

## **Announcing 2025 Cookie Jar Grant Recipients!**

Since 2010, local women have generously been donating to The Cookie Jar, a fund within Benton Community Foundation. Over 100 local women became Cookie Jar members through their gifts of \$100 (or more). While half of their donations were added to a permanent Cookie Jar fund, the other half were awarded in grants. The Cookie Jar Soiree was held on November 6 at 1871 Grille | Benton County Golf Course for a “Birthday Bash” celebrating fifteen years of passion, purpose and progress for women. The following 2025 Cookie Jar Grant recipients were announced:

### **Recipient of \$5,000**

With new funding, the Community Action Program will support the Benton Community Food and Service Co-Op in providing personal hygiene products to local women. The goal is to directly restore dignity, significantly improve health outcomes, and provide a critical financial relief for women facing hardship. Chris Sheetz and Emily Hoeing presented.

### **Recipient of \$4,000**

Franciscan Health Foundation will use these funds to directly sustain and expand the essential diaper pantry in Benton County, operated through the Benton Community Food & Services Co-Op. This initiative offers direct support to families across Western Indiana. Tristan Kirby and Julie Smith presented.

### **Recipient of \$3,000**

The Benton County Toy Shop has been awarded \$3,000 to support their holiday program. This funding ensures that every gift distributed is a valuable tool for children’s development, promoting healthy cognitive, emotional, and physical growth. Crucially, this effort also offers financial relief and dignity to mothers during the challenging holiday season. Leah Harrison, Cassidy Etter and Michelle Thurston presented.

### **Recipients of \$1,000**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been awarded \$1,000. This funding is essential for covering increased book and shipping prices and supporting the growing number of children in Benton County who participate in this crucial early literacy program. Connie Sparenberg, Judy Crumbaugh, Leslie Fisher presented.

The Otterbein Public Library received a \$1,000 grant to connect women with new job and skill opportunities in agriculture. Funds will be used to purchase books featuring strong female protagonists and support local women’s agriculture programs, opening doors for the next generation of female leaders. Patrick McMillian, Becca Lavinger, and Dilyan Harmon presented.

Despite recently facing a devastating fire, Hope Springs Safe House remains committed to its mission of helping families impacted by abuse and trafficking since 2015. A timely \$1,000 grant will aid the safe house in its rebuilding efforts, laying the foundation to restore a secure haven for survivors when they need it most. Misty Barnett, Crystal Lathrop, and Olivia Minick presented.

We especially want to thank the following for making this an amazing evening: 1871 Grille for the amazing food and venue, Cabbage Rose Floral Market in Oxford for the beautiful flowers, Erin M. Budreau Photography for capturing memories, and the Cookie Jar Committee for making the night shine. Also a huge thank you to all the ladies for 15 years of making a difference!

Interested in joining this amazing group of women? Any business or individual who contributes \$100, or more, before September 8, 2026, can be a member! Donations can be made online at **[www.bentoncf.org](http://www.bentoncf.org)** or mailed to Benton Community Foundation at **PO Box 351, Fowler, IN 47944**. Cookie Jar memberships also make great gifts for the special women in your life!

For more information about the Cookie Jar, please contact the Benton Community Foundation at 765.884.8022 or via email at [andrea@bentoncf.org](mailto:andrea@bentoncf.org).