



Inside the Foundation

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"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

The BHS class of 2025 exemplified the above quote by Coretta Scott King when it stepped forward offering its remaining class assets to establish a scholarship for fellow BHS graduates. Class officers Katherine Thormeier and Dominique Malanga met with Amy Miller (BAF Pres/CEO) in the Spring of 2025 to discuss ideas for establishing a scholarship using their remaining class funds. Their class, having been 8th graders during the Covid19 pandemic, had \$11,000 remaining due to their 8th grade class trip to Chicago having been cancelled. Rather than installing a bench, or buying flags, or something similar, the pair reached out to inquire about creating a scholarship fund. After discussing multiple avenues/types of scholarships and receiving the approval by Bryan City School officials, the **Welcome Home Scholarship** was born.

The **Welcome Home Scholarship** serves to encourage fellow BHS graduates that have gone on to further their education outside Williams County, to consider returning to Williams County to live, work, serve, and play upon graduating from an accredited college, university, or trade school. Recipients of the Welcome Home scholarship will receive up to \$10,000 for repayment of federal student loan debt in quarterly installments for one year following their return to Williams County.

Welcome Home Scholarship Eligibility :

- Applicants must be Bryan High School (BHS) graduates that have gone on to also graduate (or be graduating from) an accredited college, university, or trade school within the last seven years.
- Applicants may not be living and working in Williams County at the time they apply but must be committed to returning to Williams County within twelve months of the award decision being made.
- Applicants must be working for a Williams County Employer in a full-time position for 90 days before the first award disbursement will be made.
 - Preference will be given to applicants that have intention to get involved in philanthropic service in Williams County through service clubs or volunteerism.
 - Applicants must have federal student loan debt to qualify.

Applications for the first Welcome Home Scholarship will be available on the Bryan Area Foundation website in October 2025, with the first recipient being awarded at the BHS Homecoming football game in the Fall of 2026. If you have interest in donating to the Welcome Home Scholarship fund, an envelope is enclosed in this newsletter, or you may donate online at www.bryanareafoundation.org.

"Be proud of who you've become but never forget where you started. The strongest oak would not be what it is today, if not for its roots." - Unknown



Pictured from left to right: Mark Rairigh, Bryan Schools Superintendent; Amy Miller, BAF President; Dom Malanga, 2025 BHS graduate; Kate Thormeier, 2025 BHS graduate; Steve Alspaugh, BHS Principal.





Message from our Chair



As the cool air of fall has begun, the Bryan Area Foundation is

working diligently on the new fiscal year.

The year's theme is "Return to your roots".

While this theme of "Return to your roots" is not just about going back—it's about building forward. Some are returning home to invest in the place where their stories began, while others, though new to the area, have chosen this community as the best place to live, work, and raise their families. Together, they remind us that our roots create a foundation worth building upon. By honoring where we came from and embracing all who join us, we continue to shape a community grounded in purpose and growing with promise. Let's all "Return to Our Roots" in this season of giving!



Steve Hess
Chair of the Board



Join us as we celebrate the Festival of Trees
2025 in beautiful downtown Bryan during
the Christkindl Market!

Ways to get involved and enjoy:

- ♦ **Silent Auction and Raffle** - Come and view beautifully decorated trees, porch pots, and wreaths by talented individuals in our community. Choose your favorite and place a bid for a chance to take it home! We will also have some items available to win by purchasing raffle tickets. Watch our social media platforms and website in the coming months for more details.
- ♦ **Progressive Holiday Party** - Saturday, December 6, ticket holders will be invited to enjoy the Christmas festivities as they travel to several locations for food, drink, and fun. The final stop will allow ticketholders a "last look and bid" on the available trees, porch pots, and wreaths. Tickets (limited to 50) will go on sale mid-October.
- ♦ **Christmas Tree Decorating Contest** - Downtown Bryan merchants will be competing for three cash prizes to invest in their business. The public is welcome to vote for their favorite trees as they shop around town throughout Christkindl.

Thank you, Sponsors:



Proceeds from all Festival of Trees Activities benefit the funds of BAF and the people of Williams County.

FY 2025: A Year in Review



**"He that plants trees loves others
besides himself."**

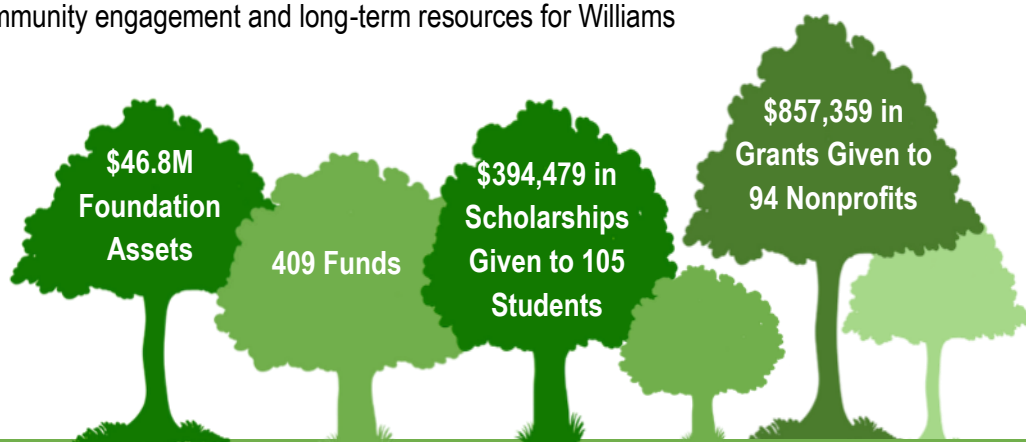
-Thomas Fuller

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Bryan Area Foundation adopted "Planting Trees" as its theme, symbolizing endowment growth for future generations. Two key initiatives brought this vision to life:

- **Matching Fund Program:** The foundation allocated \$50,000 to match 25% of gifts to community funds. Donor response exceeded expectations, exhausting the matching funds by December and generating over \$200,000 in donations while opening 10 new funds.
- **Festival of Trees:** The inaugural festival on Bryan's historic square combined community celebration with fundraising through a merchant decorating contest, progressive holiday party, commemorative ornament sales, and silent auction of fund-themed Christmas trees. The event successfully educated the community about foundation funds while strengthening holiday traditions.

These initiatives created immediate community engagement and long-term resources for Williams County. Copies of the Annual Report can be picked up at the BAF office or found online at www.bryanareafoundation.org.

Since 1969, over \$21.2 million has been given back to the Williams County area in grants & scholarships!!



Bryan Area Foundation	Edon Area Foundation	Millcreek-West Unity Foundation	Montpelier Area Foundation
338 FUNDS	19 FUNDS	23 FUNDS	29 FUNDS
\$749,765 GRANTS AWARDED	\$50,379 GRANTS AWARDED	\$25,337 GRANTS AWARDED	\$31,878 GRANTS AWARDED
\$253,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED	\$67,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED	\$21,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED	\$53,479 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$38,587,191 TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,244,000 TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,498,589 TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,521,988 TOTAL ASSETS



Grants

Aldvordton-Millcreek Township Fire Department

The Millcreek-West Unity Foundation awarded the Alvordton-Millcreek Township Fire Department a \$7,500 grant to purchase a new sign in front of the station. It will be used to communicate community and fire department events, as well as notify the public of any emergencies.

Pictured left to right during the check presentation are Assistant Fire Chief Matt Cox and Millcreek-West Unity Foundation President Patsy Miller.



Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering, in its nineteenth year, received a \$3,500 grant from the Montpelier Area Foundation. The event, which takes place on Saturday, November 22, in downtown Montpelier, Ohio, kicks off the holiday season with a craft and vendor show, parade, family activities, and more. The funds will be used to help expand and add even more festive things for attendees to enjoy.

Pictured during the check presentation, left to right, are Montpelier Area Foundation President Kara Custar and Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering Acting Chair Michelle Kannel.



Village of Edgerton Community Center

The Bryan Area Foundation awarded a \$25,000 matching grant to the Village of Edgerton to help with the construction of a new community center at Miller Park. The proposed project, a 7,800 square-foot space, will include a warming kitchen, ADA-compliant restrooms, an exterior deck and patio overlooking the pond, energy-efficient lighting, and underground utilities. Additionally, ADA-compliant pedestrian sidewalks and an entryway will be installed to ensure accessibility for all members of the community, county, and region. The newly formed Edgerton Development Foundation matched the funds with its own \$25,000.



Pictured during the check presentation and ground-breaking ceremony are, left to right, Bryan Area Foundation President and CEO Amy Miller, Edgerton Park Board representative Bill Swank, Edgerton City Council representative Jason Gruver, Village of Edgerton Mayor Robert Day, Beilharz Architects representative Kent Purk, General Contractor Mel Lanzer Company representative Lyndsey Lucas, and Edgerton Development Foundation representative Mike Krill.

Grants & Scholarships

Village of West Unity



The Bryan Area Foundation awarded the Village of West Unity, Ohio, a \$30,000 grant to help them build an inclusive playground at Wabash Park. This new recreational area will provide children and families of all physical, mental, and social abilities with the opportunity to learn, play, and grow together. It will also offer children on the south side of West Unity a park closer to their home, and it sits next to the Wabash Cannonball Trail.

Pictured during the check presentation, left to right, are Bryan Area Foundation President/ CEO Amy Miller, Village of West Unity Mayor Don Leu, and Bryan Area Foundation Grant Making Committee member Larry Harsila.



Interested in applying for a grant?

More information and applications can be found on our website: www.bryanareafoundation.org

or contact the office 419-633-1156

Next Deadline: Monday, September 29, for consideration in December



Robert F. Flightner Memorial Law Enforcement Scholarship

Congratulations to the City of Bryan, Ohio, Police Department, Detective Justin Coffman, and Captain Jamie Mendez on receiving the Robert F. Flightner Memorial Law Enforcement Scholarship. This annual scholarship assists the training and education of law enforcement officers in Williams County.

Detective Coffman, who was awarded a \$500 scholarship, will use the funds to attend a Cyber Crime First Responder course designed to help officers more effectively investigate crimes involving various types of digital evidence. By completing this training in the upcoming months, Detective Coffman will be qualified to teach the Digital Evidence class at the Police Academy. It will also contribute to his required hours for the State of Ohio's Master Criminal Investigator Certification.

Captain Mendez received a \$1,000 scholarship and will use the money to attend the State of Ohio Basic Academy Driving Instructor course. After completing this program, he will use his knowledge to teach the Driving Unit in the Peace Officer Basic Training curriculum. He will also instruct students in this class at the Northwest Community College Police Academy and help with the Bryan Police Department and other agencies with updated techniques.



. Pictured from left to right are Detective Coffman, Bryan Area Foundation Scholarship Committee member Dottie Hallett, Captain Mendez, and City of Bryan, Ohio, Police Department Chief Gregory Ruskey.





Scholarships Cont.

Harlan G. and Ernestine B. Spangler Continuing Education Scholarship



Pictured left to right during the check presentation are Spangler Family representative Kirk Vashaw and scholarship winner Matthew Kaullen.

Congratulations to Matthew Kaullen for receiving the Harlan G. and Ernestine B. Spangler Continuing Education Scholarship. To qualify for this annual scholarship, applicants must be a resident of Williams County, 25 years old or older, and returning to school after being in the workforce for at least five years.

Matthew is currently a Science Teacher at Bryan High School, and the \$6,000 scholarship will help him earn his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership with a Principal Licensure from Youngstown State University. After graduation, Matthew hopes to move to a leadership position where he can positively influence district policies, instructional methodologies, and program development.

Good luck to Matthew as he pursues his dreams, and thank you to the Spangler Family for helping him achieve his goals.

Chris and Mary Thaman Scholarship

The Chris and Mary Thaman Scholarship, for \$1,500, was awarded to Erin Elser. This annual scholarship is given to any Williams County or Fairview High School graduate who has completed at least one year of post-secondary schooling following graduation, is employed to support their education, and is in good academic standing.

Erin attends Bowling Green State University, where she is studying Applied Health Science to become a physician's assistant. Outside of academics, she works full-time in the summer and part-time during the school year as a personal care aide at Fountain Park Assisted Living and Memory Care. Upon receiving her diploma, Erin plans to get her Master of Physician Assistant Studies, pending acceptance into the program, and wants to return to Northwest Ohio to work in healthcare.

Good luck to Erin in all her future endeavors, and a big thank you to the Thaman Family for helping them come true!



Pictured left to right during the check presentation are Josiah, Gabe, and Mataya Thaman, Erin Elser, and Tom Thaman.

Women's Giving Circle

Since 2016, more than **\$247,000** has been donated to
46 local nonprofit projects!

Our third-quarter meeting was held Thursday, July 31, with 29 members, including two ladies who joined that night and one guest! Congratulations to Pat Burkholder (pictured on the right) for receiving the PIP apparel and items donated by ImagePro and Bill's Locker Room 3. Thank you to both organizations for all the PIP gear!



Organizations nominated:

We had 4 nominations last Thursday, and the three that were picked and presented are as follows:

National Alliance on Mental Illness:

Shirley Fry, nominated and presented National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Founded in 1979, this nonprofit is the nation's leading voice on mental health and strives to improve the quality of life, ensure dignity, and respect for persons with serious mental illness and their families. PIP monies would help them continue and expand their services to more individuals and families in the local area.

Beauty for All Ages:

Amy Miller, who nominated and presented for this nonprofit, shared that it furnishes free professional hair services to residents in assisted living and nursing homes. The PIP grant would allow Beauty for All Ages to help expand its outreach and partner with stylists in other facilities across Williams County. This would ensure more individuals benefit from these essential grooming services, uplifting their spirits and enhancing their dignity.

Williams County Humane Society:

Finally, Ashley Epling, presented and nominated this local organization that provides a temporary, healthy, and loving environment with excellent medical services to all Williams County domesticated animals, while finding them a forever home. They are seeking funds to help build a separate building on their property to use as a surgery center for their animals.

And the Winner Is.....Beauty for All Ages was chosen and will benefit from a **\$6,275 grant**.

2025 PIP Recipients

1st Quarter Recipient
Special Olympics of Williams County -
\$5,525

2nd Quarter Recipient
Mentors For Williams County - \$6,675

3rd Quarter Recipient
Beauty for All Ages - \$6,275

4th Quarter Recipient
TBD



Pictured during the check presentation in front of Bryan, Ohio's skilled nursing care facility, Majestic Care, one of Beauty for All Ages' locations, PIP member Ann Spangler, President and Founder of Beauty for All Ages Amber Gebers, and PIP members Jeanette Roberts, Karin Bowers, Amy Miller, Michelle Henricks, Helene Moog, and Georgetta Kuhman.



Join the
CELEBRATION!

Monday, October 20
6:30-8:30 PM
@ Cattle Creek, Bryan

Scan the QR code to purchase a ticket for you and a guest. Tickets are \$20 per person (excluding an Eventbrite non-refundable fee of \$3.18 per person for using the online platform). Your RSVP includes heavy appetizers and non-alcoholic drinks, with alcoholic beverages available to purchase that evening.



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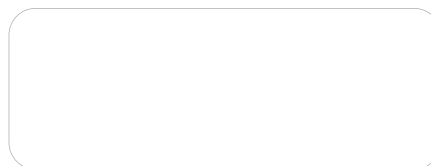




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2025 Benedict Family Outstanding Educator Presented to Coleen Smith



The 2025 Outstanding Educator



Pictured from left to right are Mark Rairigh, Bryan City Schools Superintendent; Coleen Smith, 2025 Benedict Family Outstanding Educator Award Recipient; and Julie Taylor, Academic Booster Club President.

Coleen Smith, Bryan City Schools, Seventh and Eighth Grade Intervention Teacher, was awarded the 2025 Benedict Family Outstanding Educator Award at the Academic Booster Club (ABC) Awards breakfast. Nominated by coworkers, students, and Bryan community members, Coleen's job requires her to work with pupils who have varied learning styles and might struggle in a typical school setting. She tackles this challenge with patience and understanding, helping them become the best they can be. And because of her efforts in building trust and confidence with these young adults, many of them have stayed on the path to graduation.

An example of her dedication was when the Bryan City Schools enrolled several Spanish-speaking students. Coleen researched and learned new methods and the language to meet their needs. As one nominator stated, "Working with Coleen has made me a better teacher. I learn from her every day through her interactions with students and strive to emulate her patience and strategies when working with them. Bryan City Schools is fortunate to have her, and she is very deserving of this award."