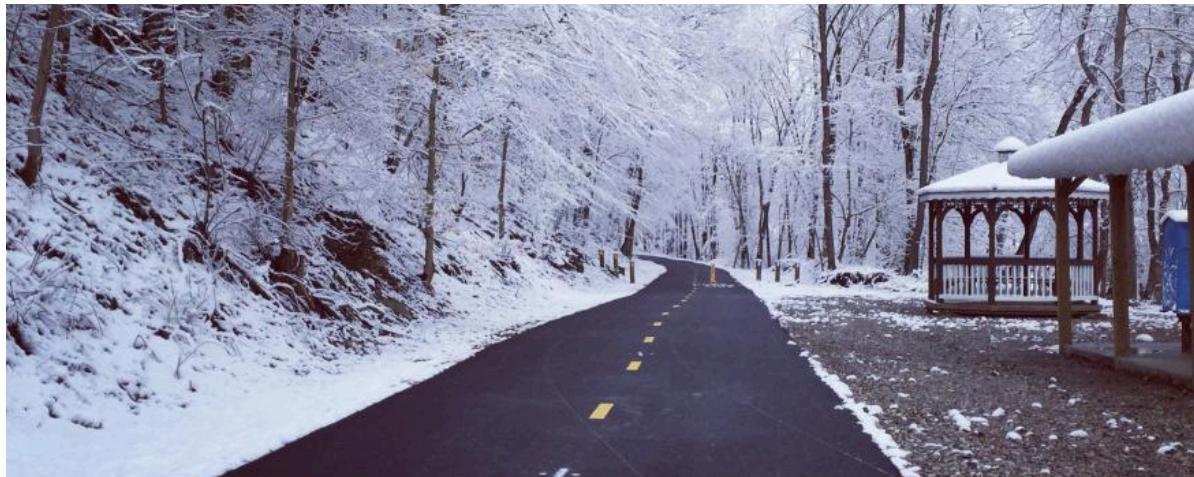




Keynotes

A Holmes County Education & Community Foundation Newsletter



Holmes County Trail, Glenmont Area

A note from our Executive Director. The Year Behind and the Year Ahead.

As I reflect on all that our community has accomplished through the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation, I'm filled with deep gratitude for this place we all call "home." There's just no place like Holmes County, and working for this foundation is an honor. I am continually in awe of those who came before me at the foundation—our founders, board members, former executive directors, and the generous donors past and present—who had the vision and foresight to build this organization designed to strengthen Holmes County for generations to come.

In 2025 alone, the foundation awarded more than \$750,000 in scholarships to local students pursuing their educational goals, along with \$175,000 in grants to 19 nonprofit organizations working to make our community stronger.

For a rural county of just 44,000 residents, that impact is nothing short of remarkable.

As we begin this new year, I'm filled with excitement for what is possible. There is still important work ahead—supporting our local nonprofits, helping students succeed, and meeting the evolving needs of our community. My hope is that the foundation will continue to broaden its impact by growing our scholarship program, strengthening nonprofit support, and cultivating partnerships that uplift our entire county.

If you're looking for a meaningful way to make a difference in Holmes County, let's talk. We're always better when we work together.

Holley Johnson

In this newsletter you can expect:

Community
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Scholarship
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Spotlight

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Grant

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Student
Highlight



The Cary House, home of the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation

Community Grants

In November 2025, the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation awarded a total of \$100,000 in community grants—up to \$15,000 per award—to 17 nonprofit organizations whose projects and programs are poised to make a lasting difference in Holmes County. Thanks to the generosity of donors who care deeply about our community and the dedication of our board of directors, this inaugural annual grant cycle marks an exciting milestone for the foundation and will help strengthen Holmes County for years to come.

The following organizations received awards:

Killbuck Methodist Church - Christ's Cupboard
Fostering Love of Holmes County
Holmes Center for the Arts
Holmes County District Public Library
Holmes County General Health District
Holmes County Park District – Legacy Point Park
Holmes Fire District #1
Holmes Soil & Water Conservation District
Holmesville Community Center
Love INC of Greater Holmes County
Pure Gift of God
Sacred Ground
Scouters of Holmes County, Inc.
Viola Startzman Clinic
West Holmes Athletic Booster Club, Inc.
West Holmes High School Counseling & Student Services Departments
YMCA of Holmes County

These grant awards were made possible through the Anonymous Donors Community Fund, the Community Impact Fund, and the Patrick Shriver Memorial Fund for Mental Health—all funds of the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation. For information on donating to one of these funds or starting a fund of your own, please visit www.hcef.net/giving or call 330-674-7303.



Scholarship Applications Open

The Holmes County Education & Community Foundation is pleased to offer scholarships, available by application, to high school seniors, non-traditional students, and graduate students seeking higher education at a university, college, or trade school.

The 2026 - 2027 academic year scholarship application is now available on our website at www.hcef.net/scholarships. Applications are due by March 13th. Preference is given to Holmes County graduates or residents.



Client of Sacred Ground, an HCECF partner agency

Understanding Agency Funds

You may have seen several announcements over the last few months of different local nonprofit organizations who have established agency funds at the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation. If you're wondering about the benefits for these organizations or what an agency fund is, keep reading!

An endowed agency fund at a community foundation is a long-term savings account created by a nonprofit to support its mission forever.

When a nonprofit or other donors place charitable dollars into a fund for an agency, our community foundation invests those dollars, and each year a portion of the investment earnings is made available to the nonprofit to use for its programs. The principal stays invested and grows over time, creating a steady, reliable stream of support that helps the organization stay strong—not just today, but for generations.

Current Agency Funds at HCECF:

- **Holmes Center for the Arts Fund**
- **Holmes County Rails to Trails Coalition Fund**
- **Killbuck Watershed Land Trust Fund**
- **Millersburg Lions Club Fund**
- **Sacred Ground Fund**
- **Scouters of Holmes County Inc. Fund**
- **YMCA of Holmes County Fund**

At the Foundation, we are passionate about making sure our local nonprofits thrive into perpetuity through endowed funds.

Our nonprofits need your help! If you are interested in giving to one of these funds or setting up an agency fund of your own, contact us today or visit www.hcef.net/giving.

Agency Spotlight: Sacred Ground

Sacred Ground, a faith-based nonprofit organization serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), has established a new agency endowment fund at the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation (HCECF). This fund will provide lasting financial support to advance Sacred Ground's mission of cultivating an environment of belonging and purpose for people with IDD and their families.

Sacred Ground provides day services and transportation for adults with IDD in Holmes, Wayne, and Tuscarawas Counties, helping individuals build meaningful relationships, pursue personal growth, and participate fully in community life.



A view of Glenmont

Western Holmes County Grant

The Village of Glenmont

The Holmes County Education & Community Foundation recently announced an award of \$25,000 to the Village of Glenmont to cover the cost of creating plans to improve their village stormwater conveyance system. These plans will address the flooding issues within the village due to insufficient or undersized stormwater conveyance infrastructure and the unique surrounding topography. This award comes from the Western Holmes County Fund that was established to issue grants for projects, improvements, and items to benefit and improve the quality of life for the residents of townships in the West Holmes School District.

If you are interested in learning more about the Western Holmes County Fund, the current projects it supports, and how to help us build this fund for the future, please contact Holley Johnson directly at hjohnson@hcef.net.

Patrick Shriver Memorial Fund for Mental Health

Viola Startzman Clinic

In November of 2025, the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation awarded a grant from the Patrick Shriver Memorial Fund for Mental Health and the Community Impact Fund to the Viola Startzman Clinic (VSC). The award goes to the clinic's new initiative to bridge the gap between primary care and mental health services in Holmes County.

Holmes County has the most severe shortage of mental health providers in the state with approximately 6,324 residents per provider. The grant from HCEF will help to cover staffing, medical supplies, and patient education materials. Funding will also contribute toward free preventative screenings, mental health evaluations, and medications for uninsured or underinsured patients, making certain no one is turned away due to cost.

The Patrick Shriver Memorial Fund for Mental Health was established in 2024. This is the second annual grant award provided by this fund. Thank you to all those who have donated to this fund to help support projects and activities that provide awareness, prevention, and treatment of mental illness.



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Meet Our Finance Manager



Amanda Humphrey-Heller

Amanda Humphrey-Heller grew up in the Loudonville area before moving into the West Holmes School District as a Junior and graduated in 2005. She attended Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, where she was a member of their Division I volleyball team, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with concentrations in Finance and Investment Management. After a few years working in the banking industry, Amanda pursued her Bachelor's Plus in Teaching from Ashland University with a licensure in Integrated Business. She taught Business Education classes for six years at North Canton Hoover High School before moving into administration, which brought her back to Holmes County as the Treasurer of East Holmes Local Schools. Getting married in 2022, Amanda decided to step away from education and enter the private sector and is currently the CFO at Holmes Oil Distributing. She is also the Head Varsity Volleyball Coach at West Holmes and currently resides in the Benton area with her husband Chad, her two stepsons Grant and Wyatt, and her two dogs Zion and Daisy. She is a member at Grace Church in Berlin and serves alongside Chad as a small-group leader for married couples and is a part of the guest services team. Amanda is excited to be working with the Holmes County Education & Community Foundation that is directly impacting Holmes County's students and community members.

Donate

If you are interested in investing in our community, consider donating to an established community or scholarship fund or create your own!

There are three ways to donate:

1. Through the mail
2. On our website at www.hcef.net/giving
3. Or by clicking the QR code



Our Board

Garrett Roach, President
Michael Taylor, Vice President
Matthew Campbell, Treasurer
Julian Coblentz
Lisa Grassbaugh
Craig Hershberger
Judge Thomas Lee
Shasta Mast
Roger Proper
John Waltman

Our Staff

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HCECF Scholarship Recipients Alumni Highlight

Having triplets is rare—but having all three attend college at the same time is truly extraordinary. We recently caught up with the Jones triplets, proud Holmes County Education & Community Foundation scholarship alumni and now newly minted college graduates. Lauren, AJ, and Megan, all graduates of West Holmes High School, each charted their own unique path after graduation—and we couldn't be more proud of everything they've accomplished.

Lauren Jones

Lauren graduated in December 2024 from Kent State University and received a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. She is a Preschool Teacher with East Central Ohio Education Service Center and is teaching at the Holmes County Training Center in Millersburg.

Andrew (AJ) Jones

AJ attended The Ohio State University and received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Surveying. He now works for the Franklin County Engineer's Office in their construction department as a project engineer.



Megan Jones

Megan went to Kent State University and received her Bachelor of Science in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management. She now works at Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, Wisconsin, serving as the Assistant Recreation Manager.

Lauren said, "Being a triplet has its ups and downs. One of those downs was all of us going to college at the same time, and the financial pressure on our family was three-fold. HCECF helped all three of us with our tuition and eased the burden." Megan said that her HCECF scholarship allowed her to focus more on her coursework rather than worrying about tuition. "Because of this support, I was able to dedicate more time to my internship, extracurricular programs, and opportunities that strengthened my skills for my future."



HOLMES COUNTY
Education & Community
Foundation

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