

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## INTRODUCING THE 2022 LILLY SCHOLAR.....MICHAEL HANNON

Michael Hannon, a 2022 graduate at Paoli High School has been chosen as the newest Lilly Endowment Community Scholar of Orange County. The scholarship will provide full tuition for four years of undergraduate study at any eligible Indiana public or private non-profit college or university, required fees, and a \$900 annual stipend for books and required equipment.

The son of Aaron and Terri Hannon, Michael plans to attend Butler University to major in Biological and Chemical Studies.

While a high school student, Michael has been active in band, Drama Club, National Honor Society, and the school newsletter. As a volunteer, he supported the Playoli Playground Project, created and organized food packages for his church, and rang bells for the Salvation Army.

“With so many research opportunities at universities and organizations, making a career of research would be extremely intriguing to me and allow me to be a life-long



learner in my chosen field,” Hannon wrote in his qualifying essay.

To select the Lilly Scholar, a designated committee evaluated blind application and identified academic skills, character traits, and involvement in school and community. From 15 applicants, nine finalists were chosen, who then went on to submit essays and participate in personal interviews. Once the committee

makes its selection, the decision is taken to the Board of Directors for approval, then submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana, Inc. (ICI) for final selection approval.

Lilly Endowment created their Community Scholarship program during the 1998-99 school year, and has since supported more than 5,000 students with over \$439 million in scholarships. The primary purposes of the scholarships are: to help raise the levels of educational attainment in Indiana; to increase awareness of the beneficial roles of community foundations in their communities; to encourage and support the efforts of current and past Lilly Scholars to engage with one another and with Indiana business, government, education, non-profit and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana and in local communities throughout the state.

Michael is the 41st Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recipient from Orange County.

# COLUMNS

A Publication of the ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

## *Looking back...*

This issue is an opportunity for us to share with you some of the programs and events of the past year. We hope you enjoy discovering the many ways that the Orange County Community Foundation, Inc. serves Orange County and the people who call it home.

### RURAL FOOD ACCESS GRANT

Surely by now everyone has heard of Backpacks of Blessings at Throop Elementary, Blackhawk Blessings at Springs Valley Elementary, and Bulldog Backpacks at Orleans Elementary. If not, these are programs that provide healthy, nutritious food options for students who may be food insecure over the weekend during each school year.

The Foundation applied for, and was approved for, a \$20,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Health Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, which in turn was funded by the Center for Disease Control. The grant is made in support of the backpack initiatives to provide staff support and coordinate the increasing needs of the programs.

In order to fairly allocate the grant monies across the local schools, it will be divided according to the number of students enrolled in the program at each school.

Just another example of what can be accomplished by those who care, these programs are conducted entirely by local volunteers in each school and were begun by concerned citizens who saw the need in these food-insecure children. For more information or to learn how you can help, please call the Foundation office at 812-723-4150 or visit us at our offices in the Orange County Community Building. We're located downstairs and are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM.

### ON MY WAY PRE-K GRANT

The State of Indiana is stepping up its game on behalf of early childhood education. One aspect of that effort was a capacity building grant for those schools looking to build a Pre-Kindergarten program. Retired educator and former OCCF Board member Larry Hollan assisted in filing an application on behalf of all three county schools for the program, and the grant was awarded for the 2020-2021 school year, with the Foundation serving as grant administrator.

Through this grant opportunity, the county schools received \$88,458.15 in equal shares of reimbursements for expenses incurred in their pre-K programs. Expenses included classroom personnel, classroom materials, family engagement, marketing and communication engagement, and other costs incurred in the execution of the program.

At the end of the grant period, Orleans had served 11 students, Paoli 21, and Springs Valley 14. Five teachers and one teaching assistant were hired. Orleans reached Level 3 of the Paths to Quality as designated by the State of Indiana, Paoli Level 1, and Springs Valley Level 1 (with Level 3 planned by December of this year). Orleans was approved for On My Way Pre-K, Paoli was pending approval, and Springs Valley was expecting approval by year-end. Of the three schools, Orleans had met all of the required key indicators.

We are so pleased to have been a part of this program, and look forward to seeing the results of pre-K programs moving forward in our three school systems.

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## LIST OF FUNDS GROWING...

During 2020-2021 a number of new funds were opened with the Foundation, covering a range of interests.

New scholarships included the Russell and Reba Farlow Memorial Scholarship (established by their children), Springs Valley United Methodist Church, and the Orleans Classroom Teachers Association Scholarship.

With GIFT VII's matching fund initiative providing two-to-one matches of gifts to unrestricted funds, that particular type of fund benefitted greatly from both the match and the generosity of local donors. An unrestricted fund is an endowment with the ability to address any current or ongoing charitable need from its annual payout.

Taking advantage of the opportunity for matching funds were creators of the Fred Sensing Memorial Unrestricted Fund for Youth, the Duke Energy Unrestricted Fund, the C.J. and Caitlin Fleenor Unrestricted Fund. Hoosier Hills Credit Union opened an unrestricted fund after the matching fund opportunity had been exhausted.

Pass-thru funds were created by Team OC, the local mentoring group, and to accommodate the grant activity of the On My Way Pre-K Capacity Building Grant from the state. In all, the Foundation now holds and administers 123 permanent endowed funds and 63 pass-thru funds.



## FOUNDATION FUNDS BABY BOX

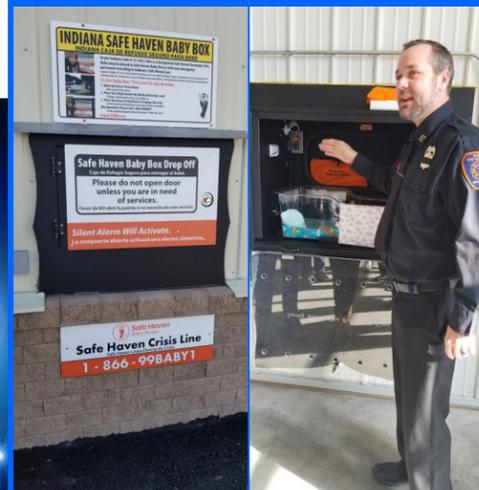
Tessa and Keegan Higgs of Paoli tried for years to start a family. They were already fostering one child when they were notified by the Indiana Department of Children and Family Services that a baby girl had been surrendered in a Safe Haven Baby Box in the Fort Wayne Area. "The caseworker called, telling us she wanted to be the first to congratulate our family on being selected (for adoption)," Keegan remembered.

A few months later both the baby girl, Nola, and the foster child, Jackson, were officially part of Tessa and Keegan's family.

Inspired by their good fortune, the Higgs' approached the Foundation regarding the possibility of a Baby Box in Orange County. After some time and several meetings, it was agreed that a box could be installed at the Paoli Fire Station. The box was funded by the Foundation, along with funding for several years of maintenance costs, at a cost of \$15,000 provided through program grant monies from Smithville Charitable Foundation.

In November of this year, the box was dedicated and fully functional to provide the proper environment for babies in need of a loving home.

The Safe Haven Baby Box opens from the outside, locking upon placement of the child inside and providing a safe and healthy environment for the baby until an automatic alarm brings a fireman to the rescue. The baby will then be taken to the local hospital to be fully checked and the Department of Child and Family Services can be notified.



## SO MUCH MORE...

Having been involved with Orange County Thrive for some time, the Foundation was honored to help Team Orange County, the county's new mentoring program, get up and running by serving as its finance administrator. A planned early childhood symposium was canceled in 2020 and again in 2021 due to COVID-19, but plans are moving forward for an event in 2022.

Team OC is the latest in a long list of local non-profits assisted by the Foundation, a list that includes the Paoli Park Playground Project, Good Samaritans, the three Backpacks programs, the three Running Start programs, Orange County Cancer Patient Services, Orange County Service Council, and many more.

Executive Director Imojean Dedrick has been active for several years in efforts to put forward increased housing opportunities in Orange County, and is currently working with a number of organizations and local economic development agencies in achieving that goal.

And we would be remiss if we did not mention the many efforts toward assisting our local non-profits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three COVID-response funds were created during 2020 to address the needs of local organizations. From various payouts and program grant monies available, the Foundation itself created the Orange County Crisis Response Fund; and funds were made available by IU Health and from Lilly Endowment gifts to United Way of South Central Indiana. In all, more than \$157,000 was provided via COVID response funds.

## OCCF YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATES...

What rings bells, teaches philanthropy, collects pennies, hosts Trunk or Treats, and much more? The OCCF Youth Council, that's what! These 48 young people from the three county schools work during each school year to learn and to share the joys of philanthropy.

The group's most recent endeavor involved "Penny Wars" between the fourth and seventh grade classes at each school, with the results destined for local charities. In total, more than \$550 was collected (that's a LOT of pennies!), and will benefit Love Never Fails, Orange County CASA, and others.

If you saw a group of good-looking teenagers ringing bells for the Salvation Army at Walmart, that was probably the Youth Council. Bell-ringing has been one of their service projects for years, but certainly not the only one.

At Halloween, the group hosted a Trunk or Treat at the community center, which was a huge success. Candy was donated by board members and by YC members alike, with prizes awarded for best "booth" and best costumes. The young people once again assisted with Holiday Markets in both Orleans and Springs Valley, and they provide collections of items such as socks, hats, canned goods, and more at each of their monthly meetings for donation.

Each year, the Youth Council members teach philanthropy lessons with fun activities and events to fourth graders county-wide, as well as provide a Philanthropy Day presentation to seventh graders.



## WE SAID GOOD-BYE TO BOARD MEMBERS...

Ending the year on a sad note, we said good-bye to outgoing board members Michael "Mac" McCullough and Sandy Blanton. Both had served the maximum nine-year term. While on the Board of Directors, McCullough served as Vice-President, as well as a member of numerous committees. Blanton, as well, had served on a number of committees, and also as the Foundation's liaison with the Sol Strauss Committee.

Filling spaces left by the outgoing members are Harvey Edwards of West Baden and Maryann Whalin of Orleans.

The OCCF Board of Directors consists of 15 members, five from each of the county's school districts. Members are chosen based on their community service, their areas of expertise, and their proven abilities to lead. In 2021, the Foundation was fortunate enough to receive a \$100,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. based on participation and engagement of our board members and proving that every member of our Board of Directors is committed to the Foundation's mission.

Board members may serve a total of three 3-year terms. During that time, they meet a list of board expectations, govern the Foundation by setting its policies and approving its procedures, and oversee the direction of the Foundation in fulfilling its mission.

