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Anna Oswalt, Foundation Manager

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NEW AACF BOARD OF DIRECTOR – ERIC MCCLURE

Eric McClure began his first term of service as a member of the AACF Board of Directors on April 1, 2021. Although he is new to the board, Eric has been a volunteer with AACF for the past three years as a committee member for the Finance/Development/Public Relations Committee. Eric is also a previous scholarship recipient both as a graduating senior and an adult.

Eric has not been shy serving the greater Athens area community. He has been on the Athens Area Schools Board for the past eight years, he served on the Athens Historical Society for a few years, and he has been a constant presence in the community. Eric has worked with the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi for the past four years. He started in the communications department and more recently has filled the Tribal Court Clerk position. With his experience on the Finance/Development/Public Relations Committee, Eric was also appointed treasurer of the AACF Board of Directors.



"I'm excited to have the opportunity to serve on the AACF Board of Directors to help make the opportunities that were available for me a steppingstone for the next generation of Athens graduates," said McClure.

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THANK YOU DALE DITTMER!



Please join us in thanking Dale Dittmer for his many faithful and diligent years of service as the Athens Area Community Foundation board president! March 31, 2021 was the last day of Dale's presidential service, but he is remaining on the board for one more year.

Dale helped found the AACF in 1994. He fondly talks about where the Foundation started, which was in Paul and Shirley Fredericks kitchen, and how Paul Frederick started the entire Foundation with \$10. Dale has had the privilege of watching the Foundation grow from \$10 to over \$1.5 million in just over 26 years, much of it thanks to his persistent leadership.

Dale became the AACF board president in 2010 and has served as president for the past 11 years. Former AACF Executive Director Cindy Leach said that Dale was instrumental in transferring over 10 different scholarships from the Athens Area Schools to AACF where their endowments have been invested and monitored since. Dale led over 60 board meetings, participated in countless committee meetings, and represented AACF at several events throughout his time as AACF President.

In addition to his faithful service to AACF, Dale served the Athens community in a different capacity as well. Dale was the Superintendent for the Athens Area Schools for 11 years following his time as a middle school principal for the Pennfield School District for 25 years. Dale hails from Scottsville and upon graduation went on to study Education, majoring in math at Western Michigan University (WMU). At WMU not only was Dale a student but an athlete too. He earned his varsity letter playing football for the Broncos. WMU gave Dale an education, but it also introduced him to the love of his life, Karen Weessies. Dale also earned a Specialist Degree from Michigan State University following his time at WMU.

"Dale has been an irreplaceable resource to AACF, and me while I learned the ropes of this organization. From my very first day on the job to any time after that, Dale has always been available for advice, support, and guidance. I am truly fortunate to have had such an amazing mentor," said current AACF Manager, Anna Oswalt.

Dale is finishing one more year of service before becoming an emeritus. He will be greatly missed at meetings but has assured AACF that he is always available if needed. Thank you again Dale.



DATES TO REMEMBER

July 9, 2021

Grant Applications Due Online

July 17, 2021

Hall of Fame Presentation

December 10, 2021

Grant Applications Due Online

Would you prefer to receive our newsletters via email versus snail mail? We are now offering digital newsletters! Simply send us an email at athenscommunity@theathenscf.org letting us know that you'd like to enroll in our digital newsletter program and we will send your next newsletter over email!

FUND PROFILE

AACF has over 40 funds that allow us to support the community in many versatile ways. Each newsletter we will be highlighting one of our funds. Since AACF has recently established two new scholarships, both will be highlighted in this seasons newsletter. The two new Scholarships are the Gerald & Ruth Stanton Memorial Scholarship and the Melodi Dulyea-Christina Shilling Memorial Scholarship.

Gerald & Ruth Stanton Memorial Scholarship Fund: Gerald and Ruth lived in the greater Athens area for several decades. Gerald worked for 25 years at Spoor and Parlin, now known as Greenmark Equipment, where he greeted customers by their first name. Ruth was a homemaker who not only raised their seven children but fostered over 20 children throughout the years. Their son, Alan Stanton, who passed away in October 2020 had a vision for a scholarship that would honor their legacy. Alan believed that the youth are the future and wanted there to be a way



to aid students in the greater Athens area pursue their post-secondary education dreams. Knowing there were already established scholarships for top athletes or valedictorians, he wanted an educational scholarship for the average student. Someone who might not have the highest grades but gives their best effort. This scholarship was established to provide funds to Athens Area Schools graduating seniors and Athens Area Adults with a minimum GPA of 2.0, seeking post-secondary educational opportunities beyond high school. Preference will be given to students pursuing educational opportunities in the skilled trades, apprenticeship, or certificate programs and/or foster youth.

Carlena Hacker, Alan’s sister said,” Alan wanted support for those kids who may be marginal students who have amazing gifts but aren’t noticed academically, and be able to give them a fair chance. That was the goal for this scholarship, to fulfil Alan’s wishes to continue to help the youth of the greater Athens area.”

Melodi Dulyea-Christina Shilling Memorial Scholarhsip Fund: Melodi Dulyea and Christina Shilling were both amazing educators for the Athens Area Schools system for years. They both taught and worked in the Special Education Department and have helped countless students over the past few decades grow past their learning challenges and succeed. Before she passed, Shilling wanted to make sure there was a way she would be able to continue to help her students, and those like her students, even after she was gone. A scholarship was established for the purpose of providing scholarships to Athens Area Schools graduating seniors and graduates, with special needs, pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities, including training and career exploration programs for adults with disabilities. Being a close friend and also an advocate for students with disabilties, friends and family of Shilling believed adding Dulyea to the fund



would have been exactly what Shilling would have wanted.

“Melodi Dulyea and Christina Shilling both spent their careers in Athens supporting special education students. It was their ultimate goal to prepare students to be successful, contributing members of their communities. In efforts to honor their desires, the Melodi Dulyea-Christina Shilling Memorial Scholarship was established to aid deserving senior’s financial assistance to complete an apprenticeship program, certificate program, or degree,” said Donna Martin, a good friend to Shilling.

It is anticipated that scholarships will begin being awarded from these funds next school year. If you are interested in supporting either of these scholarships in memory of Alan Stanton, Melodi Dulyea, or Christina Shilling, please send cash or check donations to the Athens Area Community Foundation, P.O. Box 205, 215 N Capital Avenue, Athens, MI 49011. Please write checks out to AACF-Gerald & Ruth Stanton Memorial Scholarship or Melodi Dulyea-Christina Shilling Memorial Scholarship Fund. Or donate online at <https://www.bccfoundation.org/fund/affiliatefndns>



GRANTEE PROFILE – ATHENS COMMUNIYT LIBRARY

The Athens Area Community Foundation (AACF) is pleased to announce a rapid response grant of \$5,000 has been awarded to the Athens Community Library. The grant will provide Personal Protection Equipment for staff and patrons, as well as operating support meant to partially replace lost revenue incurred during the state-wide shutdown.



Support for this grant comes from \$20,000 set aside by AACF this spring. These funds were allocated to provide rapid response grants to local nonprofits impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or working to meet the needs of citizens impacted by the pandemic.

“We were very excited and appreciative to learn that funding assistance directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic was available in our community,” Missy Irons, Athens Community Library Director, stated. “Being that the Athens community is mostly rural and made up of 16 percent youth and 64 percent senior citizens, our library gets regularly used. Even with funding support from the millage and State of Michigan, due to COVID-19 we were not in a great spot, but this rapid response grant has enabled us to keep operating, as well as provided our staff and patrons with protective equipment.”

Rapid response grants will remain available until all the funds have been awarded. These grants range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and will be reviewed and awarded as quickly as possible in order to best assist any organization dealing with the COVID crisis. Priority will be given to nonprofits addressing essential community needs such as childcare, healthcare and food insecurity.

The Athens Community Library serves the community in the Athens Township of Michigan. With the ongoing pandemic, the library is now offering curbside service as an option for patrons in addition to face-to-face services. Find more information about curbside service, hours of operations, or to sign up for the Athens Community Library Newsletter on the Athens Community Library website at <https://www.athenscommunitylibrary.org/>. The library’s collection from anywhere by visiting athenslibrary.follettdestiny.com To learn more about or apply for a rapid response grant, visit the AACF website at <http://www.theathenscf.org/index.php/grants> and select the COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant Application.

AACF FUNDING OPPORTUNITES

Over the past 26 years the Athens Area Community Foundation (AACF) has awarded in excess of \$150,000 to more than 150 organizations and programs in the greater Athens area. Our goal is to fund even more projects and programs which will directly benefit our community and its residents.

AACF grant applications are available three times a year to nonprofit organizations including schools, churches, (for nonsectarian purposes), and governmental agencies serving the greater Athens area. Priority is given to programs which support the following AACF focus areas: Education, Arts & Culture, Health and Wellness, Youth, Environment, Human Services, and Community/Economic Development. The remaining general grant application deadlines for the year are July 9 and December 10, 2021.

Two other grant options are also available to qualifying applicants. Rapid Response Grants are awarded in amounts of up to \$5,000 and are available to help organizations impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. There are Mini-grants of up to \$300 for small more immediate projects as well.

If you are interested in applying for funding or know an organization who might be interested, please reach out to our Grantmaking Team at 269-962-2181 to discuss your idea. AACF is happy to provide guidance to applicants as to which type of grant best suits your program or project. Funding decisions for general grants occur within 6-8 weeks of the grant application deadline while decisions for Rapid Response grants and mini-grants occur within 1-2 weeks.

