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Blue Valley Educational Foundation's Women's Giving Circle, CAPS Bioscience students are partnering with Kansas City Hope Garden (KCHG) to tackle food insecurity and protect pollinators through sustainable agriculture.

Led by CAPS educators Kelley Tuel, Joe Whalen, and Eric Kessler, students are gaining hands-on experience in beekeeping, composting, and food production, all while learning from KCHG's Executive Director, Emma Entwistle through up to 400 hours of mentorship.

This initiative comes at a critical moment, as early 2025 saw record losses in honeybee populations. Students will create and deliver educational presentations to elementary and middle school classrooms across the District, raising awareness and expanding the program to Field Biology and Zoology students at all five high schools.

Thank you to the Women's Giving Circle members for supporting this meaningful, real-world learning experience that benefits both our students and our environment!



13 | BVEF YEAR IN REVIEW



new location, new format, new record- breaking event

Thanks to all who attended and contributed to BVEF's 13th annual Battle of the Bands on Friday, February 21, 2025, at Fiorella's in Overland Park. Proceeds from this BVEF Signature Events provide significant funding for the performing arts programs in Blue Valley Schools, including band, orchestra and strings, choir, theater, debate, and competitive speaking.

This fun adult evening featured three bands competing for bragging rights as Best of Blue Valley champions. Nearly 400 attendees enjoyed parent emcees, great live music, a silent auction, wine and bourbon pulls, light appetizers, games of chance, and dancing the night away while supporting a great cause. Congratulations to our Battle of the Bands 2024 winning band, Young Medicine, ensuring a \$1,000 performing arts grant for Lakewood Elementary School.

- \$129,279 raised in 2025 - a new record-high total
- \$57,750 in sponsorships
- More than \$45,000 raised by BVIP Ambassadors
- BVEF is proud to have contributed almost \$726,000 in 13 years to Blue Valley schools for performing art programming, initiatives, and district-wide grants

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS AT THE \$1,000 LEVEL AND ABOVE:

Becky Alfred Parent Coaching
Anonymous
Arvest Bank
Baron BMW
Bluth Company
CBIZ
Cincinnati Financial Corporation
DLR Group
Equity Bank
Farmers Insurance – The Wertzberger Agency
Fifth Third Bank
FNBO
Fry-Wagner Relocation & Logistics
Garmin
Samantha & Quentin Hammontree
JE Dunn
Kendall Bank
Mike & Christy LaHood
McCownGordon Construction
Optum
Peak Real Estate Partner
Brooks and Carol Sherman
Straub Construction Company
Summit Ranch
Synetic Technologies
Whataburger

bvef celebrates 34th community breakfast with record-breaking funds raised

The Power of One was the theme of August's Community Breakfast, which raised \$420,000 — the most in BVEF history! Thanks to every school, our administrative staff, board members, Board of Education attendees, panelists, parents, students, educators, community businesses, and sponsors for their incredible support.

We honored 2024 BVEF Hall of Fame recipient Tom Mitchell and celebrated District academic achievements, and highlighted BVEF funded initiatives like Mental Health First Aid training and expanded programming for English language learners.

Breakfast proceeds fund Excellence in Education grants and support district initiatives throughout the year. Special thanks to our Title Sponsors — Keep the Spark Alive Foundation, Dianne Shumaker, and SPEAK UP Foundation — for showing the Power of One and making this event possible. We are so grateful for your generosity!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS AT THE \$5,000 LEVEL AND ABOVE:

AdventHealth
Bank of Blue Valley
BCI Mechanical Inc.
Blue Valley Schools' Parent Organizations
Capitol Federal Foundation
DLR Group
Durham School Services
Garmin
Deb Grimes & Ken Selzer
Hollis + Miller
Holmes Murphy
JE Dunn
Keep the Spark Alive Foundation
Mainstreet Credit Union
McCownGordon
Menorah Medical Center
Dr. Tonya Merrigan
Midwest Trust/FCI Advisors
Dr. Roy Moss Foundation
Netsmart
Michael and Brandy Rea Family Foundation
Resurrection, a United Methodist Church
Dianne Shumaker
SPEAK UP Foundation



gift giving

2024-2025 fiscal year*

\$50,000 & above

Keep the Spark Alive Foundation

\$30,000-\$49,999

The Cocherl Family Foundation
Michael and Brandy Rea Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$29,999

AdventHealth
Anonymous
Kristin Bechard, Ewing M. Kauffman Matching Gift Program
Frank and Kris Cappo
DLR Group
Garmin International, Inc.
Kiewit Engineering Group Inc.
Mathnasium of Blue Valley North & South
McCownGordon Construction
Thor and Vickie Melicher
Reginier Family Foundation
SPEAK UP Foundation
Dianne Shumaker
The Stanley M Truhlsen Family Foundation, Inc.

\$5,000-\$9,999

Ash Grove Charitable Foundation
ATHCO LLC
Baron BMW Mini
Boy Scouts of America Troop 59
BCI Mechanical, Inc.
Commerce Bank, N.A.
Durham School Services, L.P.
Farmers Insurance - The Wertzberger Agency
FNBO
Fore the Kids Foundation
HCA Midwest Health Menorah Medical Center, Inc.
Hollis + Miller Architects
Holmes Murphy & Associates
Mainstreet Credit Union
Dr. Tonya Merrigan
Dr. Roy Moss Foundation
Netsmart
Peak Real Estate Partners
Christi Posey
Resurrection, A United Methodist Church
Ken Selzer and Deb Grimes
Neal and Angela Sharma
Carol Sherman
Sylvan Learning
Trane U.S. Inc.
The University of Kansas Health System
Whataburger
Josh and Emily West
Ted Wightman

\$2,500-\$4,999

All Point Transportation, Inc.
Blue Valley High School PTO
Club SciKidz Kansas City
Dr. Katie and Clint Collier
Mike Dusselier Concrete Flatwork Co., Inc.
Ron and Karen Gier
HealthSource of Overland Park
imageQUEST
Johnson County Community College Foundation
Kansas City Royals Foundation
KOMA Taekwondo+
Mike and Christy LaHood
Major Saver
My City All-Stars Overland Park
Optum Services
Pyramid Roofing
Rotary Club of Leawood
RSVP Med Spa & Cosmetic Eye Institute
Spencer Fane LLP
Straub Construction Co., Inc.
Summit Ranch, Inc.
Validity Screening Solutions
Variety KC

\$1,000-\$2,499

Becky Alfred Parent Coaching LLC
Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C.
Chad and Gretchen Anderson
Arvest Bank
Aubry Bend Middle PTO
James and Julie Beaver
Benchmark, Inc.
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City
Blue River Elementary PTO
Blue Valley North Booster Club
Blue Valley Recreation
Blue Valley West PTO
Building Controls & Integration Inc.
Building and Controls Services
Don and Mary Bush
Canopy Lawn Care
Central Bank of the Midwest
Challenge Island Johnson County
The Cincinnati Insurance Companies
Country Club Bank
Empower Rheumatology LLC
Equity Bank
Fifth Third Bank
Mikel Flickinger
Fry-Wagner Relocation & Logistics
Michael and Brenda Graham
Gilmore & Bell, PC
Gracie Barra
Harmony Elementary PTO
Rev Adam and LaVon Hamilton
Henderson Engineers, Inc.
Andrew and Molly Hermreck
Derrick Jackson
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
KC Architects LLC
KCAV - Smart Technologies
Kendall Bank
Mary Kopecky
KVC Health Systems

Lakewood Middle School PTO
James and Season Lentz

Geoffrey Ley
Hosanna Flower Farm

The Little Gym of Kansas City - Leawood

Mazuma Credit Union
MC Electric, Inc.

Merrill Companies LLC
Meyer Music Inc.

Music House LLC
OP Wordshop
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce

Oxford Middle School PTO
J. Elizabeth Parks

PGAV Architects
Saint Luke's Health System

Stand Up Blue Valley
Scot Stubenhofer

Synetic Technologies, Inc.
Temp-Con, LLC

Curt and Susan Tideman
Karen Thurlow

The Patrick Trysla Family Fund & Frontier Investment Banking
Challenge Island Johnson County

WaterOne of Johnson County
Lawrence A. and Joan S. Weiner Foundation

Hedda Winetroub
Gary Young

partners in education

BVEF loves to support our educators and community businesses. Our popular Partners in Education Program provides businesses the opportunity to invest in our schools and market directly to BV families with our unique e-blast system. For their donation, these Partners receive benefits associated with BVEF's signature events in addition to reaching a specific audience with their business offerings.

BVEF's PIE businesses provided \$48,250 in support during the 2024-2025 academic year. Email Lisa Austin at Laaustin@bluevalleyk12.org to learn more.

Thanks to the following 2024-25 Partners in Education.

Canopy Lawn Care*
Challenge Island

Class 101
Club SciKidz

Gracie Barra
HealthSource

Hosanna Flower Farm
KOMA Taekwondo

Master's Martial Arts Academy
Mathnasium

Meyer Music
Music House

My City All-Stars
OP Wordshop*

Pyramid Roofing*
RSVP Med Spa & Cosmetic Eye Institute

Summit Ranch
Sylvan Learning

The Little Gym

* Represents our newest Partners.

bgef volunteer of the year

congratulations
JEFF KEYES

The Blue Valley Educational Foundation proudly honors Jeff Keyes as our 2025 Volunteer of the Year. This award, established in 2006 in memory of dedicated board member Julie Miller, recognizes individuals who go above and beyond in service to BVEF.

Jeff has supported BVEF for over 20 years, joining the Board in 2016 and serving as Treasurer from 2017-2022. He remains active on the BVEF Finance Committee and is a loyal supporter of the Foundation's Community Breakfast and Battle of the Bands.

Jeff and his wife, Kerrie—an educator at Sunrise Point and longtime Women's Giving Circle member—are proud parents of two Blue Valley graduates and have generously supported BVEF for 18 years.

We are thrilled to recognize Jeff Keyes for his dedication, leadership, and lasting impact!



meet the bgef board...

Emily West, President
Midwest Advisors

Sara Holmes, President-Elect
McCownGordon Construction

Dr. Katie Collier, Secretary
Blue Valley Schools

Molly Hermreck, Treasurer
JE Dunn Construction

Patrick Wertzberger, Immediate Past President
Farmers Insurance- The Wertzberger Agency

Board Members

Becky Alfred, Becky Alfred Parent Coaching LLC

Kristin Bechard, Stowers Institute

Laura Berger, Saint Luke's Foundation

Page Burks, Black & Veatch

Mike Fahey, DLR Group

Maneesh Gauba, Gensai.Tech – AI Solutions

Michael Graham, Commerce Bank

Season Lentz, Sun Life Financial

Stephanie Meyer, Leawood Chamber of Commerce

Amy Moss, Community Volunteer and TCJ Consulting

Leah Mountain-Neece, AdventHealth

Marilyn Winter, Cincinnati Insurance

Mike Yeggy, Peak Real Estate Partners

Ex-Officio Members

Dr. Gillian Chapman, Blue Valley Schools

Carrie Myers, Blue Valley Education Association

Jan Kessinger, Blue Valley Board of Education

2025-2026 board of directors





blue valley educational foundation staff

Susan Tideman
Executive Director

Cindy McAlister
Business Manager

Lisa Austin
Communications Manager

Abby Yeagle
Program & Development Manager



Interested in learning more or helping support BVEF? Visit FundBV.org
15020 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66223 | 913-239-4053

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 so corrections can be made. Thank you.

This publication was printed economically by the Blue Valley Printing Services Department.