

2023

TUCKER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ANNUAL
REPORT

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Letter from the President



The three well-recognized characteristics of philanthropy are Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Treasure is shorthand for financial contributions you can make or encourage from our wonderful community members. The engine only runs on money.

None of us are as wealthy as those big-name philanthropists, but our power lies in hundreds of small donations, not just a few big ones.

Time is a measure of the dedication you, as a member of our Board, can commit to making the Tucker Community Foundation sound and relevant to our community needs. Time is a precious commodity for everyone, but it is probably the most essential characteristic we can volunteer for.

Talent encompasses all the items in your personal skill set, our staff's skill set, and our large community of volunteers. Every one of you brings a fresh, unique mindset to the issues we face in our community philanthropy.

I want to add another "T-word" to this triplet: "Tenacity." Nothing comes without effort, especially in the practice of community philanthropy. Every project at the Foundation calls for the dedicated support of every one of us every day throughout the year.



Initiating any foundation project requires a mountain of dedicated work and attention from all of us. But that is only the beginning of the thoughtful labor we all need to provide continuously. Make it your personal challenge this year to jump in and lend a hand on every initiative of the Tucker Community Foundation. To continue to make our communities better every day, every year, we must be super-tenacious.

— **DAVID MORAN**
Tucker Community Foundation Board
President

Mission & Values

The Tucker Community Foundation was established in the aftermath of the catastrophic flood of 1985.



A group of committed philanthropists were motivated to set up a grassroots community foundation to offer solace and hope to those who had lost everything. Their vision was to create an organization extending from the flood to the world beyond. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, who are committed to our mission and vision, the communities we serve can strive for a more productive and secure future.

Our Mission

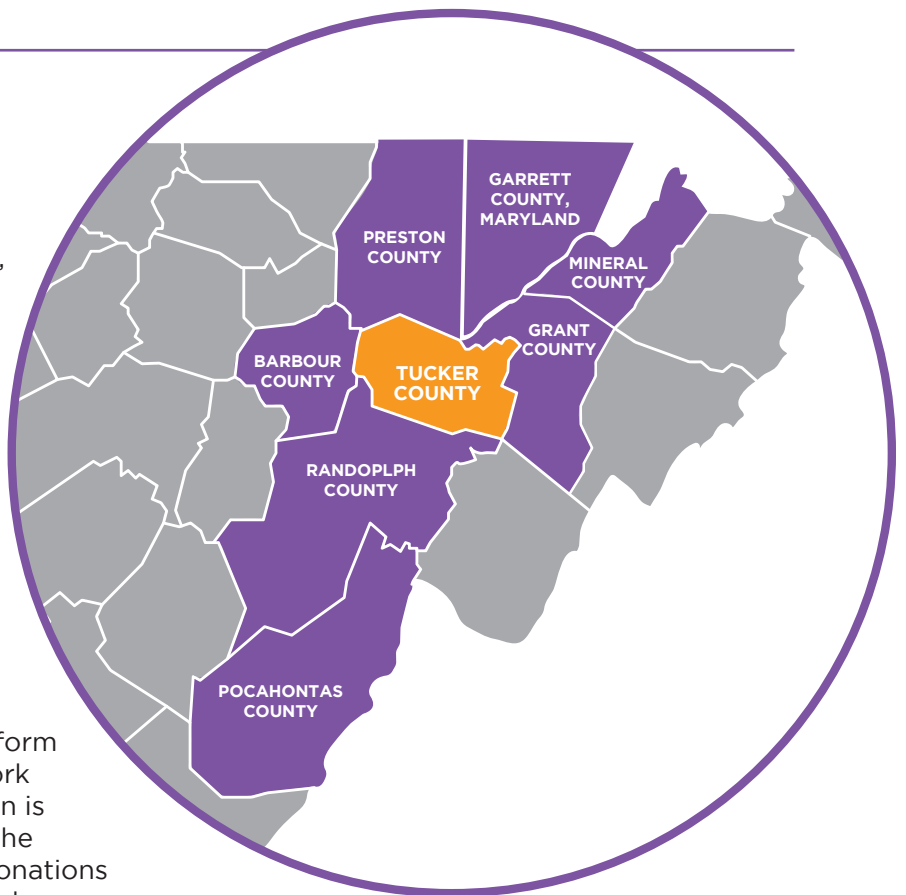
Creating opportunities for the communities we serve in West Virginia and Maryland in Barbour, Grant, Mineral, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Tucker, and Garrett Counties.

Our Vision

Tucker Community Foundation strives to inspire a more productive and sustainable future by fostering a culture of giving without expecting personal gain.

What We Do

The Tucker Community Foundation is a charitable organization providing a platform for thousands of people to unite and work towards a common goal. The Foundation is dedicated to sustaining and improving the quality of life in the region by pooling donations from individuals, families, businesses, and organizations.



 SERVICE AREA  FOUNDING MARKET



These donations are used to create new Endowed Funds or enhance existing ones, which the Foundation manages. The funds are invested, and the income earned from these investments is used to make annual distributions through grant and scholarship awards.

The Foundation plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges posed by changing times by providing financial support to individuals and organizations making a positive impact in the region. By using the collective power of donations, the Foundation can make meaningful differences in peoples' lives in the Potomac Highlands and beyond.

What We Believe

We strongly believe that preserving and safeguarding our heritage should be a crucial part of all the decisions made by the Foundation. When we refer to heritage, we mean our cultural and social surroundings, our self-sufficiency driven by a strong motivation to share, family values, community spirit, a sense of belonging, natives often returning to the community, and rural freedom.

We uphold high standards of conduct and ethics, as well as believe in honesty and transparency with the community, donors, Foundation grantees, and ourselves. We consider avoiding conflicts of interest, both in our actions and how they appear, paramount. We believe that communicating our values to the public is vital to our organization and our service to the community.

We are open-minded and value the knowledge gained from the opinions of all people. We believe that all actions the Foundation takes must yield the most significant benefit for the communities we serve.



Our Impact at a Glance

Harman Fund

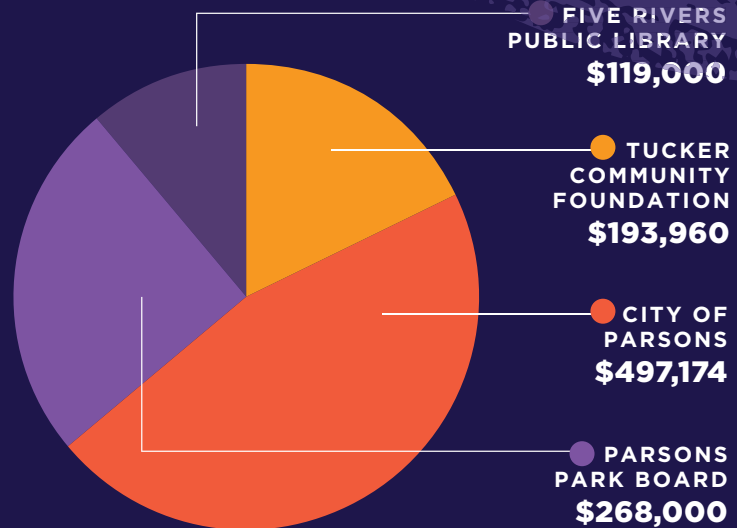
TOTAL ASSETS MANAGED

\$21,253,340

TOTAL GRANTS PAID OUT

\$1,078,134

TOTAL DISTRIBUTIONS



Tucker Community Foundation

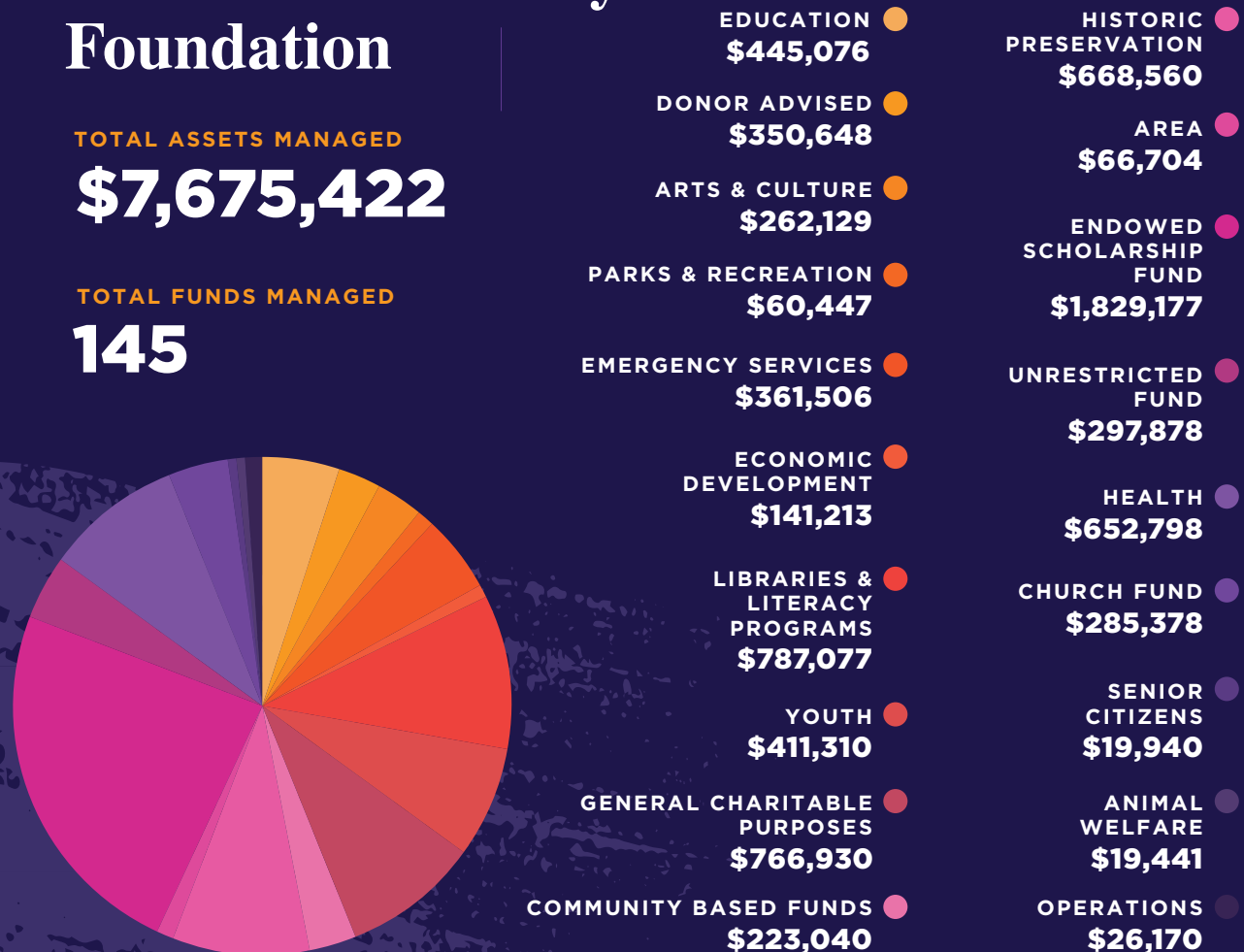
TOTAL ASSETS MANAGED

\$7,675,422

TOTAL FUNDS MANAGED

145

ASSETS BY FUND TYPE

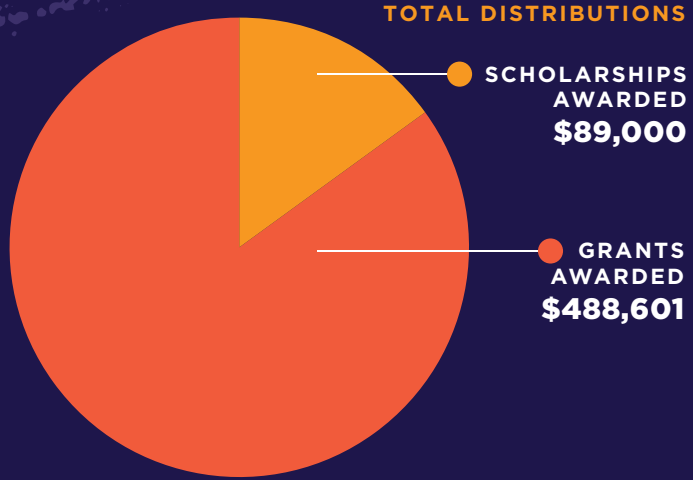


GROSS CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

\$517,531

TOTAL DISTRIBUTIONS

\$577,601



Grants

TOTAL DONORS

1,059

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

\$517,531

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED

162

TOTAL GRANT DISTRIBUTION

\$488,601



SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR A LIST OF 2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Scholarships

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS

67 Students

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS AWARDED

\$89,000

AVERAGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PER STUDENT

\$1,328



SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR A LIST OF 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Letter from the CEO

The flood of '85 was life-altering for many communities in West Virginia. In Tucker County, the City of Parsons and other communities along the Cheat River were in the national spotlight as the devastation was realized. Lives were lost and homes and businesses were ravaged, some beyond repair. The economic impact was catastrophic, but the human response was inspirational – neighbors helping neighbors. Community leaders took up the call to action and as a result, the Tucker Community Foundation was established.

The goal was to build a pool of resources that would sustain and strengthen the history, culture, values, and traditions of our Tucker community. The success of that model has had an even greater impact as seven counties have now joined our service area. Donors are generously providing financial support and security to non-profit agencies, students, and local institutions in Barbour, Grant, Mineral, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, and Tucker Counties in West Virginia and Garrett County, Maryland. This growth is due to your support and involvement. You are making a difference.

The Foundation is motivated by the past, responsive to the present, and planning for the future. Strategic planning is a priority. You can help! Contact us to share your ideas and resources. Your support and involvement can traverse mountains, rivers, trails, small cities, towns, and even state boundaries. You can be an active participant in the growth and revitalization of our region. It only takes one individual human being who endeavors to help one another.



Philanthropy comes in many forms. Caring deeply about a place or a cause and contributing with your time, your talent or your resources can result in innovative and exciting changes. A strong, resilient community is an engaged community. We invite you to join us in this journey of community self-development, to share your ideas, volunteer your time, and express your vision for the future of our mountain region, a future that's secure, sound, and built on the principles of neighbors helping neighbors.

I hope you enjoy our 2023 Annual Report. These pages reflect our history, our impact, and our vision. Our founders understood the value - and the potential - of giving local. That foresight has had a profound effect on students, communities, and non-profit organizations throughout the region.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

— **DAVID "COOP" COOPER**
Chief Executive Officer

New Endowments

Arvin Harsh Community Educational Improvement Fund

The Aurora School was in danger of being closed, but the community came together to ensure that the students in the area continued to receive high-quality education. Thanks to the leadership of Arvin Harsh, the community campaign was successful, and a fund was created to support local students and enhance their learning experience. This fund aims to provide grants for student support, educational enhancement programs, and financial aid to local students pursuing careers that can help boost the local economy. The fund can also train non-traditional learners in trades and other areas, further improving their employment prospects. With this fund in place, the community's commitment to education and economic development is stronger than ever.

“Dutch” Easton Family Fund

Garrett James “Dutch” Easton, a gifted and passionate graphic artist, left an indelible mark on those who knew him. Despite his untimely passing in 2004, his legacy lives on through the Easton family's philanthropic efforts. The fund they established, dedicated to aiding children, adolescents, and families in the Tucker Community Foundation service area with mental health and substance abuse disorders, is a testament to Dutch's enduring impact during his brief time with us.

Myers Family Scholarship Fund

Walter Myers, a native of Tucker County, had a rich and diverse life. After graduating from Parsons High School in 1961, he served in the United States Army. In 1966, he married his wife, Vivian, a fellow West Virginian. The couple eventually settled in Charleston, where Walter found work in the telecommunications industry.



To honor the memory of their beloved sons, the Myers family created a scholarship fund. They had four children: Tania, Walter II, Nadia, and Adam. Unfortunately, Walter II passed away in April 2015, and Adam passed away in September 2017.

The fund aims to provide a scholarship to a deserving student from Tucker County and/or Preston County, preferably someone who plans to attend Potomac State College of West Virginia University. Students pursuing a degree in Mental Health and Addiction Studies Program or Psychology will receive preference.

Tygart Valley Shrine Club Fund

The Tygart Valley Shrine Club is a non-profit organization serving the Randolph, Tucker, and Barbour County communities. The club is dedicated to helping pediatric patients receive the medical care they need, by providing travel expenses for their transport to Shriners Hospitals in Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The Tygart Valley Shrine Club Fund was created to support this mission. The Fund provides financial assistance for the travel expenses of pediatric patients and their families. This support is essential for families who would otherwise struggle with the high costs of travel. The Foundation's Board of Directors has complete discretion over the allocation of the Fund, ensuring that every dollar is used to support the Tygart Valley Shrine Club's mission.



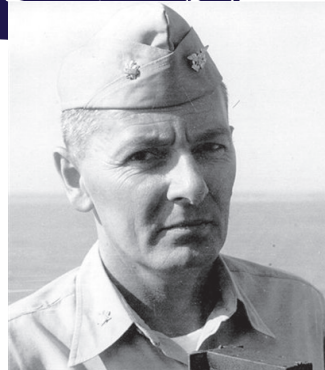
**SCAN THIS QR CODE
FOR A LIST OF
ENDOWED FUNDS**

How to Start an Endowed Fund

Investing in a fund with the Tucker Community Foundation is a timeless act of building something that will benefit both present and future generations. It's like constructing a root cellar – laying the foundation stone by stone until the structure is in place. Once it's ready, you can stock it each year with your surplus until enough is stored away to guarantee its longevity. Like the resilient Appalachian root cellar, the fund will endure the test of time and provide many opportunities for generations to come.

Giving To Any Fund

We offer multiple ways to make donations. You can donate by calling our office or visiting our website at www.tuckerfoundation.net. On our website, you can make a donation via PayPal



using a credit card. If you prefer to send a check, you can do so by mailing to P.O. Box 491, Parsons, WV 26287. If you prefer to make a cash donation, you can do so in person at our office. We also offer the option to make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one.

Types Of Gifts Accepted

The Tucker Community Foundation welcomes donations of different kinds, such as cash gifts, appreciated securities, life insurance, bequests, gifts of other assets, charitable remainder trusts, transfers of a private foundation, and gifts from retirement accounts. Each type of contribution offers its own tax advantages and benefits, which you can discuss with your attorney or financial advisor.



Creating An Endowment

An endowment is a fund created when a donor transfers money or property to the Foundation. The principal remains untouched and is invested, and the income generated supports your intended cause through grants, scholarships, or other programs.

To create your fund, define your charitable and financial objectives, select the type of fund, determine assets to use, choose a name, contact the Foundation office, complete the Fund Agreement, and transfer your assets. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, your fund will be announced and may then receive subsequent donations.

Types of Endowment Funds

The Tucker Community Foundation offers various funds for donors with specific giving objectives. The Unrestricted Fund gives full autonomy to the Foundation in allocating the gifts. The Field of Interest Fund targets areas like health, education, animal welfare, and historic preservation. With the Donor-Advised Fund, donors can make specific



recommendations. The Designated Fund benefits a specific organization, and the Agency Endowed Fund supports non-profits in creating long-term endowments. The Scholarship Fund helps students pursue their education, and the Cemetery Preservation Fund maintains and beautifies cemeteries.

Minimum Fund Requirements

UNRESTRICTED

\$2,000 to initiate
\$10,000 to establish

DESIGNATED

\$2,000 to initiate
\$10,000 to establish

AGENCY ENDOWED

\$2,000 to initiate
\$10,000 to establish

FIELD OF INTEREST

\$2,000 to initiate
\$10,000 to establish

SCHOLARSHIP

\$4,000 to initiate
\$20,000 to establish

DONOR-ADVISED

\$4,000 to initiate
\$20,000 to establish

Initiated funds have five (5) years to meet the minimum fund requirement, at which point grant or scholarship awards can be distributed.

How to Apply for Scholarships and Grant Awards

Scholarships

We provide over 40 scholarships in West Virginia and Maryland to support students in their pursuit of success. Our scholarships ease financial burdens, enabling students to focus on their studies and follow their dreams.

One of the standout features of the Foundation's scholarships is the direct provision of funds to the recipients, bypassing the school. This unique approach allows students to use the funds for various needs, be it books, semester fees, or any additional expenses that may arise during their academic journey.

The Foundation's scholarship program is a beacon of inclusivity, welcoming applicants from high school, college, trade school, and non-traditional backgrounds. We believe that every student, regardless of their academic path, should have the opportunity to succeed. Our scholarships are available for a diverse range of fields, ensuring that students from all academic backgrounds have an equal opportunity to apply and thrive.

Scholarship applications are available in early January and are due in mid-March. They are available online at tuckerfoundation.net, the Foundation office in Parsons, West Virginia, and all the Foundation's eight-county service area high schools. The Foundation is committed to helping students achieve their academic and professional goals and is proud to support the community in this way.



Grants

The Foundation awards over 50 grants to organizations, volunteer groups, and individuals working to create positive change in their communities within our service area.

The Foundation's grant funding is due to the generosity of donors who have established and contributed to the endowed and unrestricted funds created through the Foundation. While some funds are targeted to support specific charitable areas, others are written to have a much wider reach.

Our grants have a wide-ranging impact, supporting charitable service areas such as the arts, education, health, emergency services, community development, parks, libraries, historic preservation, and more. The grants we've awarded in the past have made a significant difference in our communities, helping a high school theater group build a set, a church's food pantry restock its shelves, and a search and recovery crew acquire new emergency equipment. This diversity of support reflects our commitment to creating positive change in our communities.

Grant applications are available in early August and are due in late September. They can be found online at tuckerfoundation.net as well as the Foundation office in Parsons, West Virginia.



Uncle Sam's Birthday Party:

A Celebration of Community Giving



As the warmth of summer envelops our beautiful mountain state, the Foundation's friends, donors, and supporters gather in Canaan Valley to celebrate a long-standing tradition—Uncle Sam's Birthday Party. This annual elimination dinner is the Foundation's longest-running fundraiser, providing unrestricted grant and scholarship awards to local organizations and students in our eight-county service region. It also supports critical general operating funds for the Foundation.

Since its inception in 1989, Uncle Sam's Birthday Party has been instrumental in introducing the Foundation's important work to a captivated audience, allowing it to expand its reach and create opportunities for the communities it serves. Your participation is a direct and significant contribution to the betterment of our community.

In 2023, Uncle Sam's Birthday Party was not just a success; it was a testament to the generosity and support of our community. The Foundation hosted a sell-out crowd and raised \$50,880. These funds directly impacted our ability to issue \$488,601 in grants and \$89,000 in scholarships to 67 deserving students within our service region. The Foundation was also



honored to have the generous support of numerous local business partners who provided funding, gifts, and prizes. This success is a reflection of the strength and unity of our community.

The event's growth over the years is a testament to the tenacity of the Foundation's founding members, who dared to dream the impossible. One of our founding board members, Tom Patrick, created this beloved annual celebration and was the master of ceremonies for eleven years, ensuring the event grew with more door prizes, raffles, fun, and improved fundraising results. Uncle Sam's Birthday Party is a significant fundraiser for the organization and an enduring tribute to the groundbreaking vision of the Foundation.



**SCAN THIS QR CODE
FOR A LIST OF
ATTENDEES**

Run For It!

Racing to Make a Difference

Run For It, a program developed by the Tucker Community Foundation is not just about supporting non-profit organizations in West Virginia and Maryland. It's about inspiring healthier lifestyles.

Since its inception in 2007, the program has motivated people of all ages and abilities to lead healthier lives. It's a platform that engages people in healthy activities and teaches them the value of using resources for non-profits and charities.



Non-profit and charitable organizations in the region often face limited resources, but Run For It encourages them to use their resources to gain critical operational support. The program has been immensely successful, generating over \$2.9 million and positively impacting the local economy by attracting serious racers and families to the area, as well as supporting local businesses. The program has also served as a networking opportunity that has brought together various agencies, programs, projects, and people throughout West Virginia, Maryland, and beyond.

The program supports non-profit and charitable organizations in raising funds through entry fees, team sponsorship, and race-day awards. 100% of team sponsor donations and race-day awards go towards the team's chosen cause, while half of the entry fees are donated. The program supports causes, including the arts, animal welfare, challenged athletes, charities, community improvement projects, and more.

Run For It is a 2k walk and a USATF-certified 5k race around the scenic mountain town of Davis,



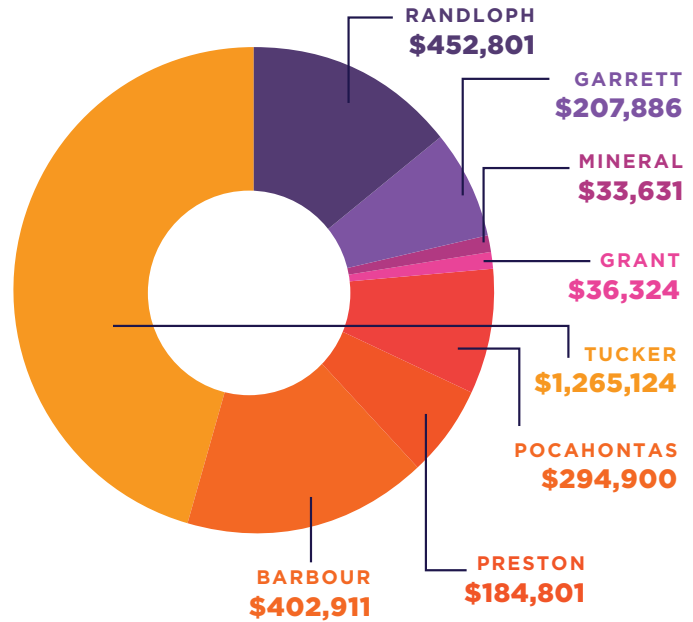


WV, during the Leaf Peepers Festival. Each year, Run For It team registration kicks off on April 1st, with the Foundation challenging participants to form teams to support community causes of their choice during a six-month campaign. On the last Saturday in September, the teams run, walk, roll, and stroll for their cause.

In 2023, the Run For It program was a testament to the power of collective action. It attracted 1,389 walkers and runners, raising a staggering \$287,595. These funds were instrumental in supporting 78 non-profit organizations and groups in the Potomac Highlands and beyond. The program has promoted healthy activities and empowered non-profit and charitable organizations, fostering a sense of hope and optimism in the region.

Proceeds Distributed Since 2007

Total Distribution: \$2,878,378



SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR A LIST OF 2023 DISTRIBUTIONS, WINNERS, AND SPONSORS



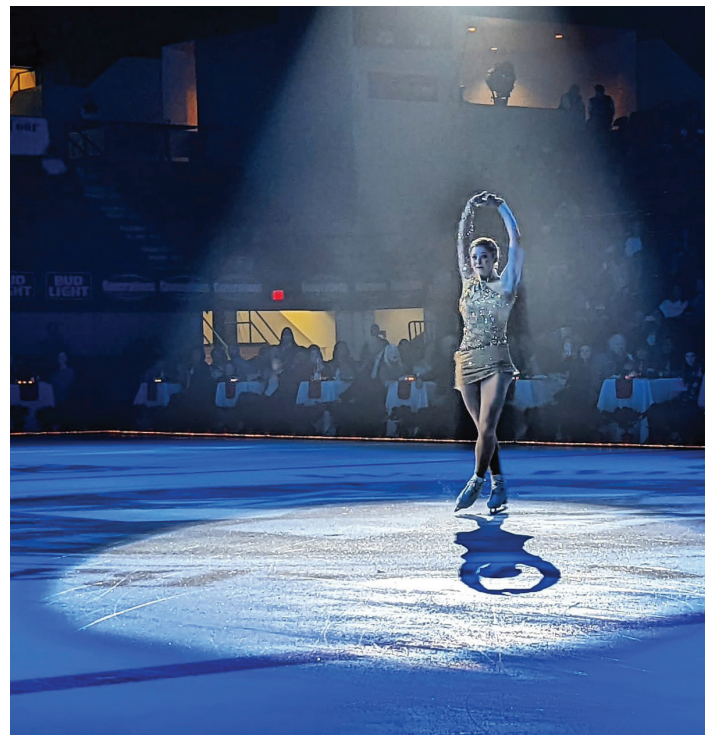


Holiday Road Trip:

The Wheeling Symphony Orchestra's Symphony on Ice

Imagine over 200 student choir members from five high schools in West Virginia, all on stage with the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, performing the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. The unforgettable sights and sounds of this special night at the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra's Symphony on Ice were a treat for all who attended, thanks to the Tucker Community Foundation.

It all began when the Foundation commissioned West Virginia's renowned composer, Matthew Jackfert, to write music for the Independence Day celebration in Canaan Valley. His composition, "Canaan Valley Suite," which was dedicated to the philanthropic character of our communities, was featured at the annual Independence Day concert by the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra in 2023. Jackfert's music was so well-received that conductor John



Devlin challenged us from the podium to attend Symphony on Ice in Wheeling.

The Foundation accepted this challenge, and on November 30, 2023, we all boarded a chartered tour bus to go to Wheeling for the concert. Neither snow nor sleet nor gloom of night deterred us from the spirit of community that developed instantly on the bus and lasted throughout the entire evening.

The Wheeling Symphony Orchestra continues this beloved holiday tradition by performing holiday classics, while local figure skating clubs take to the ice alongside professional and Olympic-level skaters. The high school and middle school choirs from our West Virginia communities joined Maestro Devlin and the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra for this spectacular performance. Even old Saint Nick himself made a guest appearance out on the ice in his sleigh.

The Symphony on Ice is a true community effort, and we are grateful for the musicians, skaters, volunteers, board members, stage crew, and teachers who worked hard to create a magical evening. We are all looking forward to the next community outing to see the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra's Symphony on Ice and celebrate the holidays in the spirit of philanthropy that defines the Foundation.

The Road Less Traveled: Heroes on an Unconventional Journey

Our adult scholars are a testament to boundless human potential, inspiring us to pursue growth and transformation. Often referred to as “non-traditional” students, they challenge conventional norms and contribute to a diverse and enriched learning environment. Let’s celebrate their achievements, follow in their footsteps, and commit ourselves to lifelong learning and growth.

Natalie Josimovich

Natalie Josimovich, a talented artist and educator, has recently taken up the role of Art Teacher at Harman School in Randolph County. The school, which offers a full-spectrum curriculum from Kindergarten to 12th grade, allows Natalie to cultivate artistic talent in her students throughout their educational journey. In addition to her art teacher role, Natalie is the Drama Teacher responsible for the school’s theatre performance of “No School Spirit PSA,” which has garnered public acclaim.

Natalie’s love for creating artwork has been integral to her life since childhood. She has always enjoyed expressing her creativity through various mediums and techniques. Her passion for art led her to pursue a degree in Art Education from Davis & Elkins College, where she honed her skills in creating art using various materials such as clay and paper-mâché. She then explored new and innovative artistic styles through 3-D printing.

Natalie’s exceptional talents and artistic abilities earned her a place at the prestigious Art Academy of Cincinnati. In 2020, she was awarded a Tucker Community Foundation scholarship, which enabled her to complete her master’s degree in Art Education. With her extensive training and experience, Natalie is well-equipped to teach art and creative drama at Harman School. She believes that these two subjects compliment each other perfectly and



allow her to develop a well-rounded and holistic curriculum for her students.

Natalie is thrilled to be part of the Harman School community and is committed to enriching the educational experience of each of the 120 students under her guidance. She sees Randolph County as her true home and is excited to contribute her knowledge and expertise to enhancing learning at Harman School.



Our dedication to our communities and families drives us. Education keeps us going. Every adult student's triumph inspires us. It's never too late to pursue education. Let's all follow their lead and seize opportunities.

Kara Maust

Kara Maust's love for children is evident in her natural rapport with them, which surpasses every requirement for teaching. She is a proud mother of four girls, aged four to ten, and has been a foster parent to numerous children needing a home for the past decade. Kara and her husband have seen many foster children come and go, but she cherishes every opportunity to contribute to their educational needs, regardless of age.

Kara's journey towards becoming an educator began with an associate's degree in Elementary Education 14 years ago. However, providing a nurturing family environment for her children and foster children took up most of her time. Despite this, Kara never gave up on her dream of continuing her studies. Thanks to the Dr. Mary Alice Klein Scholarship from the Tucker Community Foundation, she finally has the opportunity to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education at Grand Canyon University (GCU).

GCU is a Christian university that prepares its graduates to serve humanity in various fields. Education is one of the primary areas

of its commitment to students. Fortunately, Kara can complete most of her coursework online, balancing her studies with her teaching obligations at Calvary School in Cresaptown, Maryland.

Kara combines her educational skills with her artistic talents to teach reading to pre-kindergarten students through tactile stimuli. She uses play-dough letters and encourages her students to write with their fingers in sand or salt boxes, among other methods. Kara is proud to tailor her teaching approach to each student's unique needs, abilities, and interests.

“We look forward to the day when Kara's students will apply for our scholarships, just like Kara did, to receive the financial support they need to pursue their dreams.”

— Mr. Moran

Finding time to study can be challenging for adult learners. It can be lonely if you're studying from home, or you may feel like you stand out from other students on campus. But remember, you are there to learn and grow like everyone else.



Joseph Strait

When Joseph Strait was only 14 years old and a member of the Explorer Scouts, he discovered his passion for becoming a paramedic. During this time, Joseph worked with a search and rescue team on real cases, and he was hooked. He knew he wanted to make a career by helping others in need. Even as Joseph pursued a military career, he never lost sight of his goal to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

After retiring as a Drill Sergeant from the Army, Joseph settled in Canaan Valley. His wife was originally from a farm on the Sinks of Gandy, and the Canaan Valley/Davis area felt like the perfect place to call home. Joseph joined the Canaan Valley Volunteer Fire Department and has served the community for ten years.

Joseph's dream of advancing his EMT status to becoming an EMT Educator has never wavered. He is currently studying at Pierpont Community and Technical College to achieve this goal. Additionally, Joseph teaches Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in Tucker County High School classes.

Living in a rural area, Joseph knows emergency services may take longer. That is why he believes it is essential to train as many people as possible, especially young people, in the application of emergency service CPR. Joseph strongly believes that young people may be the ones who save the most lives, and he wants to share this message with everyone in the area.

At the Tucker Community Foundation, we're here to support you in achieving your educational dreams. We're proud of all adult learners and look forward to celebrating your accomplishments. Keep pushing forward; you can do this!

Impactful Grantmaking: Champions of the Heartland

Oklahoma has hosted the National Rangeland Judging Contest annually since 1955. The 73rd Annual National Land and Range Judging Contest was held in El Reno, Oklahoma, from April 30th to May 2nd, 2024. Over 1,000 contestants from 194 teams representing 34 states participated. The contest offers young conservationists an opportunity to demonstrate their land and range judging skills, preparing them for careers in natural resources and



environmental management. Contestants gain a deeper understanding of ecological sites, soil properties, and vegetation types while learning to assess land suitability for various purposes. They also make recommendations for sustainable land use and gain hands-on experience in the field.

Barbour County 4-H teams have participated in soil judging competitions since 1963, earning numerous state and national titles. They have sent 25 teams to compete at the National Land and Range Judging Contest, winning 10 National Land Judging Championships, 6 National Land Judging Reserve Championships, 10 National Homesite Evaluation Championships, and 2 National Homesite Evaluation Reserve Championships.



During the 2023 West Virginia state contest, the Barbour County 4-H team, consisting of sophomores Hunter Townsend, Griffin Hart, Hailey Findley, and Hannah Nutter from Phillip Barbour High School, secured 3rd place and earned qualification to attend the 2024 National Land and Range Judging Contest in El Reno, Oklahoma.

This year's team was coached by Jody Carpenter, who has coached the Barbour County 4-H soil judging team since becoming the WVU Extension Agent for Barbour County in 2018. Jody has many years of coaching experience and even competed in Oklahoma as a 2010 Barbour County 4-H team member who earned the National Championship in Land Judging and the National Reserve Championship in Homesite Evaluation. After competing in 2010, Jody remained active in 4-H and continued helping then-coach Roger Nestor train future Barbour County teams. In planning and preparing for this year's event, Jody applied for a grant from the Tucker Community Foundation to help with the costs of the team's travel to Oklahoma to compete, and the Foundation awarded \$500 from the Crimson Shamrock Appalachian Crafts Fund to assist with their travel expenses.

The journey to the National Land and Range Judging Contest in Oklahoma is demanding, but 4-H teams from Barbour County view it as a path filled with opportunities and rewards. Jody started preparing the team for the national competition by practicing their skills from January through April. This allowed them to refine their abilities and be well-prepared to execute all assigned tasks. During the competition, the students have twenty minutes to complete their protocol once they are in position. These practice scenarios helped the



students develop their teamwork and time management skills, ensuring they could remain calm under pressure and trust their decisions during the competition.

On April 25, 2024, Jody and the members of the Barbour County 4-H Team began their eleven-day trek west, making some memorable stops at Will Roger's Birthplace in Claremore, Oklahoma on Route 66, the Gateway Arch National Park, and the Oklahoma National Stock Yards. Once they arrived in Oklahoma, they had a few days to practice with three other 4-H teams from West Virginia at some local ranches in the area before the start of the competition. These practices allowed the team to see ranches close to one another and how the soil types, structures, and textures are different. All the practice Jody and the team from Barbour County put in paid off, as the team secured National Championships for both Land Judging and Homesite Evaluations. At the same time, in the individual competition, Hunter Townsend earned the National Championship for Homesite Evaluation and National Reserve Championship for Land Judging, Griffin Hart earned the National Championship for Land Judging and 9th place for Homesite Evaluation, Hailey Findley earned 8th place for Homesite Evaluation and 38th place for Land Judging, and Hannah Nutter earned 13th place in Homesite Evaluation and 29th place in Land Judging.

The Foundation recently had an insightful conversation with Jody and Hunter Townsend, a member of this year's Barbour County 4-H team. During our discussion, Hunter shared valuable insights into his experiences as a team member and how his participation in this competition has influenced his future.

Hunter's parents have been long-time 4-H volunteers in Barbour County, and he was able to attend 4-H camp before he was even old enough to join 4-H. He has won awards for showing pigs and goats in competitions since he was nine. Jody describes Hunter as being "baptized in 4-H long before he became a member." Jody encouraged Hunter to join this year's team, and he's happy he did. This experience has influenced the way he thinks about conservation. He has seen how erosion affects the soil and how different actions can help improve the soil by adding nutrients. While Hunter is unsure what awaits him after high school, he hopes to continue in Jody's footsteps by helping coach future Barbour County teams for competition. He also encourages young kids in West Virginia "to get involved in 4-H, experience the competition, and give it a try at least once."



Hunter has many memorable moments to share from this experience. He and his teammates calculated the slope of a field in Oklahoma, evaluated soil textures, learned the true meaning of being part of a team, and had the opportunity to meet many students from across the country. One of the most memorable moments for the team was hearing their names announced as National Champions from the state of West Virginia.

The enduring support from the community for the Barbour County 4-H team and the unwavering dedication of its Extension Officers over the past 30 years stand as a testament to the program's lasting success. The Foundation takes pride in contributing to the team's trip to Oklahoma this year and eagerly anticipates future opportunities to support the program's continued success.

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We are grateful to the many generous donors who invest in the Tucker Community Foundation. Your philanthropy and partnership advance the Foundation's mission of creating opportunities for the communities we serve. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in people's lives in the Potomac Highlands and beyond.

Use this QR code to view a list of all living and deceased individuals who made a difference by donating to the Tucker Community Foundation during 2023. If we have omitted a name, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us so that we can make the appropriate corrections.



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