



# Keynotes

A Holmes County Foundation  
Newsletter



## A note from our Executive Director. The Blessing of a Community Foundation.

I'll admit—winter isn't my favorite season, so when Spring arrives, I find a renewed sense of hope. The days feel lighter, possibilities seem closer, and life just feels easier. In a lot of ways, a community foundation feels like the blessing of Spring.

As Executive Director of the Holmes County Foundation, I have the privilege of meeting regularly with local nonprofit leaders. They are passionate, dedicated, and deeply committed to their missions—but often feel like they're fighting an uphill battle to meet growing needs in our community.

I also hear from students who are preparing for the next chapter of their lives. They have big dreams and a strong desire to make a difference, yet many carry a very real concern: how to afford the education that will help them get there.

And yet, even in the face of these challenges, (just like Spring) I am filled with hope.

I'm reminded every day that we live in a community that cares deeply and gives generously. I see firsthand the power of a community foundation—how it brings people together, organizes generosity, and turns compassion into meaningful impact.

The Holmes County Foundation gives all of us a voice in shaping what our community needs—both today and for the future—and helps ensure those needs are met.

At its heart, it's simply neighbors helping neighbors. And that, after all, is the Holmes County way.

I love meeting with our community so if you want to know more about what we are doing at the foundation or just want to talk about Holmes County, I hope you'll get in touch!

*Holley Johnson*

## Our Board

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

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The Cary House, home of the Holmes County Foundation

## Foundation Update

The Board of Trustees recently approved an exciting name change. We are now the Holmes County Foundation.

While this might be a subtle change we believe it provides a more accurate description of who we are and what we want to be. The word "Foundation" denotes an entity that provides a broad range of charitable services.

We will continue our commitment to this community by supporting educational scholarships and community grants. Our mission continues to be the same—inspiring generosity by connecting philanthropic resources with essential needs. We will play an active role in providing leadership to help resolve community challenges.

It's an exciting time in our history and we look forward to continued growth and success of the Holmes County Foundation.



Holmes County  
Foundation



Brylie Rickly & Jordan Stutzman

## Scholarships & Community Grants

### Dates to Remember:

May 2026:

Scholarship Awards Announced

July 16, 2026:

Nonprofit networking group meeting  
(All nonprofit leaders welcome.)

September 1, 2026:

Community Grant Applications Open

October 1, 2026:

Community Grant Applications Due

December 1, 2026

Community Grant Awards Announced

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## Understanding Designated Funds

A designated fund is created to provide ongoing support to one or more specific nonprofit organizations chosen by the donor. Instead of making one-time gifts year after year, you can establish a fund that distributes support automatically—creating a steady, reliable source of funding for the causes you love.

Here's how it works:

When you establish a designated fund, your gift is invested by the Holmes County Foundation. Each year, a portion of the fund is granted to the organization(s) you've selected. Because the fund is endowed, it continues to grow and provide support long into the future—often forever.

Why donors choose designated funds:

- Consistency for nonprofits: Your favorite organizations receive dependable, annual support they can count on.
- Simplicity for you: No need to remember to give each year—your fund does it for you.
- Long-term impact: Your generosity continues to make a difference well beyond your lifetime.
- Flexibility and security: If a designated organization changes, merges, or closes, the community foundation ensures your fund continues to support similar causes in alignment with your original intent.

Designated funds are especially meaningful for donors who have a strong connection to a particular organization—whether it's a local nonprofit, church, school, or community program that has made a difference in their lives.

If you're interested in creating a designated fund or learning more about how it works, we would love to talk with you.

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## Carl & Florence Maurer: Their Legacy in Holmes County



Carl and Florence Maurer loved their community. After meeting at a dance, they were married for 52 years before Carl passed away in 1996. They farmed the land where Carl grew up in the Nashville area raising cattle, sheep, hogs, and chickens. The couple was active in the Holmes County Farm Bureau, members of Zion Lutheran Church of Loudonville, and faithful fans of West Holmes Athletics. Florence was a cook at Lakeville Elementary and West Holmes High School. She later volunteered in the kindergarten classroom at Nashville Elementary School.

In 2016, Florence established the Carl & Florence Maurer Scholarship Fund at the Holmes County Foundation and many students have been able to further their education thanks to her generosity. Florence also left instructions in her trust for proceeds from the sale of their farm to be given to the Holmes County Foundation. Recently, the Carl & Florence Maurer Community Fund was established so that grants could be awarded for projects and activities that benefit the community.

Florence lived a remarkable 103 years, passing away in 2022. Carl and Florence Maurer will be remembered for their lifelong dedication to hard work, service, and love for their community. Through their funds at the Holmes County Foundation, their legacy will continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of students and community members for generations to come.



HCA's production of "Disney's Newsies" Summer 2025

## Community Grant Recipient Highlight

### Holmes County District Public Library: New Bookmobile

Our local library was the recipient of one of the 2025 Holmes County Foundation community grants with funds awarded towards a replacement bookmobile. This new bookmobile will allow the bookmobile program to visit stops more frequently and continue serving residents throughout the county who lack access to a fixed library facility.

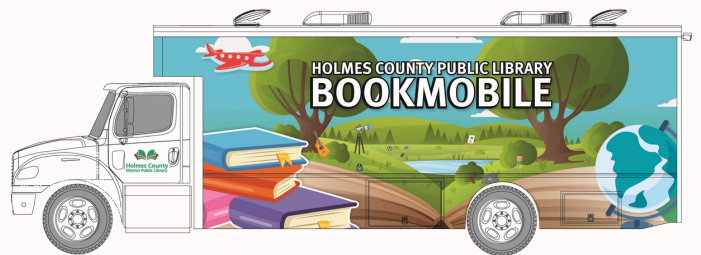
After receiving the award from the foundation, the library was able raise additional funds and the bookmobile has now been ordered. They expect to have the bookmobile ready to roll into the new school year!

## Agency Fund Spotlight

### Holmes Center for the Arts (HCA)

The first endowed agency fund to be created at the Holmes County Foundation was the Holmes Center for the Arts Fund. The mission of HCA is to provide quality educational and performance opportunities to individuals of all social and economic backgrounds in a wholesome, family-oriented atmosphere. They offer classes and performances in music, art, theatre, and dance. In 2025, they opened the Center Stage, a multi-purpose state-of-the-art theater for performances, art galleries, and community events. HCA inspires more than 600 students each year and captivates audiences with over 4,000 tickets sold to their productions annually—bringing vibrant, high-quality arts and culture to Holmes County in ways the community has not experienced in generations past.

Their endowed fund at the Holmes County Foundation is meant to provide lasting support that extends well beyond our lifetime. It's a gift to the community to ensure that their mission is carried out forever. We hope you will consider giving to this agency fund or supporting other local nonprofits with a donation through the Holmes County Foundation.



Rendering of new bookmobile

## 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](http://www.hcef.net/giving)
3. Or by clicking the QR code



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## Meet Our Newest Board Member



### Dave Mast

We are pleased to welcome our newest board member, Dave Mast, to the Holmes County Foundation. Dave is a lifelong citizen of Holmes County, growing up near Trail and graduating from Hiland High School in 1982. It was there that he met his wife of 37 years, Ann Kandel, and the two have lived in Benton nearly their entire married lives. After both attended Bluffton College, the two high school sweethearts were married Oct. 17, 1987.

After graduating from Bluffton College in 1986, where he played baseball for four years and graduated with a degree in psychology, Dave came home to Holmes County and immediately joined Graphic Publications Incorporated, better known to many as The Bargain Hunter. The company was started in 1973 by his parents, Abe and Fran Mast.

Dave served as the manager of Mister Printer, part of the GPI family, for 10 years prior to becoming a journalist for The Bargain Hunter. He initially served as the sports editor before branching out to become a more well-rounded journalist covering all types of local community events and features. In 2000 he and his brothers John and Michael purchased Graphic Publications, Inc. from their parents, and a few years later they changed the name of the company to AloNovus, Inc. which means "new growth" in Latin.

Dave and Ann have three sons, Neil, Alec and Kyle, all of whom are married and living in Ohio. They currently have two grandsons, Calvin and Jackson. He and Ann are long-time members of Martins Creek Mennonite Church, where they have headed up the Operation Christmas Child effort for many years. In his spare time Dave enjoys playing pickleball and golf, remains passionate about baseball, is a monumental movie buff who quotes far too many irreverent movie quotes, enjoys collecting and polishing rocks and feels blessed to live in a caring, compassionate and service-minded community of believers in Holmes County.

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## Introducing Our Newest Agency Fund: Holmes County Agricultural Society Fund

This fund will help ensure the long-term vision of preserving the Holmes County Fair as an agriculture-centered community event—one that strengthens local 4-H and FFA youth through education and leadership opportunities. Since 2016, the development of the Harvest Ridge facility has set a high standard for excellence. Through this fund, dedicated resources will support ongoing maintenance, repairs, and improvements to the grounds and facilities, ensuring the venue remains one of the premier fairgrounds and event centers in the state for years to come.

To donate to this fund, visit [www.hcef.net](http://www.hcef.net) and click on "Donate to a Fund". Scroll down until you find "Holmes County Agricultural Society Fund". Or send a check to the Holmes County Foundation with "Holmes County Agricultural Society Fund" in the memo.

Thank you for supporting our community funds at the Holmes County Foundation!



**HARVEST RIDGE**

# HCF Scholarship Recipient Alumni Highlight

Anne Straits graduated from Hiland High School in 2020 and was a recipient of the Holmes County Education Foundation Scholarship and the Rebecca C. Metcalf Science Scholarship from the Holmes County Foundation. She received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering (BSE) in Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Polymer Science and Engineering, as well as a Master of Science in Biomedical Engineering from Case Western Reserve University. Anne is now a cardiac electrophysiology mapping specialist for Abbott. She assists in complex cardiac procedures using software programs to create 3D models of patients' hearts and map out the electrical patterns of the heart.

When asked about what advice she'd give to high school seniors, Anne said, "At college, you'll find that you are surrounded by opportunities. These may be in the form of departmental seminars, student organizations, university programming, or the people you meet. Take advantage of these as much as possible, and use them to tailor your college experience to your own personal interests. Beyond college, it is far less common to find this unique combination of individuals and opportunities all in the same spot."

Anne added, "The scholarships I received from the Holmes County Foundation helped a great deal in affording my education by narrowing the gap between

my financial aid from CWRU and the remaining costs covered by my student loans. When I was considering the 4 + 1 BSE/MS program, I knew I would have to rely on additional loans to fund my 5th year since I had exhausted my 8 semesters of undergraduate aid. Thanks to HCF scholarships, I was able to earn my Master's degree without the burden of financing the full cost of tuition through loans."



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