



Richland County Sheriff Steve Sheldon and Donor Merris Welge

Local Couple Supports Law Enforcement

By Katie Hunt, Richland Source

Merris and Jean Welge have always had an interest in helping law enforcement any way they can. Over the years, they have donated to several police and veteran funds, including the Buckeye Sheriff's Association and the Washington Memorial. The Richland County Sheriff Fund they have set up this year is only their most recent donation of their time, money, and effort.

Merris worked in Downtown Mansfield for 25 years, where he saw firsthand how hard local police worked. He always admired how they put themselves at risk every day for the safety of their community.

So about five years ago, he contacted his neighbor, Rod Smith, Chief of Police for the city of Ontario at the time, to see what he could do to help local law enforcement. As a result, he and Smith worked together to order St. Michael pendants for each officer, as St. Michael is known as the patron saint for law enforcement.

Tommy Hill, the current Chief of Police for the city of Ontario, speaks fondly of those medals to this day. "I still have some of the St. Michael pendants, and every time we hire someone new we give them one. Some officers put it on their hats, but what they do with the pendant is up to each individual officer. It has become a personal token for each officer."

But for Merris and Jean, that wasn't enough. They were continually searching for more ways to show their support for local police.

Merris approached Smith again, asking him what more could be done to help and honor local police officers. The conversation with Smith led him to the Richland County Foundation, who then helped the Welges establish a fund for the Ontario Police Department.

The fund was established with two main objectives: to build a memorial honoring police officers, which can now be seen in front of the Ontario City Building and to establish a way for the community to be able to show support for all that the police department does through financial support.

Merris and Jean have several reasons for giving so much to law enforcement. Jean's brother served in the Vietnam War, and she is eternally grateful for those willing to serve. Merris mentions growing up during World War II, and how he was affected seeing soldiers giving their lives to protect the country.

But this still wasn't enough for the family.

After establishing the fund for the Ontario Police Department in 2016, they continued by creating a fund for the Mansfield Police Department in 2017, and most recently, the Richland County Sheriff's Fund in 2019. All three funds were made possible through the family working with the Richland County Foundation.

The entire community benefits from this single family's donations.

Brady Groves, President of the Richland County Foundation, expressed his admiration for the Welge family, stating "Merris and Jean are leaders in creating a mechanism for people who want to support law enforcement in other ways than taxes. They recognize the importance of law enforcement in our community."

Hill echoed Groves, stating "It is great to have such tremendous support in our community. To know that we have those who want to honor our current and former officers is something that we are very grateful for."

The Welges are leaving the specific use of the funds up to the police departments' discretion.

Speaking about working with the Richland County Foundation, the Welges repeatedly expressed how easy and painless the funds were to set up. They remarked how the foundation really worked with them, allowing their desire to help and their vision to come to fruition.

Currently the funds are building up their earned income from investments to make the grant money fully available to each department. According to the Foundation's Chief Advancement Officer, Maura Teynor, this can take two to three years to achieve. As the grant money becomes available, the police chiefs and sheriff will work with the Foundation to allocate the funds to their best possible use.

When asked about potential uses for the funds, Hill noted "As I see us moving forward, I would like to continue to honor officers – past and present – and find new ways to grow the memorial or show our respect for those who risk their lives. I am excited to be able to do that with the funds."

The Welges want local law enforcement to know that they appreciate them and their dedication to their community. The family's vision and hope is that these funds will prompt members of the community to get involved in assisting local law enforcement in any way they are able.

Anyone can donate to any of the funds simply by visiting the foundation's website and clicking the "donate to a fund" button. Any donations made through the foundation are considered tax deductible.

Donors who wish to make their donation immediately available to the departments should include a note to apply their gift to the spendable balance of the fund.



Third Street Family Health Services Invests in its Future



Chief Financial Officer Barbara Sullinger and Chief Operations Officer Nicole Williams

The Third Street Family Health Services established two funds with the Richland County Foundation to help it meet its long-term strategic goals. It will allow the organization to acquire additional capital for building projects.

TSFHS was originally known as the Third Street Community Clinic when it began in 1994. It is a private, non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center with a mission to provide accessible, quality primary health care to the underserved. The services delivered by TSFHS staff include behavioral health, dental, medical and OB/GYN.

TSFHS believes that the health status of the underserved population can be improved by providing accessible, affordable health care for those in need. People utilizing services at TSFHS have the right to be treated with dignity regardless of life circumstances. It supports people in their efforts to assume responsibility and actively participate in their health care plan.

TSFHS has several locations including its original one on Third Street in Mansfield. Other locations in Mansfield are Cornerstone OB/GYN, 770 Balgreen Drive and Mansfield Family Health, 270 Sterkel Blvd., along with Hawkins Medical Center, 2131 Park Avenue West, Ontario and Shelby Health and Wellness Center, 31 East Main Street, Shelby.

TSFHS likes to make improvements to better a neighborhood and a community. That was the case when TSFHS renovated and gave new life and purpose to the building on East Main Street in Shelby. The organization is looking to expand services into other communities.

The new funds will allow the senior staff members to talk with funders and donors about new projects.

Local History Gets a Financial Safeguard



Foundation President Brady Groves and Rich History Alliance President Fred Boll

The Rich History Alliance has a new fund at the Richland County Foundation. Rich History Alliance President Fred Boll said the purpose of the fund is to provide money for projects and programs to increase historical tourism and promote history for Rich History Alliance members in Richland County.

The seed money for the fund came from the Ohio History Connection Foundation. The State of Ohio collected a fine from the Rover Pipeline in 2017 because it demolished the historic Stoneman House near Leesville in Carroll County. Money was distributed to each county in the state for historic preservation. Richland County received \$60,000. The Rich History Alliance awarded a portion of the settlement in the form of 26 grants for historical tourism, education and capacity building.

The Rich History Alliance was formed in 2016 as a partnership of museums and historical sites. The mission is to collaborate to discover, preserve and share history in Richland County. Since its formation the alliance now hosts Rich History Weekend during the first weekend in May. It gives people a chance to explore historic sites and museums and learn about the county's past.

To learn more about the members and events go to richhistory.org.

To donate to the Rich History Alliance Fund, go to richlandcountyfoundation.org. Select Rich History from the fund drop-down box and determine the amount of your gift. Or you can write a check to the Richland County Foundation and note Rich History on the memo line.

Compassion In Action Fund



Alice Hutzl-Bateson, Bekah Beachy, Kristine Lindeman, Nancy Labaki, and Shannon Wine

Compassion In Action will continue to help the community through a donor advised fund at the Richland County Foundation. After much thought and the advice of a consultant, Compassion In Action Board Members Nancy Labaki, Kristine Lindeman, and Bekah Beachy decided they could accomplish more through a donor advised fund rather than operating as a nonprofit organization. They invested the financial resources from the nonprofit to focus on making grants to improve the quality of life for children with disabilities.

Compassion in Action's mission was to offer hope to families in our community experiencing medical crisis by providing assistance, guidance, and encouragement.

History of CIA: Compassion in Action was founded in 2012, when a group of community members organized a benefit for the family of Grant Reed, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After such a positive community response Compassion In Action was approached about hosting several more benefits for families in similar situations. The members of Compassion In Action began to recognize the financial strain that can result from having a child in the home with a serious illness or disability and became a 501C3 nonprofit. This allowed Compassion In Action the ability to financially reach more families. Through fundraising efforts and corporate sponsorships Compassion In Action financially assisted many families over the past few years, by covering expenses such as: rent, utilities, car payments, medical bills, medical equipment/supplies, and transportation expenses.

Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society Inc. Fund



The Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society wants to make sure the historical prison is around forever. That is why the Executive Director and the Board of Directors recently established an endowed fund to benefit the Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society.

The Mansfield Reformatory, also known as the Ohio State Reformatory, was saved from the wrecking ball by a small group of local historical preservationists in 1994.

The Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society is working to restore the facility to its original grandeur. Completed projects include the restoration of the Warden's quarters, the Central Guard Room, original stained-glass windows, replacement windows and a roof. Ongoing projects include the Ohio Correctional Museum now recognized and chartered by The Governor of Ohio and the newly installed Shawshank Museum. Future plans include the North Central Ohio Industrial Museum to be opened in Spring of 2020. All the current funding comes from donations, tours, paranormal tours, Halloween Haunted House, rentals of the facility and now this new endowed fund.

The prison was used for the production of six films, including the one that made it famous, Shawshank Redemption. Shawshank was filmed in 1994 and celebrated its 25th anniversary in August of 2019 with the largest cast assembled from the movie since its release, drawing fans from all over the world.

The Reformatory also was used to film numerous music videos and TV shows.

According to the history on the Mansfield Reformatory website, "the cornerstone was laid on November 4, 1886. Cleveland Architect Levi T. Scofield designed the Ohio State Reformatory using a combination of three architectural styles; Victorian Gothic, Richardsonian Romanesque and Queen Anne. This was done to encourage inmates back to a "rebirth" of their spiritual lives. The architecture itself would inspire them to turn away from their sinful lifestyle, and toward repentance.

The Reformatory doors were opened to its first 150 young offenders in September 1896. After housing over 155,000 men during its lifetime, the doors to the prison closed December 31, 1990.

Today the Ohio State Reformatory Historic Site receives visitors from all over the world. Every year tourists, movie buffs, thrill seekers and paranormal investigators walk through the halls of this majestic structure."

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society Inc. Fund to ensure its future for generations to come, go to richlandcountyfoundation.org and click the donate button, click the fund option and select Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society, or write a check to the Richland County Foundation and note the fund on the memo line.

Recent Grants



Catalyst Life Services Detox Center Opens

A 16-bed withdrawal management center and 16-bed residential treatment facility recently opened in Mansfield. The project was funded by a matching grant through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The local match was provided by the Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, Richland County Foundation, S.N. and Ada Ford Fund, OhioHealth Foundation, Rotary Club of Mansfield, Mid-Ohio AFL-CIO Labor Council and many other individual and corporate donors.

Sherry Branham, Joe Trolan, Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board executive director, Brady Groves, Richland County Foundation president, and Christina Thompson, OhioHealth public relations specialist.



Urban Farm

An urban farm which will increase access to healthy food has been created on the former site of the Gorman-Rupp Company at the corner of Bowman and Sixth Street. Gorman-Rupp leased the land to the North End Community Improvement Collaborative for \$1 a year. The project was funded by a \$2 million matching grant to the Ohio State University at Mansfield from the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research and with support from the Fran and Warren Rupp Donor Advised Fund of the Richland County Foundation. The Urban Farm is a partnership with OSU-M, NECIC, Mind Body Align and Braintree Business Solutions.

Center, Deanna West-Torrence, NECIC executive director, discusses the urban farm during a recent ribbon cutting. To her left is Kip Kurtis from OSU-M, and to her right is Jeff Gorman, Gorman-Rupp president.



Richland Idea Audition Winners

Richland Idea Audition, the local version of Shark Tank, produced three winners in September. Ryan Anschutz and Nichole Minnich won first place and \$5,000 for their new business Big Iron Concealment which makes custom gun holsters. Emily Allen-Smith of the Odd Sprout Farm won second place for an idea to expand a farm to table dinner series. And Michael Zeiter earned third place for his company "Z" Electric Co. which has a patent to produce easy to install electrical receptacles

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Make a Gift of a Lifetime

IRA Transfers to the Richland County Foundation

Individuals aged 70 ½ and older can transfer up to \$100,000 annually from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charity without being federally taxed.

A provision in the federal law allows for transferring IRA assets directly to charity otherwise known as a qualified charitable distribution. By going directly to a qualified public charity such as the Richland County Foundation, the money is not included in the IRA owner's income and—most important—is not taxed, preserving the full amount for charitable purposes.

The Richland County Foundation can help donors execute the transfers and choose from several charitable fund options for their gift. IRA transfer gifts of any amount can be made to an existing fund at the Foundation or for the establishment of a new fund.

This really is a powerful opportunity for anyone interested in establishing a permanent legacy in this community, this is a chance of a lifetime to make the gift of a lifetime.

If you would like to make a transfer from your IRA contact Vice President of Finance & Operations Bob Barrett at 419-525-3020 or bbarrett@rcfoundation.org



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The Richland County Foundation is recognized for having organizational and financial practices that are in compliance with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations.



RichlandCountyFoundation.org

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Richland Gives is December 3

Close to 70 nonprofit organizations are participating in Richland Gives this year. Last year a community of donors contributed over \$309,000 on the day of giving.

Richland Gives is designed to encourage everyone to support local nonprofits they care about through a single giving platform/website. The Richland County Foundation is hosting the day to build capacity, grow philanthropy and make the community stronger.

Thanks to the generosity of donors at the Richland County Foundation, incentives will be awarded as grants to nonprofit organizations participating in Richland Gives, beyond what they raise from online donations.

The richlandgives.org website will begin to accept credit card donations at 7 a.m. on Nov. 1 and continue through 7 p.m. Dec.3.

- 1:1 matching grant of \$1,000 to the first 25 nonprofit organizations that raise at least \$1,000 online via the Richland Gives website.
- \$500 grants to the first (5) organizations that increased online donations by 30% compared to the previous year. To be eligible, a nonprofit must have raised at least \$500 the previous year.

Mansfield Y Marketing Director Sara Baker and Mansfield Y CEO Cristen Gilbert spread the word about Richland Gives.

- Six (\$500) Golden Ticket hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Dec. 3.
- Six (\$500) tickets drawn during the Leader Board Watch Party at Idea Works from 5-7 p.m. Dec. 3.
- Leader Board Winners: Small Nonprofit and Large Nonprofit Leader Boards are based on annual revenue of below or above \$250,000.

1st: \$3,000 | 2nd: \$1500 | 3rd: \$500

To see all the rules and prizes go to richlandgives.org.

