Volume 28, Issue 2 · December 2025

Legacy Newsletter

Published by the Washington County Community Foundation

$230,000 Awarded to Strengthen Programs, Facilities, and Technology in Washington County!

The Washington County Community Foundation (WCCF) has awarded $230,000 in capacity-building grants to 16 local nonprofits to strengthen programs, operations, and long-term stability.

In the communications category, a total of $20,000 was awarded to **412 Food Rescue** and **Washington City Mission** to support marketing initiatives. For data management improvements, $15,000 went to **A.D. White Research Society** and **Jefferson College Historical Society** to digitize and better manage historical records. Grants for equipment and materials totaled $65,000, benefiting **Always B Smiling**, **Canon-McMillan School District**, and **Neighbor 2 Neighbor** to support program equipment and resources.

412 Food Rescue is growing fast in Washington County, expanding fleet routes, building powerful community partnerships, and fueling new funding success.

Facility improvements received $70,000, helping **The Salvation Army – Mon Valley Corps**, **Shekinah Ranch**, **South Hills Pet Rescue & Rehabilitation**, and **World Series Tournaments** upgrade buildings and infrastructure. Technology-focused grants totaled $60,000, awarded to **Healing Bridges**, **Summit Legal Aid**, **Voices for Independence**, the **Mental Health Association of Washington County**, and **United Way of Washington County** to enhance operations and service delivery.

"The projects supported through this capacity-building cycle reflect our commitment to helping local nonprofits grow stronger in every way - from infrastructure to outreach to innovation," said Aliesha Walz, WCCF President & CEO. "Whether it's expanding STEM education, making a building more welcoming, or upgrading how an organization communicates, we are proud to invest in projects that have a lasting impact on our community."

The Foundation relies on contributions to provide grants and other charitable services. Gifts are welcomed via wccf.net or by contacting the Foundation at 724-222-6330.

What is Capacity-Building?

Powering Strategic Growth

The WCCF defines "capacity-building" as any activity that increases the nonprofit's operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity. The initiative seeks to strengthen nonprofits strategically, benefitting from our 30 years of grant-making experience.

Contributions can be made to an existing or new fund.

A Record Year for Local Giving!

This year's WCCF Gives event raised more than **$1.9 million** for **152 local charities**, marking a **7% increase** over last year's contributions total and the highest number of gift designations in the program's history.

The seven-week campaign drew thousands of donors who made nearly **6,000 gift designations**, demonstrating the community's continued commitment to supporting local charitable causes.

Monies raised through WCCF Gives are issued as unrestricted grants, providing critical flexibility at a crucial time for the sector. Unlike restricted funding that must be used for specific programs, these dollars allow the charities to address their most pressing needs, from covering increased operational costs to meeting surging demand for services.

The WCCF Gives grants total is comprised of donor contributions and **$100,000 in prizes** thanks to our sponsors. Additionally, an anonymous donor generously covered the transaction fees associated with the contributions made through the online giving platform.

For details on prize winners, donations, and donor counts by charity, visit www.wccfgives.org.

Thank you — from the WCCF team!

Our 2025 WCCF Gives Sponsors

Philanthropy Sponsors

CHAPMAN CORPORATION

WFCF WASHINGTON FINANCIAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Humanitarian Sponsors

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

Altruism Sponsor

Coen Markets

Range Resources School District Enrichment Fund Awards Over $50,000

Thirteen schools were selected in this cycle including: **Avella Area**, **Bentworth Area**, **Burgettstown Area**, **Canon McMillan**, **Chartiers Houston**, **Deer Lakes**, **Fort Cherry**, **Hopewell Area**, **Intermediate Unit 1**, **McGuffey**, **South Side Area**, **Trinity Area**, and **Western Area Career & Technology Center**.

At **Trinity High School**, grant funding helped expand the school's sensory-friendly silent disco program by providing additional iPads and headphones. The school now has more than 300 pieces of equipment, allowing them to invite special needs students from other schools in the area to participate in these inclusive events.

Trinity hosted a sensory friendly Halloween silent disco with over 190 attendees.

Congratulations to the Community PILLARS Graduates

Modeled after an accreditation tool of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO), this charity governance training program was developed to help charity representatives to become **Proactive**, **Impactful**, **Loyal Leaders** who are **Accountable**, **Resourceful**, & **Strategic.**

Members of the Class of 2025:
Carla Anderton, Mon Valley Academy for the Arts, inc.; Joe Baker, National Pike Trail Council; Gary Beam, Washington Christian Outreach ; Lesley Brock, Beyond Survival Ministries; Kendra Casella, Transitional Employment Consultants -TEC; Abby Stark, Mon Valley Alliance; Taylor Duda, Washington Area Humane Society; David Jenco, Mental Health Association of Washington County; Dedi Kramer, Beyond Survival Ministries; Jordan Linck, Blueprints; Melissa Marion, Washington City Mission; Bradley Martin, City of Washington Citywide Development Corporation; Cassandra Muhr, Washington Symphony Orchestra; and Terry Vessels, Food Helpers.

Duttons Recognized for Community Philanthropy

By Dorothy Tecklenburg

Megan Chicone, WCCF Trustee; Aliesha Walz, WCCF President & CEO, Dennis and Mary Lea Dutton; Michael Anderson, WCCF Chairman; and Dr. Geraldine Jones, WCCF Trustee.

Dennis and Mary Lea Dutton are rooted in Washington County: to the land, their community, and the people around them. "I'm a sixth-generation dairy farmer from West Alexander," Mary Lea says. Dennis grew up in Taylorstown, the son of a steelworker. "Few people had money, and we didn't know we didn't have any," he adds.

Dennis built a long career in insurance after graduating from McGuffey, while Mary Lea stayed closely involved in agriculture. Her family's long support of the West Alexander Fair led her to help create Got Ag?, a hands-on program that teaches second-grade curriculum at the Fair. Over time, FFA students took over the teaching and now run the entire program.

Their community involvement grew from there. Dennis served as an early trustee of the WCCF, and together they helped advance funds such as the Alice Boone Main Memorial Fund and the Buckholt Science Scholarship Fund.

But it is the Chuckie Mahoney Foundation that touches Dennis' heart. When a friend's son died tragically, Dennis helped start a foundation providing scholarships and advocacy for suicide prevention.

Dennis (Dink) & Mary Lea Dutton

"But the biggest inspiration for their philanthropy was more personal: Dennis' cancer treatments. After seeing how much extended chemo and stem cell transplants cost, he knew he had to give back. He served on the Washington Hospital board and gave generously.

It was Washington County legend Chuck Keller who influenced him to donate publicly.

"I wanted to donate anonymously," Dennis admitted. "Chuck scolded me. 'I know you don't want the recognition, but you need to model for others.' That stuck with me, Chuck's legacy."

The WCCF has named Dennis and Mary Lea Dutton the 2025 recipients of the ***Northrop Family Excellence Award for Community Philanthropy***. Their lives are a tapestry woven with threads from church, fair, work, school, and friendship.

Among their friends is Washington County Commissioner Larry Maggi: "I have known Dink & Mary Lea Dutton my whole life. They don't just talk the talk; they walk the walk."

How do they get things done? Connections.

"You ask people, people ask you," Dennis says.

"My Dad and Mom always just did," Mary Lea shares. "That's just the way we grew up."

"We model it more than anything else," Dennis explains. "It's that great feeling you get which drives volunteering and community connections."

Liberty Pole Spirits Recognized for Corporate Philanthropy

By Dorothy Tecklenburg

Jim, Ellen, and Kevin Hough.

With **Liberty Pole Spirits**, there's a lot to distill. There's the whiskey of course, but there's also the story.

More than a decade ago, Jim and Ellen Hough were struck with inspiration. They wanted to make whiskey, and considering the history of the region, they wanted to do it the way it was done in the 1700s — using heirloom corn varieties and whiskey and rye recipes from that era.

"We wanted to respect the history of the area," Jim explains. "We chose our name and story to honor what happened here."

They located a suitable building and, along with their adult sons Kevin and Rob, spent another year crafting it into the perfect small batch distillery.

They opened on July 9, 2016, not coincidentally, the day of the Whiskey Rebellion Festival. Festival volunteers sent hundreds of people to their Maiden Street establishment, and 800 opening-day cocktails later, they learned an important lesson: It takes a village to start a business.

It wasn't long before the community became a not-so-silent partner in their operation. People cared. About their history. About their community. But most importantly, about good whiskey.

Kevin Hough volunteers on the tourism board. Jim serves on the Pennsylvania Distillers Guild. After Ignite Business Incubator gave them valuable start-up advice, Ellen now serves on their board, helping others start their businesses.

"It was a way for us to give back," Ellen explains, "We like to help with Ignite because we owe them for what they gave us."

They had to adjust their schedules to support the community at the Whiskey Rebellion Festival, First Fridays, and the Christmas Parade. Supporting the hospital was a natural.

Kym Lambert is co-chair of the Washington Health System Foundation Charity Ball. "I can speak from personal experience that every time we have asked the Houghs for a donation they have been very generous to support the cause."

Marc Scott agrees. "The Olivia Scott Foundation has been fortunate to receive community support. At the top of the list is Liberty Pole. They have been extremely generous to the Foundation...We are very appreciative of their donations."

The WCCF is proud to present Liberty Pole Spirits with the 2025 ***Charles C. Keller Excellence Award for Corporate Philanthropy***, which recognizes a local for-profit business for exemplary giving and community service.

Jim McCune, WCCF Trustee; Kevin, Ellen, & Jim Hough, Liberty Pole Spirits; Aliesha Walz, WCCF President & CEO; and Lars Lange, WCCF Trustee.

Year-End Guide to Powerful Giving

Science confirms what generous hearts have always known: giving triggers our brain's reward circuits, flooding us with the same feel-good chemicals as life's other great pleasures.

As 2025 draws to a close, you have a critical window to create lasting change, maximize your tax benefits, and feel the genuine happiness that giving brings.

Next year brings sweeping tax law changes that will limit deductions for many donors. Here are three year-end giving strategies you may want to consider in order to maximize your impact.

1. Donate Appreciated Assets (Not Cash)

Instead of writing a check, donate stocks, bonds, or mutual funds held over one year. You can avoid capital gains tax AND deduct the full market value of the contribution. This strategy can be a fantastic option for almost anyone with investment accounts, and it has the potential to significantly increase your giving power.

2. Bunch Multiple Years of Giving

Consider combining multiple years of charitable giving into 2025 to exceed the standard deduction threshold, then take the standard deduction in future years. This “bunching” strategy maximizes tax benefits even for moderate givers. Perfect timing with tax law changes coming in 2026.

A donor advised fund (DAF) may offer an ideal giving vehicle for donors who wish to utilize bunching, as grants from DAFs can be directed over time.

3. QCDs from IRAs (Age 70½+)

Required to take distributions from your IRA (individual retirement account)? Send up to $108,000 directly to charity tax-free instead. This gift counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) but skips the income tax. Couples can give $216,000 combined, turning tax obligations into charitable impact. For retirees, this is often the single most powerful giving strategy available.

Since our founding, the WCCF has witnessed the profound ripple effects of strategic philanthropy. We combine deep community knowledge with prudent investment strategies to ensure your generosity creates perpetual waves of positive change.

Right now, families in Washington County are counting on organizations stretched to their limits. Your year-end gift, whether through appreciated assets, bunched giving, or an IRA distribution, can become a lifeline at the most critical moment.

Don't let December 31st pass with regrets about the good you could have done, or the tax benefits you could have claimed.

The window is closing. But it's not too late to experience the joy of giving and make a true impact in our community. To learn more, call 724-222-6330 or visit www.wccf.net.

The WCCF serves as your philanthropic partner, helping you achieve your charitable goals. While we provide general information about giving strategies, please consult your professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and financial implications for your specific situation.

Bradford House Receives Presidential Silver Award

The WCCF is pleased to announce that the **Bradford House Historical Association** (BHHA) has been selected as the recipient of this year's Presidential Silver Award, which includes a $25,000 program expansion grant to support the organization's growth.

Founded in 1965, the BHHA preserves the National Historic Landmark Bradford House Museum and promotes the history of the Whiskey Rebellion and 18th-century life. Over the past 30 years, it has grown from a stand-alone house museum to a multi-site operation that includes the Whiskey Rebellion Education and Visitor Center and the Meeting House, and in 2026 plans to expand into additional space on South Main Street to better accommodate programming and festival storage needs.

Aliesha Walz, WCCF President & CEO, presented the award to BHHA Executive Director, Tracie Liberatore, at the annual Whiskey Rebellion Dinner.

The WCCF's Presidential Silver Award recognizes local charities that demonstrate the sector's highest standards for governance. For complete award criteria, visit wccf.net.

Inspiring Intentional Giving

PA GIVING PLEDGE

The WCCF is proud to be part of the growing PA Giving Pledge movement. The initiative encourages Pennsylvanians to consider leaving at least 5% of their estate to support charitable causes within the communities they call home. By inspiring thoughtful, long-term philanthropy, the PA Giving Pledge helps ensure that future generations benefit from the generosity and vision of today's citizens.

As a participating community foundation, we are here to help individuals explore meaningful ways to include charitable giving in their estate plans. This commitment to fostering intentional, informed giving was featured in our new Lunch & Learn series, *Around the Giving Table*. The program held its pilot session in October, uniting a few community champions for an informal but meaningful conversation about strategic giving and the many ways thoughtful philanthropy can strengthen Washington County.

Scan to Learn More About the PA Giving Pledge

AROUND THE *Giving Table*

Participants explored current opportunities created by recent tax law changes, learned more about the Foundation's involvement in the PA Giving Pledge, and discussed how we assess local needs and measure community impact.

The session also served as a listening opportunity for the Foundation. Attendees shared feedback that will help shape the future of this program as we consider offering it as a regular series. We are grateful to those who joined us for the pilot and contributed their perspectives.
Would you like a seat at the table? Please contact us at 724-222-6330.

Washington County
Community Foundation
Helping You Give . . . Close to Home

1253 Route 519
P.O. Box 308
Eighty Four, PA 15330

Return Service Requested

In This Issue: Capacity-Building Grants, Award Honorees, Intentional Giving Strategies, and More!

The Washington County Community Foundation seeks to improve the quality of life in Washington County by promoting and facilitating philanthropy.

Confirmed in Compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations

Connect with Us

www.wccf.net
WashCoCommFdtn
724-222-6330

The Washington County Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) publicly-supported charitable corporation. The official registration and financial information of the Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.