



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**YOUR IMPACT GUIDE THROUGH
KANKAKEE AND IROQUOIS COUNTIES**

Community
FOUNDATION

OF KANKAKEE
RIVER VALLEY

DESTINATION IMPACT

MISSION

Connecting people who care
with causes that matter in our community.

VISION

Through leadership, stewardship, and grants, Community
Foundation of Kankakee River Valley enhances quality of life
throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties.

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OUR COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS

Board of Directors

2023 -2024



Jake Lee
Chair



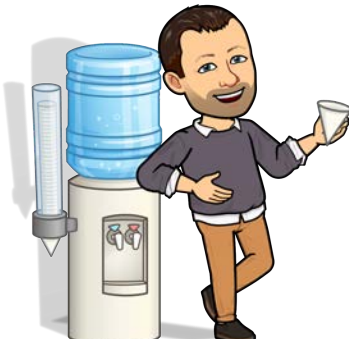
Jeff Williamson
Past Chair



Nick Bufford
Secretary



Beverly Hood
Treasurer



Nick Allen



Alice Argyelan



Arlene Bartolini



Nina Epstein



Walter "Chip" Hasselbring III



Rende Langlois Jr.



Angela Morrey



Michael Pueschell



Kerstin Rust



DEAR IMPACTFUL EXPLORERS,

Buckle up, fellow adventurers! We are setting out on a journey filled with joy, inspiration, and a dash of whimsy as we navigate towards Destination Impact! As we embark on this adventure together, I am thrilled to share the inspiring highlights of our expedition through the landscapes of community transformation.

On our route to Destination Impact, every stop on our itinerary represents a triumph of collective effort and a testament to the power of community. In the ever-changing terrain of our community, your unwavering support has been our compass, guiding us through uncharted territories and propelling us

towards new horizons. Through your generosity and enthusiasm, we've transformed challenges into opportunities and setbacks into stepping-stones towards progress.

In this report, Philanthropy Phil will guide you through our journey of impact. Together, you will be immersed in impact stories of overcoming speed bumps in community development, surpassing the roadblocks hindering those on an adventure of healing, and paving new roads for success along the way.

To our donors, volunteers, partners, and staff—thank you for embarking on this adventure with us. Your passion, dedication, and spirit of adventure fuel our expedition and propel us towards our destination with determination. So, fasten your seatbelts and get ready to explore the vibrant landscapes of positive change we've cultivated together and continue our voyage towards a brighter, more impactful future for all.

With boundless excitement and gratitude,

Chief Explorer & Captain of Impact

ADVENTURE CREW



hey.

Nicole Smolkovich
Executive Director
Hometown: Herscher

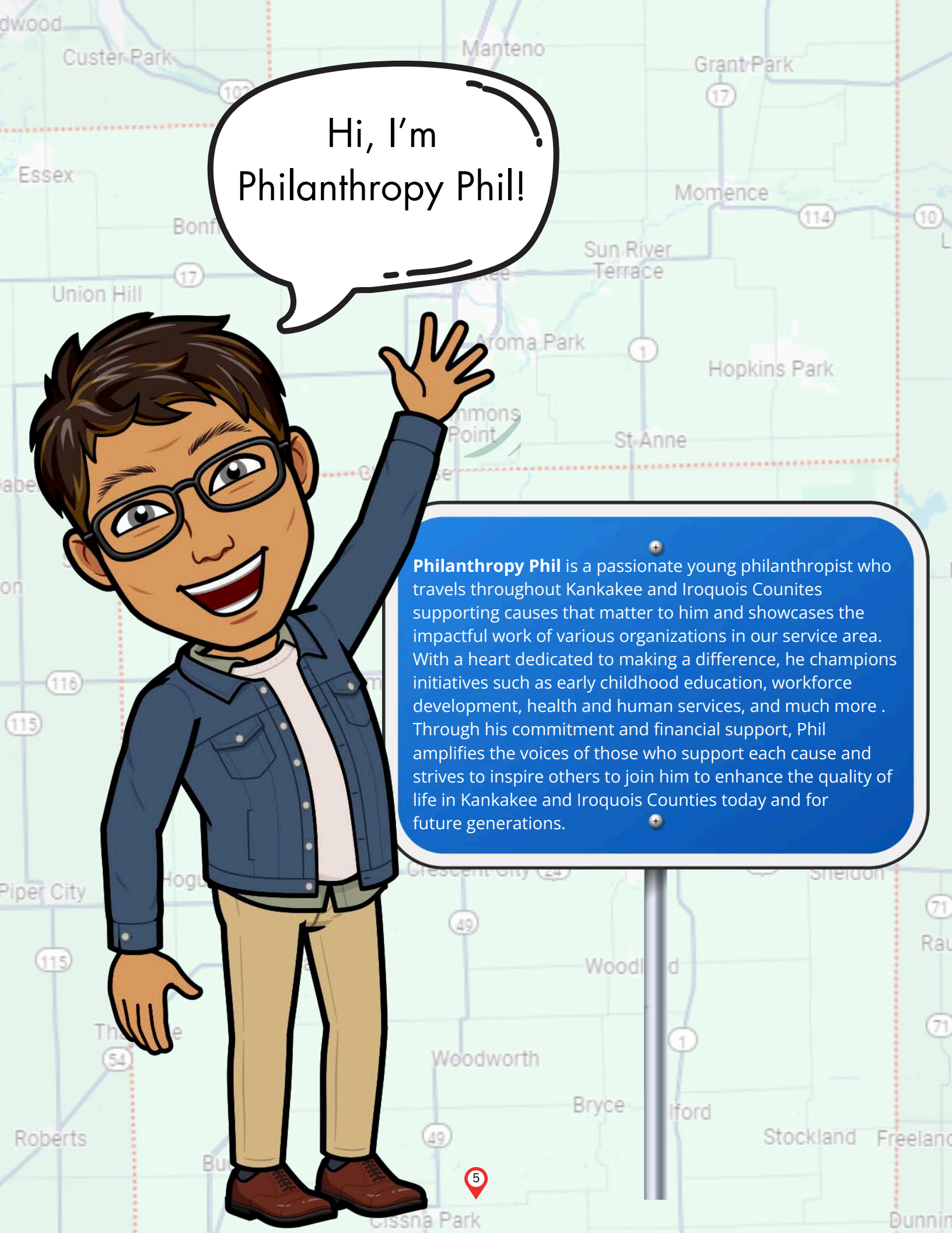


Mia Hansen,
Director of Programs
& Communications
Hometown: Manteno

hi



Theresa Kolasinski
Accounting Assistant
Hometown: Irwin

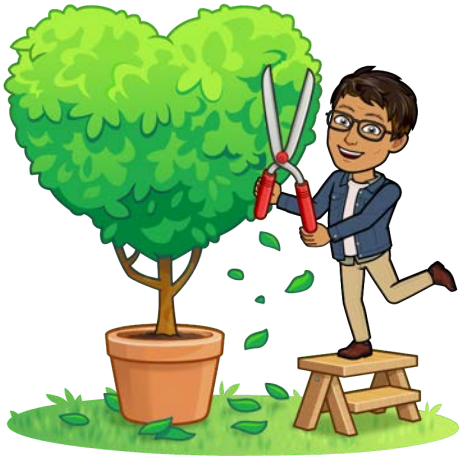


Hi, I'm
Philanthropy Phil!

Philanthropy Phil is a passionate young philanthropist who travels throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties supporting causes that matter to him and showcases the impactful work of various organizations in our service area. With a heart dedicated to making a difference, he champions initiatives such as early childhood education, workforce development, health and human services, and much more. Through his commitment and financial support, Phil amplifies the voices of those who support each cause and strives to inspire others to join him to enhance the quality of life in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties today and for future generations.

FAST FACTS 2023

FUNDS



We offer various types of funds to meet the philanthropic needs of our donors.

53

GRANTS DISTRIBUTED



Grants are awarded through our Spring and Fall grant cycles, and donor-advised funds.

\$240,084

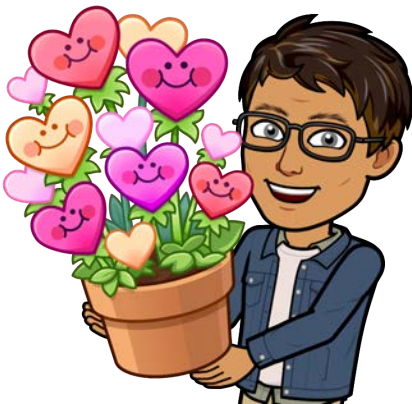
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED



By working with donors and local school districts we award scholarships to students to further their education.

\$68,751

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED



We support many organizations throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties.

54

ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT



Our diverse portfolio and experienced investment team ensures stable growth of our long term investments.

\$10.3 Million

5 YEAR AVERAGE RETURN ON INVESTMENTS



Growing our assets allows for greater impact in our communities.

7.97%

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets:		
Cash and Certificates of Deposit	\$ 277,984	\$ 295,562
Investments	9,752,981	8,703,146
Total Current Assets	10,030,965	8,998,710
FIXED ASSETS		
Furniture and Equipment	19,926	19,926
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(19,926)	(19,926)
Net Fixed Assets	-	
OTHER ASSETS		
Property	278,047	278,047
Total Assets	\$ 10,309,012	\$ 9,276,757
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable/Accrued Liabilities	\$ 8,559	\$ 8,465
Total Current Liabilities	8,559	8,465
NET ASSETS		
Temporarily Restricted Funds	3,325,743	2,324,146
Permanently Restricted Funds	6,974,710	6,944,146
Total Net Assets	10,300,453	9,268,291
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 10,309,012	\$ 9,276,757

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	2023	2022
Contributions	\$ 155,648	\$ 174,580
Grants	445,000	619,021
Investment Income	135,283	206,976
Gain (Loss) on Sale of Investments	(108,353)	149,247
Unrealized Gain on Investments	525,422	(1,787,719)
Administrative Fees Collected	53,235	64,509
Total Revenue and Support	1,206,235	-573,386
EXPENSES		
Operating Expenses	\$ 760,159	\$ 724,113
Charitable Disbursements	280,334	469,027
	1,040,493	1,193,140
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		
Net Assets- Beginning of Year	\$ 1,032,162	\$ (1,843,294)
Net Assets- End of Year	9,268,291	11,111,585
	<u>\$ 10,300,453</u>	<u>\$ 9,268,291</u>

Full Audited Financial Statements available in the Foundation Office



GROW YOUR LEGACY

Members of the Legacy Society are dedicated to enriching Kankakee and Iroquois Counties by pledging \$5,000 or more over a five-year period to the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley. They also introduce friends and colleagues to CFKRV, its mission, and its programs. Traditionally, each year Legacy Society members are invited to attend an exclusive Legacy Society event, honoring our donors and celebrating the year.

In the Fall of 2023, the Legacy Society members were the first to be invited to the Community Foundation's new home in the PNC Bank building. Members toured the office and celebrated the impact made through their donations and their donor-advised funds.

TRIBUTE DONATIONS

Making a donation to the Community Foundation is a special way to celebrate a loved one by contributing to a cause they care about. In 2023 donations were made in memory/honor of the following:

In memory of:

Albert A. and Elizabeth Wheeler Mau
Caitlin Poppie
Dave King
Donna Seggebruch
Dr. Lawrence T. Jacobson
Erica Lynn Paulissen
Janice Strasma
Ken Allers
Mianna Malone
Patricia A. Long
Randy Lehnus
Rebecca Schatz
Reverend William H. Copeland Jr.

Rich Jensen
Stacy and Chris Skarstad
Stevie Bajenski
Tim Orwig
Terry Moore
Zayla Ann Mitsdarffer

In honor:

Sarah Ann Robert
Norm Strasma

NEW FUNDS

Establishing a fund in memory of a loved one or a cause they care about is a meaningful way to ensure their legacy lives on to better the community for years to come. In 2023 two new funds at the Community Foundation were established:

Reverend William H. Copeland Jr Scholarship
Renville Cares Scholarship





DONOR TESTIMONIALS

Our mission is to connect people who care with causes that matter in our communities, and our passionate donors are the heart of our mission! We are grateful for the support, guidance, and trust our donors instill in the Community Foundation.

“ It is great to have professionals to handle my gift.

Wendy Skarstad,
Stacy & Chris Skarstad Memorial Scholarship”



Wendy Skarstad



Erica Paulissen

“ We are so proud of Erica’s Memorial Scholarship Fund and the good work of your organization in providing financial help to those deserving graduates.

David Paulissen,
Erica Lynn Paulissen Scholarship”

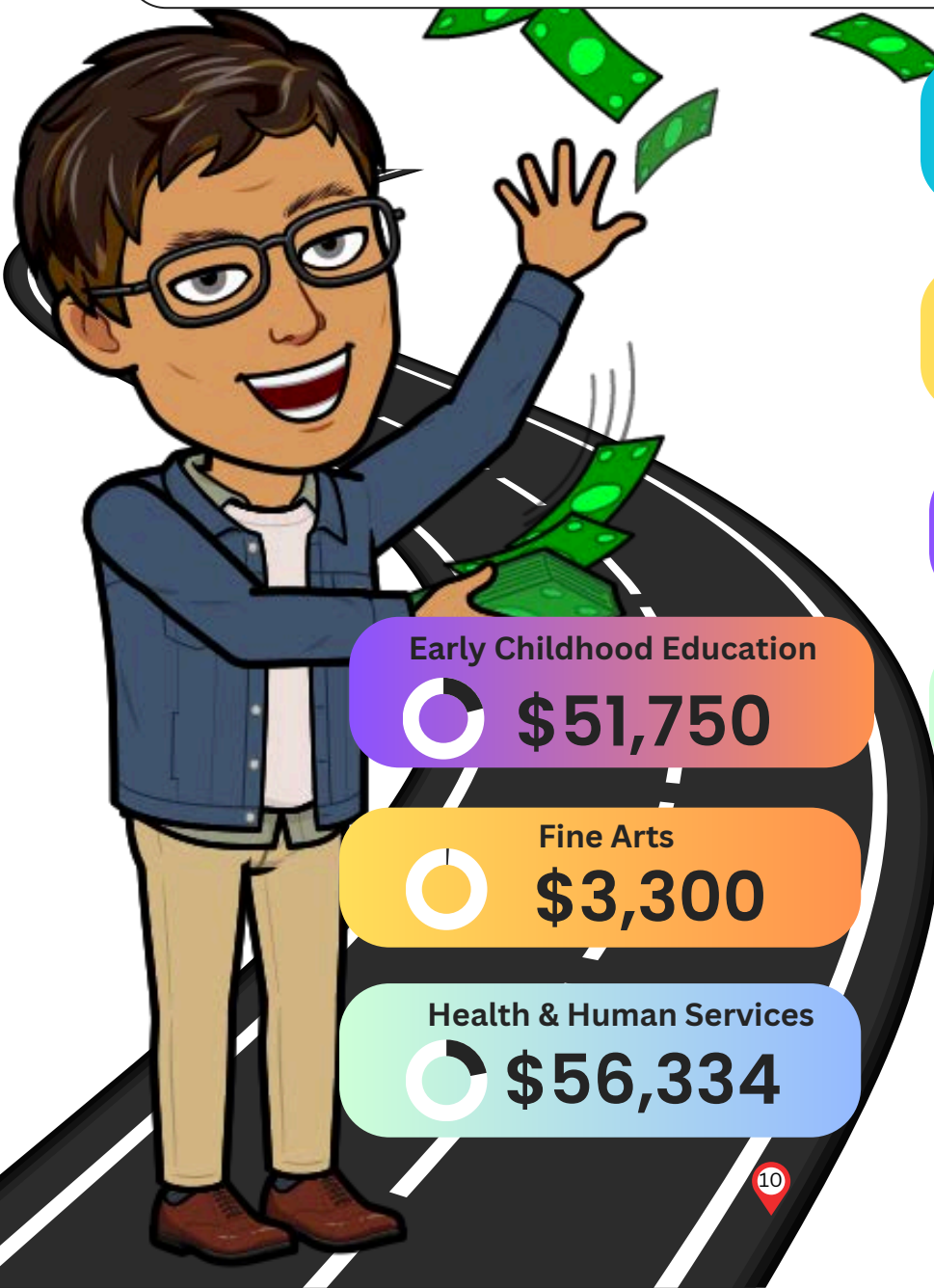
“ Bob Dunn’s commitment to the youth of his community during and after his life... could be an inspiration to other people in the community.

William Schmidt,
Robert K. Dunn Perpetual Charitable Trust”



2023 Grant Making

Community Foundation grants are generally distributed biannually, through our Spring and Fall Grant Cycles. These grant requests address the various needs throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. Donor-Advised Funds may make grant requests at any time throughout the year to nonprofit organizations of their choice. In 2023, a total of \$240,084 was awarded to organizations addressing the following focus areas in our counties.



Nonprofit Capacity Building



\$7,600

Land Use & Protection



\$18,750

Religious Support



\$9,984

Early Childhood Education



\$51,750

Women's Needs



\$8,000

Fine Arts



\$3,300

Workforce Development



\$60,750

Health & Human Services



\$56,334

Youth & Family



\$32,000

GRANTS

Coalition for Hope Excellence Education Fund
 Kankakee County CEO - Investor
 Kankakee Community College- Career Coach

Community Stewardship Fund
 Azzarelli Outreach Clinic of St. John Paul II Parish
 Iroquois County Youth Center
 Kiwanis Club of Kankakee
 Project Headspace and Timing

Communityworks Endowment Fund
 Blessings in a Backpack
 Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet
 Child Network
 Coalition for Hope Excellence Education Fund
 Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project
 Harbor House
 Herscher CUSD #2
 Kankakee Area YMCA
 KCC Baby Talk Program
 Kankakee County Health Department
 Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District
 Kankakee Riverfront Society, Inc
 LoveALatte Coffee Treats and Sweet Eats
 Pledge for Life Partnership
 Riverfront Trail Fund
 Riverside Healthcare Foundation
 Success by Six Fund-Iroquois
 Success by Six Fund-Kankakee
 Youth for Christ Kankakee City Life Center

Fine Arts Fund
 Country Theatre Workshop
 Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra
 Wright In Kankakee

Johnson Downs Fund
 Kankakee Area YMCA

Kankakee Development Fund
 Kankakee Development Corporation










Project SUN Fund
 Easterseals - Joliet Region

River Conservation Fund
 Riverfront Trail Fund

Rosie Fund
 Agape Community Outreach Mission
 Clove Alliance
 Harbor House
 The Salvation Army of Kankakee County

Undesignated Fund
 Agape Community Outreach Mission, Inc.
 Run A Way Buckers Club, Inc

United Way of Iroquois County Fund
 Supporting Iroquois Nonprofits

IMPACT KEY	
 Early Childhood Education	 Nonprofit Capacity Building:
 Fine Arts	 Religious Support
 Health & Human Services	 Women's Needs
 Land Use and Protection	 Work Force Development
	 Youth and Family

DONOR-ADVISED GRANTS

Dennis & Georgia Hess Fund
 Boy Scouts of America
 Good Shepherd Manor
 Harbor House
 Kankakee Area YMCA
 Kankakee Community College Foundation
 Kankakee County Training Center for the Disabled
 Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
 Marco Lutheran Church
 Olivet Nazarene University
 Prairieview Lutheran Foundation
 Riverside Healthcare Foundation
 St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School
 Tunnels to Towers Foundation
 United Way of Kankakee & Iroquois Counties
 Uplifted Care - Hospice of Kankakee Valley
 Wright In Kankakee

Florence McMullen Fund
 Kankakee Community College Foundation

Rebecca Schatz Memorial Fund
 Clifton Community Food Pantry
 Clove Alliance
 Options CIL
 St. Jude Research Hospital

Robert K. Dunn Perpetual Charitable Trust Fund
 Camp Shaw-wa-nas-see
 Child Network
 Dream Catcher Farms Rescue Corp
 Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project
 Kiwanis Club of Kankakee
 Nexus Family Healing
 Northern Illinois Food Bank
 Spirit of the Sol Inc NFP



TAKE CONTROL: NAVIGATE DIABETES WITH CONFIDENCE



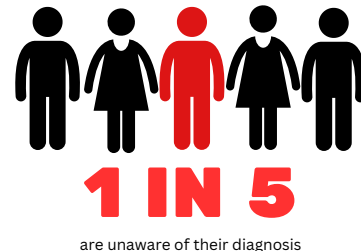
Azzarelli Outreach Clinic

The Azzarelli Outreach Clinic of St. John Paul II Parish offers healthcare services to the uninsured and underinsured, welcoming all who need assistance. Operated entirely by volunteer healthcare professionals and ancillary staff, their clinic is dedicated to reducing health disparities and providing care to those without other healthcare options. As the only 100% free medical center in Kankakee and the surrounding River Valley, their clinic treats over 1,300 patients annually, ensuring that all services are provided at no financial cost to them.

The majority of patients visiting the clinic have either Type I or Type II diabetes. The volunteer team aims to improve diabetes control and reduce health disparities through quality screenings, diagnosis, treatment, and enhanced patient education and empowerment strategies.

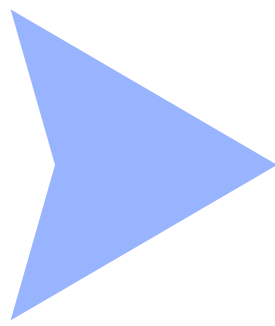
Through the clinic's comprehensive care program, patients receive free medications, regular foot and eye examinations, and essential supplies like blood glucose test kits. Research indicates that actively engaged patients tend to experience better health outcomes and slower disease progression. To empower patients in managing their diabetes, the clinic encourages regular home monitoring of blood glucose levels. By providing testing kits free of charge, the clinic enables patients to maintain control over their health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five Americans with diabetes and one in three with prediabetes are unaware of their condition. Early screening and treatment are crucial. For newly diagnosed patients, their providers conduct thorough history and physical examinations. Comprehensive blood panels are ordered to establish baseline levels and check for target organ damage. Diabetes can lead to both macrovascular and microvascular complications, increasing the risk of stroke, heart disease, kidney disease, blindness, and amputations. Therefore, every three months, their providers perform focused physical assessments and recheck bloodwork to monitor diabetes control and progression.



To further educate their patients, 975 placemats, available in both English and Spanish, were purchased to promote healthy eating habits among patients. These placemats serve as practical tools to guide patients in making nutritious food choices, a key component in controlling diabetes. A grant award through the Community Stewardship Fund provided assistance in these efforts of improving diabetes control in underinsured patients. Through access to healthcare and screenings, alongside education and empowerment, Azzarelli strives to detect diabetes early, manage the disease and minimize progression.





EAST RIVERWALK

Kankakee Riverfront Society: Currents of Kankakee

The Kankakee Riverfront Society is on a quest to transform our community through the implementation of the Kankakee Riverfront Master Plan. Their vision, The Currents of Kankakee, aims to create an extraordinary riverfront experience that will redefine our region's image, boost its marketplace appeal, and significantly enhance the quality of life for our residents. In tandem with our efforts on the Riverfront Trail projects the Currents of Kankakee are taking crucial steps toward this goal.

Despite some speedbumps and detours in their journey, groundbreaking for the East Riverwalk is set for the Summer of 2024, marking the first physical manifestation of their vision. Covering a three-acre area at the corner of Schuyler Ave and River St. in Kankakee, this development will include walkways, a parking lot, gathering spaces, a boardwalk, a pavilion, a preserved boathouse and archway, along with beautifully landscaped trees and shrubs.

The East River Walk will serve as a vibrant communal space where residents can gather, relax, and enjoy the natural beauty of the riverfront. With the potential for up to 12 phases, extending from the Frank Lloyd Wright property along South Harrison Avenue to Riverside Medical Center, each step will bring new opportunities for recreation, tourism, and economic growth.

The Currents of Kankakee is more than just an infrastructure project; they are in the driver's seat for community transformation county wide. With the help of a Communityworks Grant they are fostering a stronger sense of community, encouraging local investment, and improving the overall quality of life. This project symbolizes hope and progress, reflecting the commitment to enhancing the well-being of all who live in and visit Kankakee.



MUSIC IN THE PARK

Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra

The Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a vibrant music culture in our community, continues to enrich and maintain our cultural landscape through its Music in the Park series. This initiative presents a blend of classical symphonic music alongside popular genres, providing a casual and accessible platform for all to enjoy.

Set against the backdrop of Cobb Park in Kankakee, Music in the Park invites residents of all backgrounds to partake in the beauty of symphonic music, free of charge. Featuring performances by professional musicians from the Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra, these concerts offer a diverse repertoire spanning from Bach and Beethoven to contemporary favorites like the Beatles. The relaxed ambiance encourages attendees to immerse themselves in the enchanting melodies, fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the arts.

During the Strawberry Jazz Festival, a heartfelt moment unfolded, highlighting the profound impact of Music in the Park. Accompanied by an adult, a young boy in a wheelchair happened upon a performance by the KVSO brass quintet. Despite his disability, which limited his ability to speak or control many of his muscles, the boy's face lit up with joy as the music filled the air. His infectious smiles spread happiness to those around him, showcasing the transformative power of music. Witnessing this heartwarming scene, bystanders couldn't resist joining in the collective joy, illustrating the positive ripple effect of artistic expression.

This heartwarming encounter underscores the importance of providing accessible avenues for cultural enrichment.

By supporting Music in the Park with a Fine Arts Grant we not only bring world-class music to our community, but also create moments of pure delight and connection. Together, we continue to harmonize our community through the universal language of music, creating lasting memories and fostering a brighter, more vibrant future for all.





CAMP

SHAW - WAW - NAS - SEE

Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See stands as a guiding light of potential, nurturing outdoor appreciation and character growth through skill-building and teamwork. Their commitment to creating a transformative camp experience extends beyond recreation, but equips children with invaluable social, emotional, and leadership skills that will last a lifetime.

At Camp Shaw, youth explore an array of outdoor environments, leadership, challenges, and athletic activities. Through these experiences, they not only learn practical skills but also forge lasting bonds with their peers, extending beyond their time at camp.

Collaborating with Kankakee Forgives, Camp Shaw has developed a program to support youth in our communities affected by trauma. Through a grant generously funded by the Robert K Dunn Perpetual Charitable Trust, scholarships are awarded to campers across the county, providing them with an opportunity for healing and growth in the serene surroundings of Camp Shaw. This initiative not only supports ongoing anti-violence efforts in the City of Kankakee but also increases diversity and access to outdoor spaces for children who lack financial resources.

Recognizing the financial barriers that prevent some children from accessing camp, Camp Shaw is dedicated to ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all with the understanding that socio-economic status should not limit a child's opportunity for growth and enrichment. By fostering an inclusive environment where acceptance thrives and prejudice diminishes, they aim to establish a reflection of a more equal society.

As Camp Shaw continues to champion the transformative power of camp, they remain steadfast in their commitment to empowering youth, nurturing resilience, and fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society. Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See, is not just providing a summer escape; they are charting the course of positive change in the hearts and minds of our future leaders.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Through Community Foundation Scholarship Funds and local high school partnerships, \$68,751 was awarded to deserving students across Kankakee and Iroquois Counties in 2023.

African American Civic Leaders Scholarship

Brooklynn Baptist, Jerika Harris

Do It Stevie's Way Foundation Scholarship

Keegan Elliott, Jillian Fenton, Skylar Grabow, Carmen Houde, Kade Kohl, Elise Kukuck, Trenten Lance, Britta Lindgren, Kirstyn Lucht, Macey Moore, Maggie O'Brien, Aynslee Pase, Jay Ketan Patel, Landon Provost, Emma Taylor

Donna J. Seggebruch Scholarship

Lacey Lyn Jones, Britta Linda Lindgren

Erica Lynn Paulissen Scholarship Fund

Jerika Harris, Natalie Meyer

John Locke Scholarship

Tess Bottoms, Shelby Corbett, Nickolos Hall, Madison Kelly, Carson Splear

Herscher High School Scholarships

Albert A. and Elizabeth Wheeler Mau Memorial Scholarship

Emery Robinson

Caitlin Poppie Memorial Scholarship Fund

Emery Robinson, Kamryn Trammell

Dr. Lawrence T. Jacobson Leadership Memorial Scholarship

Emma Taylor

Herscher Athletic Booster Club Award

Travis Jones, Elise Kukuck

Herscher FFA Alumni Foundation Scholarship

McKayla Bissonnette, Hayden Johnson, Halie Kohl, Maggie O'Brien, Connor Overacker, Nolan Schott

Herscher High School Alumni Association Scholarship

Alyssa Buckner, Emery Robinson

Herscher High School Music Boosters Scholarship

Jillian Fenton, Lydia Jackson, Emma Taylor

Herscher High School Sports Fan Scholarship

Marissa Contreras, Travis Jones, Carter Puracchio, Emery Robinson

Herscher Lions Club Scholarship

Marissa Contreras, Zachary Schmidt

Herscher Senior of the Month Scholarship

Gwenyth Jackubowski, Elise Kukuck, Carter Puracchio, Emery Robinson, Zachary Schmidt, Kamryn Trammell, Lauren Uftring, Brock Wenzelman, Chloe Whalen

Kent Weakley Creative Scholarship

Lydia Jackson

Patricia A. Long Memorial Scholarship

Emery Robinson

Randy Lehnus Vocational Scholarship

Cole Depatis, Jackson Fritz, Anna Wakeley

Rich Jensen Scholarship

Brock Wenzelman

Riley Family Vocational Scholarship

McKayla Bissonnette, John Vana

Robert & Thelma Webber Scholarship

Travis Jones

Stacy & Chris Skarstad Memorial Scholarship

Ella Gessner, Travis Jones

Tim Orwig Memorial Scholarship

Ella Gessner, Zachary Schmidt

U2CT Scholarship

Travis Jones, Hailey King, Kade Kohl, Maggie O'Brien, Carter Puracchio, Emery Robinson, Emma Taylor, Lauren Uftring, Chloe Whalen

Zayla Mitsdarffer Memorial Scholarship

Zoey Fleischauer, Logan Schejbal, Emma Taylor

Women in Networking Scholarship

Natalie Seaton





JERIKA HARRIS

Health Sciences, Spelman College
Kankakee High School Graduate

Jerika Harris, a 2023 recipient of the Mayor Wells-Armstrong African American Civic Leaders Scholarship, is driven by her passion to change the world of healthcare. Graduating from Kankakee High School, her journey has been marked by an extraordinary commitment to her goals, a quality that has set her apart from her peers. Jerika describes herself as someone who will not take no for an answer when it comes to her future. Her acceptance into Spelman College is a testament to her hard work and resilience. This scholarship not only provides financial support, but also recognizes her potential to contribute significantly to the field of health sciences. She aspires to create equitable and attainable healthcare for all. **"I plan to serve others in my career by doing my part in making affordable and proactive healthcare available to all people of color regardless of socioeconomic status,"** says Jerika.

To further her education, she plans to pursue an advanced degree in surgical nursing. Although attending college 10 hours away, Kankakee will always be her hometown. **"Through my future career in Surgical Nursing, I would love to give back to the City of Kankakee by investing in the Kankakee School District to benefit those students who see nursing in their future,"** states Jerika.



"I have worked diligently throughout school to be in a position to make this dream of mine come true and it has. With Spelman being one of the top HBCUs in the country it has led me to believe that attending there will pave my way to success in the future."



NATALIE MEYER

Pharmacy, University of Iowa
Manteno High School Graduate

Driven by her passion for science and her commitment to aiding others through innovative medical solutions, Natalie chose to pursue her studies at an out-of-state institution, the University of Iowa. This decision was fueled by the University's distinguished drug discovery and pharmaceutical research program, which stands unparalleled in its field. Her ambitious aspirations are accompanied by a substantial price tag, however, the assistance provided by the Erica Lynn Pauliseen Scholarship has been invaluable in alleviating the costs associated with fulfilling her education. Natalie firmly believes in the transformative power of one person's actions, understanding how a single individual can make a significant difference in someone else's life journey. **"Every day presents a brand new opportunity to create a positive change in someone's life. One moment has the possibility to change everything,"** states Natalie. Indeed, it's fair to say that this scholarship has been a life-changing opportunity for Natalie, propelling her positively towards her dreams and aspirations of changing the lives of others.

"My goal is to become a pharmaceutical scientist and develop new medicines and treatments to change the future of medicine and help create a better quality of life for those undergoing various enduring health conditions."





PROJECT SUN

Project SUN is a **Strong** and **Unified Network** dedicated to strengthening Kankakee County's behavioral health system of care so that children and their families flourish. Project SUN accomplishes their mission and vision and enacts their values through four workgroups or focus areas:

- Cultural Competency
- Family & Youth Engagement
- Mental Health Service Expansion
- Navigation Assistance.

In 2023 these workgroups brought a variety of programs, opportunities, and support to the Kankakee County community.

Cultural Competency

The Cultural Competency workgroup hosted two rounds of "My Piece in the Puzzle," a multi-week class for racial equity and healing, and trained eight Racial Healing Ambassadors to further the program's reach.

Family & Youth Engagement

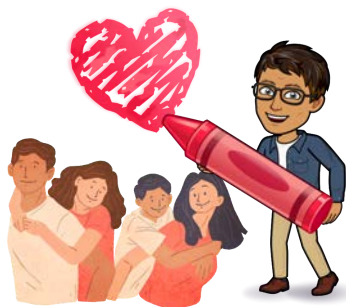
This workgroup offered various programs which meet monthly to support family and youth engagement. These include Cyndi's monthly Caregiver Craft Club which provides caregivers with an outlet to help with their own mental stress, and NAMI family support meetings. Also included is the Youth Advisory Council, which hosted a teen mental health wellness summit, and the Parent Advisory Council which provided training on IEP preparation and suicide conversations. In the effort to serve all families in Kankakee County, Project SUN developed the Consejo Asesor de Padres, support program specific for Spanish-speaking parents who have children that are navigating the Mental Health system of care.

Mental Health Service Expansion Group

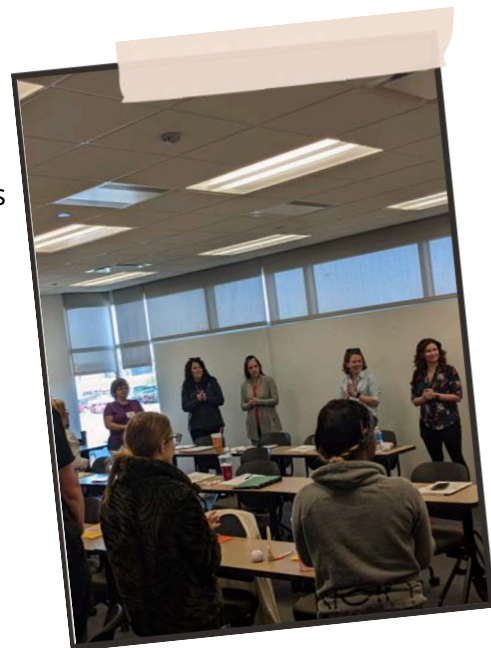
This group provided Summer Wellness sessions for children grades 4-8 to supplement services during the school year. Project SUN and the Theraplay County Planning Team continue to drive the efforts of using Sunshine Circles by hosting Sunshine Circle Trainings and offering support to other organizations. "Play to Connect," is a parenting curriculum based on the four Dimensions of Theraplay® and is near completion.

Navigation Assistance

This workgroup helped 41 families navigate the care system and maintained the Kan-I-Help database, a vital resource directory for the community.



These efforts have positively impacted Kankakee County's behavioral health landscape by promoting equity, supporting families, expanding mental health services, and providing essential navigation assistance, leading toward a more resilient community.





Early in the year, the Success by 6 steering committee, along with the Coalition, took time to revise and refine their new strategic plan. This plan categorized the goals and objectives of Success by 6 into three categories: Healthy Beginnings, Supported Families, and Workforce Development. Each goal formed its own action team, led by steering committee members and involved partners.

In June, the Healthy Beginnings action team launched the Family Support Bus partnership with help of Bourbonnais School District 53 and home visiting programs. The Bourbonnais School District offered their family support bus as a mobile site to host developmental screenings for children ages 0-5. The bus features an open layout which allows for the screening to take place comfortably and discreetly. After the screening is performed,

it is reviewed with the parents and recommendations can be made if further intervention is required.

The bus made its first appearance at the Kankakee Farmers Market on June 10 at the Success by 6 Early Childhood Fair. The Early Childhood Fair is an event planned by the Supported Families action team, providing an abundance of resources and activities to families visiting the fair. Success by 6 is a jointly funded initiative between the Community Foundation and United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties in efforts to support our community through family and parent engagement, early behavioral and mental health services and greater awareness of resources for parents, caregivers, and early childhood providers.



ceuo® KANKAKEE COUNTY

creating entrepreneurial opportunities

In line with its vision to enhance the quality of life in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties, the Community Foundation set out to introduce the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) program to the area. With support of the Communityworks Fund, guidance from the board of directors an abundance of community support, CEO launched its inaugural class in the Fall of 2023.

Led by facilitator Katie Bretzlaff, five students from surrounding area high schools took on the challenge of becoming the first Kankakee County CEO class. They began their journey with local business visits, tours, and guest speakers to immerse them in the world of entrepreneurship.

Students developed their first class business creating name badges for the CEO students to wear while on their networking and educational endeavors. Students used the badges to sell advertising space to local businesses. In November, the class hosted the Fall Meet and Greet, introducing the team to community partners and investors. With the taste of a business mind, students began their plan to launch their next big thing. In December 2023 they introduced their next venture, Trivia Night - Across the Generations, to be held in February 2024. In the spring semester each student will devise their own individual businesses, pitch them nationwide, and host a local Trade Show in the community.





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