



# Legacy Newsletter

Published by the Washington County Community Foundation

## Spotlight On: African American Community Fund



Since 2022, the Washington County Community Foundation's **African American Community Fund** (AACF) has invested in programs and projects that celebrate culture, expand opportunity, preserve history, strengthen neighborhoods, and support entrepreneurship throughout Washington County.

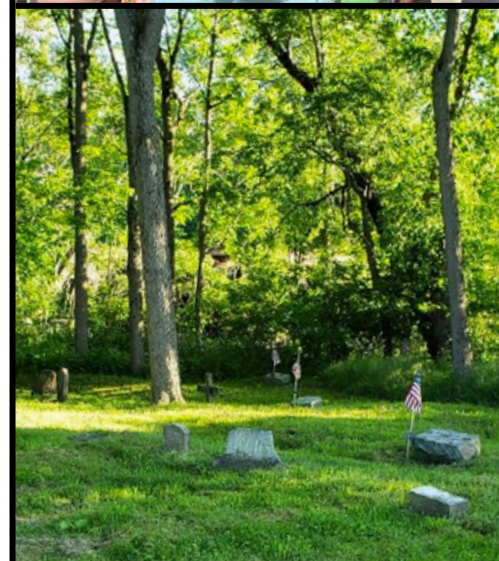
In 2025, the Fund awarded a **\$5,000 grant to the LeMoyne Community Center** to support its Homework & More After-School STEM Program. Nearly **150 students** participated in the program, which provides African American youth in Washington County with opportunities to build confidence, strengthen critical-thinking skills, and explore future careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Additional resources allowed students to fully engage in independent, hands-on learning experiences while maintaining the quality of the program. Today, the STEM program is the **first** extracurricular activity to fill up at the LeMoyne Community Center

The AACF also supports efforts to preserve and share Washington County's African American history. In 2025, **Payne Chapel AME Church and Cemetery received a \$4,000 grant** for its Pavilion Educational Center project. The project is expected to create an intentional gathering space for educational and community programs, increase awareness of local African American heritage, and support the preservation of a historic African American site.

Earlier this year, the AACF awarded a **\$2,500 grant to the Washington County Historical Society** to produce a short film on the abolitionist movement and underground railroad. The film will be presented in the theater space of the Arcs of Freedom exhibit at the Historical Society and made available for broader educational use. The project will utilize AI-assisted tools to help generate certain visual and narrative elements, alongside traditional video-production methods such as on-site filming and professional editing to create a historically accurate, high-quality final product.

Through these investments, the African American Community Fund continues to support projects that educate, preserve history, create opportunity, and strengthen Washington County's communities for generations to come.





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*Aliesha Walz*

*Our mission is to improve  
the quality of life in  
Washington County  
by promoting and  
facilitating philanthropy.*



## New Board Officers Elected

The Foundation is pleased to announce the election of its officers, effective July 1, 2026. The Foundation elected Dr. Geraldine M. Jones as Chairman, Robert C. Griffin as Vice Chairman, Barbara A. Graham as Secretary, and Todd M. James as Treasurer. Visit [www.wccf.net](http://www.wccf.net) to read their full bios.



Dr. Jones is the former President of California University of Pennsylvania. She began her career as a second-grade teacher in the Albert Gallatin School District before returning to her alma mater to serve as Program Director for Upward Bound. She held numerous leadership positions at the university, including Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Acting President, and ultimately President.



Griffin is the Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington and formerly served as Vice President of Waller Corporation. Griffin has dedicated much of his career to advancing economic development and strengthening community organizations throughout Washington County. His civic leadership has included serving as President of the Board of Directors of Blueprints and President of the Washington NAACP.



Graham is a retired senior member of Peacock Keller's School Law Group and Employment Law Group. Graham was also an active member of the Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association and served as its President in 1996. She received the President's Award for Distinguished Career Achievement from the association, in recognition for her longstanding service and commitment to the organization as well as fellow solicitors.



James, a certified public accountant, has served as EQT's Chief Accounting Officer since November 2019. Before joining EQT, he was Corporate Controller and Chief Accounting Officer at L.B. Foster Company. Earlier in his career, he served as Senior Director of Technical Accounting and Financial Reporting at Rice Energy, where he remained through the company's acquisition by EQT. Prior to Rice Energy, James was a Senior Manager at Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

## Celebrating Many Years of Exceptional Service



The Foundation also extends its sincere appreciation to outgoing trustees E. Alex Paris, Richard L. White, and James H. McCune, who rotated off the Board in June after a combined 80 years of service.

# WCCF Recognized for Leadership

## Anderson Honored for Board Service

Recognized for his exceptional leadership and dedication, Trustee Michael S. Anderson has received the *Richard L. White Excellence Award for Board Service*. The WCCF award honors individuals who demonstrate outstanding service to the Foundation and the community. Since joining the Board of Trustees in 2018, Anderson has served in several leadership roles, including Chairman, and has shared his financial expertise with local nonprofit leaders through the Community PILLARS governance program.



Richard White congratulates Michael Anderson following the surprise award presentation.



## Naser Named “Neighbor of the Year”

Joann Naser, WCCF's Manager for Nonprofit Leadership & Engagement, has been named the *Clara L. Deems Neighbor of the Year* by the **Mental Health Association of Washington County**. The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate outstanding community service and support for mental health initiatives. Naser brings extensive nonprofit leadership experience to her role at the Foundation, where she works closely with organizations across Washington County. Her commitment to service extends beyond her professional work, with her volunteer and civic involvement reflecting the same dedication to strengthening the community.

## Walz Recognized with Two Leadership Awards

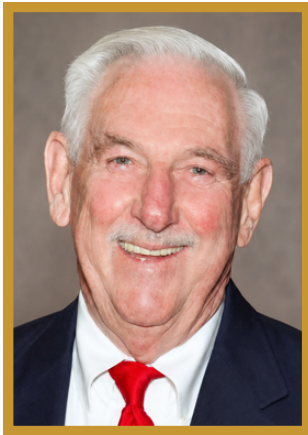
**Leadership Washington County** named WCCF President & CEO Aliesha Walz the recipient of the *2026 Aaron Smith Leadership Award*, recognizing her collaborative leadership and commitment to strengthening the community through philanthropy, partnerships, and engagement. She also received the *2026 Diana Irey Vaughan ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award* from the **Washington County Chamber of Commerce**, which honors emerging leaders who demonstrate professional excellence while making a meaningful impact.



Walz (center) surrounded by the many Trustees who attended the ATHENA Luncheon for the award presentation. 3

# Forever Remembered

Over the past several months, we have lost several friends of the Foundation whose generosity, service, and commitment helped strengthen Washington County. We remember them with gratitude and honor the lasting impact they made on our community. Through the permanent funds they established and the legacies they created, their generosity will continue to support the causes they cared about for generations to come.



**John Northrop**

*Northrop Family Excellence Award  
for Community Philanthropy  
Namesake & Honoree*

*Northrop Family Fund*

*2002 Philanthropist  
of the Year*



**Genevieve Russell**

*Ronald M. Russell Fund*

*Russell Family Fund*

*W. Scott Russell Fund*

*2007 Philanthropist  
of the Year*



**Dorothy Dillemath**

*Dorothy Dillemath Fund  
for Chartiers-Houston  
Community Library*

*Dorothy Dillemath Scholarship  
Fund for the Arts*

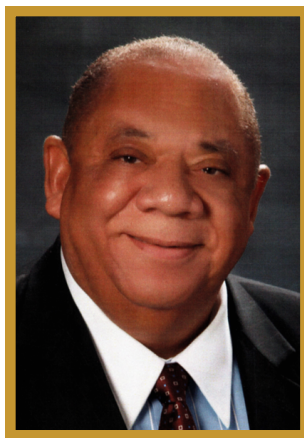
*Zonta Club of Washington County -  
Amelia Earhart Recognition Fund*



**Carol Keller**

*Charles and Carol  
Keller Fund*

*2006 Philanthropist  
of the Year*



**James "Cookie" McDonald**

*McDonald Family Cookie  
Jar Scholarship Fund*

*2021 Louis E. Waller  
Humanitarian Award  
Honoree*



**Judge Damon Faldowski**

*Founding Member of  
the James H. McCune  
Acorn Society*



**Myrna Hart**

*Hart History Fund*



### Animal Welfare

**91%**

of respondents believe that animal control contractors should be required to be licensed and receive continuing education to be employed by a municipality.



### Arts & Humanities

Concerts & music festivals topped the rankings of cultural events that respondents wanted to see more of, followed closely by live theater productions.

1 Concerts/Music Festivals

2 Live Theater

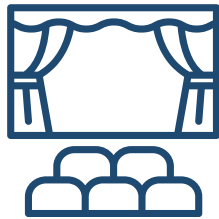
3 Historical Reenactments/Festivals

4 Art Gallery Shows

5 Film Festivals

### Community Impact & Economic Development

Entertainment topped the rankings as the type of business people most want to see in the area.



### Conservation & Environment

**94%**

of respondents believe preservation of the county's natural landscape and greenspaces should be a top priority when considering development in the area.



### Education

1 Financial Literacy

2 GED/Adult Literacy

3 Homeownership/ Handyman Skills

4 Career Development

5 Health & Wellness

Financial literacy ranked #1 as the type of adult education from which Washington County could benefit most.

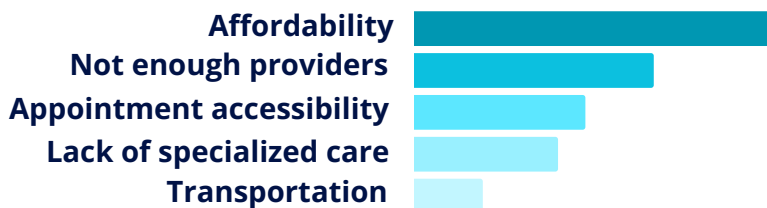
### Human Needs

**59%**

of respondents said they are "strongly concerned" about SNAP & Medicaid benefits being reduced or taken away, with an additional **17%** saying they are "somewhat concerned."



### Health & Fitness



Affordability was identified as the largest barrier to mental health care in the county with **36%** of the vote, followed by not enough providers in the area with **24%**.

### Religion & Faith



**52%**

of respondents believe the introduction of interfaith services would help the county be more welcoming to those of other faiths.

# Your Giving, Your Impact



## Make-A-Will Month Toolkit

None of us like to think about the unexpected, but planning for the future is one of the greatest acts of care we can offer our loved ones. During National Make-A-Will Month, we encourage you to take a moment to consider how a simple document can protect your family, preserve your legacy, and support the community you cherish.

A will does more than distribute your belongings. It gives you a voice when you can no longer speak for yourself, helps reduce stress for your loved ones, and ensures your values continue to shape the future. For many people, that includes making a charitable gift to organizations that have made a difference in their lives or in the community they call "home."

Estate planning is one of the most meaningful ways to care for your family while creating a lasting legacy that reflects what matters most to you.

To help you begin the conversation, the Foundation is offering a **free Make-A-Will Month Toolkit**. The toolkit includes tips for creating your legacy, sample bequest language, information about the PA Giving Pledge, and ways the Foundation can help you explore charitable giving through your estate plan.

Receive your **free digital or hard copy toolkit** at [www.wccf.net/featured-resources](http://www.wccf.net/featured-resources) and take the first step toward creating a legacy that reflects your wishes and values.



## Give Now Through September 10

Over the past 13 years, nearly \$16 million has been awarded to Washington County charities through WCCF Gives!

With a track record unmatched by any other philanthropic event in our community, WCCF Gives has become the single most powerful force for collective charitable impact in Washington County.

The need has never been greater, and this year's event is shaping up to be our most dynamic yet.

### Why Give?

- Be a part of something great!
- Support multiple charities with a single donation and receive one receipt for your records and tax purposes.
- The WCCF screens registrants annually to ensure participating charities meet federal and state charitable giving guidelines.
- Donations are amplified through **\$200,000 in prize incentives** made possible by generous supporters. Of that total, \$100,000 in prizes will be available through a special "Power Boost" opportunity designed to inspire participating charities to take their efforts to the next level by securing at least 20 unique donors and/or \$1,500 in contributions.

### Ways to Give



GIVE BY CHECK



GIVE BY  
CREDIT CARD



GIVE BY IRA

**Online Credit Card Giving:**  
**September 10 | [www.wccfgives.org](http://www.wccfgives.org)**

## Progress Update: Close to Home Disaster & Emergency Fund



In response to recent events and growing community need, the WCCF launched a **\$250,000** campaign to strengthen its **Close to Home Disaster & Emergency Fund**, with every gift helping to match a \$250,000 anchor contribution from an anonymous donor.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the fund distributed over \$740,000. Last November, when the prolonged state and federal budget impasse disrupted critical services and increased food insecurity, the WCCF awarded \$23,500 in emergency grants to support local food assistance efforts.

The fund continues to respond to urgent needs as they arise. When the **Washington City Mission** faced an unexpected expense after a lithium battery imploded, causing a small fire and activating the building's sprinkler system, a \$5,000 emergency grant helped cover the unexpected cost of the related insurance deductible, ensuring the organization could continue directing its resources toward serving more than 300 meals each day to residents and community members in need.

Following recent tornadoes that left residents in Marianna, Bentleyville, and Cokeburg without power for more than 48 hours, **The Salvation Army Western PA Division** received a \$3,000 emergency grant to provide immediate relief for the residents of those communities. The organization distributed 100 cleanup kits, 483 food boxes, 850 freeze-dried emergency meals, and three pallets of bottled water, assisting approximately 150 families.

Thanks to strong support from the community, the campaign has already surpassed the halfway mark toward its \$250,000 goal. With your gift, you can help to ensure that Washington County has the resources it needs during times of crisis.

**Let's Close the Gap!**

**73% \$184,226**



Call 724-222-6330 or visit [wccf.net](http://wccf.net) to make a gift.



Building on the success of our charity education series, we expanded our programming to further engage community members committed to improving quality of life in Washington County.

"Around the Giving Table" offers informative discussions about the Foundation's work while exploring charitable giving strategies that can help donors maximize their impact.

### Topics Include:

- *Ways to maximize your impact through tax-efficient charitable giving*
- *Assessing community needs and measuring impact*
- *How IRA giving can support your philanthropic goals*
- *Understanding the WCCF's involvement in the PA Giving Pledge*



If you're interested in joining us, contact us at 724-222-6330 or email [development@wccf.net](mailto:development@wccf.net) to learn about upcoming sessions.



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

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-  [www.wccf.net](http://www.wccf.net)
-  [WashCoCommFdn](https://www.facebook.com/WashCoCommFdn)
-  724-222-6330

***WCCF Gives Prizes Doubled to \$200,000!***

***2026 Check Contribution Form Inside!***

***Online Credit Card Giving:  
September 10 | [www.wccfgives.org](http://www.wccfgives.org)***



***Thank You to Our WCCF Gives 2026 Sponsors!***

*Philanthropy Level - \$25,000*



*Humanitarian Level - \$10,000*

**Alex E. Paris Contracting    South Hills Toyota    Observer-Reporter**

*Altruism Level - \$2,500*

**84 Lumber    Anonymous    Martin & Judy Beichner    Crossgates Management  
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