

BENTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

FOR GIVING. FOR GOOD. FOR BENTON.



BENTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S MISSION

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The Benton Community Foundation was established in 1998 with the mission to enhance community through civic leadership, philanthropy, and charitable economic development initiatives in Benton County, Indiana. The Community Foundation oversees more than \$10 million in assets through a variety of funds established by individuals, families, businesses, and organizations to support charitable causes. In 2024, the foundation awarded over **\$360,000** in grants to charitable organizations and scholarships for local students.

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Kate Farr Benton Community Foundation Communication Intern



A heartfelt thank you from the Benton Community Foundation goes to the talented Kate Farr for her exceptional communications efforts in 2024. Kate, a bright and dedicated individual from Antwerp, Ohio, is preparing to graduate from Ball State University in May 2025 with a degree in Journalism (Magazine Media) and a minor in Journalistic Storytelling. Her journey in journalism began at 14, and she further honed her skills as the Editor-in-chief of the Daily News. With a passion for multimedia storytelling and an appreciation for music legends like Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel, Kate's enthusiasm was infectious. The Foundation wishes her all the best in her promising career and thanks her for her wonderful contributions.

Lilly Endowment 2-for-1 Match

The Benton Community Foundation received a \$750,000 matching grant, meaning every \$1 you donate to the Unrestricted Fund will be matched with \$2 — tripling your impact!



Your Donation + Lilly Endowment Inc. Match = Triple the Impact!

1,000 Hearts, \$250,000 Hope Campaign



Help us continue the impact of the Lilly 2-for-1 match with 1,000 Hearts, \$250,000 Hope Campaign! We are looking for 1,000 donors who will give \$250 to help make our match to Lilly Endowment Inc.! Join the 1,000 donor movement and help us continue the impact in Benton County! The Foundation also recently celebrated 25 years of service and reached a remarkable milestone of \$10 million in assets. This is a testament to the generosity and commitment of our community!

Scan the QR code on the right to donate online, or send in a payment with the provided envelope.

For more information, email andrea@bentoncf.org.

Donations go only toward Benton Community Unrestricted Grant Fund.



Enhancing Quality of Place, Enriching Quality of Life in Benton County



Benton County is taking significant strides towards understanding and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. Thanks to the generous support of the Lilly Endowment with an engagement grant, the Benton Community Foundation embarked on a crucial initiative in early 2024 to gather valuable insights directly from the community. Over 800 Benton County residents shared their perspectives on their quality of life and identified key opportunities for improvement across the county.

Benton County leaders are actively investing in their skills and knowledge to tackle community challenges creatively. In August 2024, a group of local leaders successfully completed Ball State University's Indiana Community Development Course. This intensive 2.5-day program equips participants with practical insights and theoretical understanding in areas such as social networks, civic design, and storytelling.

By emphasizing comprehensive and creative problem-solving, the course empowers these leaders to approach community planning with a focus on leveraging assets, navigating trade-offs, and making strategic investments in both people and places.

These interconnected initiatives – the county-wide Quality of Life reports and the investment in leadership development – demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing both the quality of place and the overall quality of life for all residents of Benton County. By actively engaging residents, supporting local initiatives, and fostering knowledgeable leadership, Benton County is building a brighter future for its communities.

Residents can find more detailed information about the findings and ongoing efforts by visiting www.bentoncf.org.

2024 Unrestricted Grant Recipients



Your generosity fuels our mission to uplift and empower our community. The majority of grants from the Foundation come from unrestricted dollars. Here are the 2024 recipients:

Town of Otterbein
 Boswell-Grant Fire Department
 Discover Oxford
 Earl Park Public Library
 Benton Central Police Department
 Benton Community Food & Service Co-op
 Fowler Girls Softball
 Oxford Public Library
 CAP of Western Indiana (Benton)
 Benton County Fair Board
 Benton Central Theater Department
 Good Shepherd's Party Place
 Food Finders Food Bank-Benton
 Prairie Crossing Elementary School
 Servants at Work
 Otterbein United Methodist Church
 Boy Scouts of America-Benton
 Benton Central After Prom



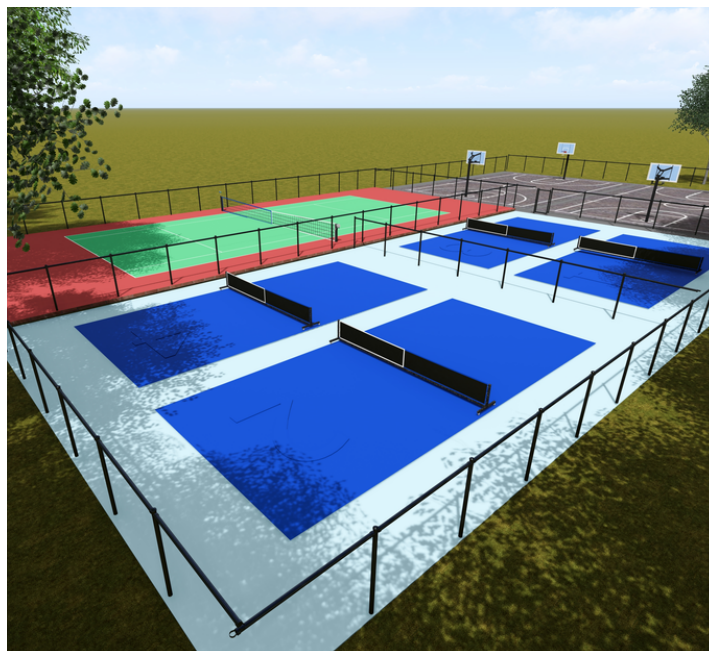
Letters to Santa Grant Recipients

Backpack Program-Prairie Crossing
 Benton Central Food Services
 Benton Community Food and Service Co-op
 Benton County Toy Shop

Boswell Free Methodist Church
 Fowler United Methodist Church
 Otterbein United Methodist Church
 Oxford Public Library

More information on grants can be found at www.bentoncf.org

Investing in Otterbein: \$40,000 Grant Awarded for Park Improvements



BCF is proud to announce a \$40,000 matching grant to the Town of Otterbein for the Otterbein Park Sports Facility project. This investment will create accessible recreational opportunities for the entire community. By repairing, restoring, and repurposing the park's courts, we're building a space where families can play, friends can connect, and everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The project will feature pickleball, tennis, basketball, a playground, and a shelter house, ensuring there's something for everyone at Otterbein Park. *Information provided - Gail Lange, Benton Review*

Discover Oxford



Exciting things are happening in Oxford! Discover Oxford Indiana, a dedicated local organization focused on breathing new life into the historic Oxford Town Square, has been awarded a significant boost to their efforts. In 2024, the Benton Community Foundation generously provided Discover Oxford Indiana with a \$10,000 unrestricted grant, made possible through the support of Pattern Energy and their Amazon Fowler Ridge IV Wind Farm. Discover Oxford Indiana's commitment to revitalization has also led to their recent inclusion in the Indiana Main Street Network as part of the OCRA Downtown Affiliate Network. This partnership will provide valuable resources and guidance as they work towards their goals.

Cookie Jar

Each year, half of our membership contributions go into The Cookie Jar's permanent endowment, the Forever Fund — now exceeding \$160,000! Since 2010, The Cookie Jar and its members have been strengthening our community through generosity, support, and empowerment. Together, we've granted over \$100,000 to programs benefiting women and children in Benton County! In 2024, the Cookie Jar had over 100 members whose membership fees were used to grant \$10,500 to three local organizations.

2024 COOKIE JAR GRANT RECIPIENTS



Franciscan Health Foundation sought funds for Western Indiana Community Health Improvement to buy diapers for a new pantry at Benton Community Food & Service Co-op.



Benton Central Helping Hands, a student-led club, raises funds to buy essentials for students. They are currently providing discreet hygiene kits for girls' backpacks to enhance their comfort at school.



Fowler Christian Church "Picture Perfect" combats societal beauty pressures through faith-based self-empowerment. It includes an overnight retreat for women 16+ and a four-session Body Project for ages 14-24.

2025 Cookie Jar Applications will open in August!

Marilyn Fischbach Reading and Writing Grants Over \$9,000



The Foundation accepted applications for Marilyn Fischbach Reading and Writing Grants. Elementary teachers throughout the county were invited to request funding for special materials for their classroom.

The committee received numerous applications for awesome educational tools and ultimately was able to award full funding for every request made.

***Your donations are making a tangible difference,
strengthening the fabric of our community.***

Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Recipient Announced



Emily Fitch has been named the recipient of the 2025 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship in Benton County. Lilly Endowment Community Scholars (LECS) are known for their school and community involvement, academic achievement, character, and leadership. Emily is the daughter of Christopher and Kim Fitch of Oxford and Valerie Spence of Clinton, Indiana.

The scholarship provides for full tuition, required fees and a special allocation of up to \$900 per year for required books & equipment for four years of undergraduate study on a full-time basis leading to a baccalaureate degree at any eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit college or university.

In her essay, Emily wrote, "I know that being a social worker is difficult... It can be a heartbreaking line of work. I'm not naive enough to think it will be easy, but I know that it's necessary. Every child deserves a safe home, but not every child has one. So, if I can do anything to remedy that, I will." Her genuine compassion for others shines through in both her application and recommendation letters.

During her time at Benton Central Jr./Sr. High School, Emily excelled in academic competitions. She participated in the Academic Super Bowl, competing in three subjects, and led the Social Studies team as captain to two third-place finishes at the state level. She also qualified for state as an individual speller in the Senior High Spell Bowl and earned first and second place in local and regional Science Olympiad competitions. Outside of academics, Emily is a nationally published poet and essayist who has made significant contributions as a member and editor of the PHOENIX Literary Arts Magazine. Since seventh grade, she has also been actively involved in Benton Central Theater Productions, both as a performer and as a mentor to junior high students.

2024 Scholarship Recipients: Over \$144,000 awarded!

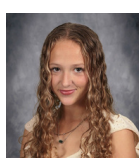
THE FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES 37 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FROM BENTON CENTRAL CLASS OF 2024



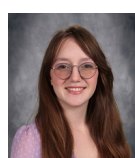
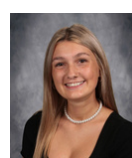
Grace Adkins

Madalynn
Barnard

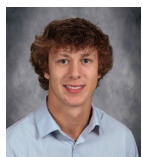
Ezekiel Bennett



Leah Black

Mikaela
BloemkerAshlyn Brigham
Kawlewski

Jacob Brouillette

Ashley Cinto
Renteria

Corbin Cooley



Claire Creek



Samuel Crisp



Aiden Deckard



Lily Etter



Sienna Foster



Blayne Fox



Cara Gephart



Caleb Gobel



Parker Haas



Cayden Hardebeck



Riley Heady



Sydney Ishmiel



Hanna Jessie



Tyler Klemme



Michelle Lewis



Dylan Musser



Liam Reed

Samantha
Rudolph

Calli Snethen



Jaycee Strawsma



Rachel Tolen



Ellen Wetli



Joe Widmer



Riley Wilkinson



Breanna Winters



Kinlyn Yadon



Addison Yates



Benjamin Ybarra

**For Giving. For Good.
For Benton.**

Because of donors, dreams take flight.

Thank you for your scholarship support.

Class of 2025 scholarship recipients will be honored in our Fall 2025 Newsletter.



Leave a Legacy with the Foundation!

The Foundation has many supportive donors who have chosen to leave a Legacy with the Benton Community Foundation. Legacy gifts, of any size, are utilized to meet your charitable and philanthropic goals after your passing. The Foundation believes that everyone has a story to be shared, and legacies are a perfect opportunity to remember those stories for generations to come!

Though there are many ways to include a gift in your estate plans, our donors commonly use two different methods. You can bequest through a will; state the fixed dollar amount, percentage, or residual of your estate after named gifts to family, friends, and other organizations. You can also make a beneficiary designation on your life insurance policy or retirement accounts to set a percentage or fixed amount!

Each gift is personalized to the donor. Your planned gift can support a specific organization or a general cause you care about. An unrestricted gift empowers our Board of Directors to meet the changing needs of our community.

Helpful information for your professional advisor:

- Our legal name is Benton Community Foundation, Inc. and our tax identification number is #26-0074023.
- The Foundation is an IRS non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Indiana.
- When possible, a fund agreement should be created with the Foundation to ensure donor intent can be fulfilled.

FUND SPOTLIGHT

Tracey Ransom Barnard Memorial Fund



The Tracey Ransom Barnard Memorial Fund was established in 2014 after she lost a courageous battle with cancer. Tracey's parents, Doug and Sherry created an advised endowment fund with memorial contributions. Grants from this fund have an emphasis on furthering education in the community. Tracey was a 1990 graduate of Benton Central High School and a 1994 graduate of Purdue University. Tracey was a beloved educator for the Benton Community School Corporation. Tracey taught at Boswell Elementary and Prairie Crossing Elementary. Aside from her family, Tracey loved her students and they loved her. She was the kind of teacher who could not wait to get to the classroom each day to be with her students! Tracey's final third grade class graduated from Benton Central High School in June 2023.

FUND SPOTLIGHT

William (Bill) and Alice Silver Memorial Fund

William (Bill) and Alice Silver were married in 1956 and shared 63 years of marriage. After retirement and moving to Fowler, Alice became involved at Sacred Heart Catholic School and was lovingly nicknamed "reading grandma" by parishioners. Bill was also an active member of the church, volunteering at church events and serving as the chairman of the Stewardship Committee. Bill and Alice could be found on the sidelines of soccer games, in the stands at basketball games and band concerts, attending theater productions, and participating in military pinnings, graduations, weddings, baptisms, and other life events their children and grandchildren participated in. They were also foster parents in Warren County for a number of years. In memory of the couple, the William and Alice Silver Memorial Fund was established to provide support to Sacred Heart Elementary School.



MEMORIALS AND HONORS

2023-2024

2023 Memorials

Tracey Ransom Barnard
 Jack Barrett
 Margaret Barrett
 Sue Barrett
 Lillis Bolin
 Gary Bramer
 Kim Burge
 Shawn Cain
 James H. Caufield
 Mary Catherine Caufield
 Donald L. Christopher
 Kim Claire
 Bruce Creek
 Herb Deno
 James Gilbert
 Jean Glotzbach
 Frank Goodman
 John Glen Green
 James Gretencord
 Dave Guthridge
 Felisha Hall
 Lee Hall
 Madison Hall
 Steve Hands
 Allen Hardebeck
 Sue Hofmann
 Thomas Hofmeyer
 Marilyn Johnson
 Brenda Lester Jones
 George Kirts
 Joan Klemme
 Miranda Knotts
 Margaret Lah
 Thomas James Lamie

Vic Lauerman
 Jamie Metzinger
 Charlotte Mickle
 Michael E. Owen
 Betty Parsons
 Mary Rooze
 Joseph Michael Sanford
 Susan Schneidt
 Jerald "Jerry" Scott
 Mike Shidler
 Alice Silver
 William (Bill) Silver
 Robert Slater
 Deb Sondgeroth
 Annis Kay Swopes
 Rebecca Vandever
 Judy Weber
 Rosemary Weist
 Westenburg Family
 Bob Wetli
 Connie Widmer
 Joe Widmer
 Jim Young

2023 Honors

Esther, Lewis, & John Baugher
 Marilyn Brouillette
 Gary & Teresa Gretencord
 Joyce & Dick Harper
 Zach Pettet
 Children of Norman & Rosalie Smith
 Roger Strasburger

2024 Memorials

Pete Arvidson
 Tracey Ransom Barnard
 John Baxter
 Allan Boehle
 Rick Boehle
 Jeffrey Brooks
 Marilyn Brouillette
 Norma Bryant
 Bruce Buchanan
 Robert Butler
 Shawn Cain
 James & Mary Catherine Caufield
 Dr. Barry Coddens
 Mike Conner
 Lela Craig
 Bruce Creek
 Lynn Findley Crespo
 John Dalton
 Elizabeth Davies Ellis
 Shirley Marie Farrell
 John Fields
 Lois & John Findley
 David Joshua Fitch
 James Gilbert
 Jean Glotzbach
 Cindy Gretencord
 Mary Beth Guard
 Steve Hands
 Cletus & Velma Hasser
 Theresa Hasser
 Loretta Haynes
 Marilyn Holscher
 Don Illingworth
 Cade Keller
 Miranda Knotts
 Mickie Krebs
 Tom & Connie Lamie

Bill & Joyce Leburg
 Vena Lewis
 Barbara Little
 Kevin McComb
 Dick & Mary Moore
 Katherine (Tody) Mraz
 John Petersen
 Catherine Pilotte
 Eleanor J. Rawles
 Barbara Pettet-Regnier
 Don Ringle
 Joseph Sanford
 Bill Sherfick
 Mike Shidler
 Becky Slavens
 Norman Smith
 Jean M. Sondgerath
 John Robert Sparenberg
 Lana Strasburger
 Bethel Souligne Utter
 Rebecca Vandever
 John & Judy Weber
 Rosemary Weist
 Joe & Connie Widmer
 Ron Winchester
 Robert Windler
 Claudia Zuege

2024 Honors

Carter & Karissa Fritz
 Chris & Angie Fritz
 Courtney & Tina Fritz
 Janice Holihan
 Angie Fritz Morgan
 Naab Family
 Otterbein Elementary
 Pat & Michelle Thurston
 Norma Wallpe
 Dick & Janet Wolverton

Each name listed represents a life celebrated, a cause supported, and a lasting impact made possible through compassionate contributions. We hope these tributes serve as a lasting testament to the impact these individuals had on our lives.

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Benton Central Class of 1976	Cris Dalton	Fowler United Methodist Church	Jeffery and Sandra Sylvester
Benton Central Girls Volleyball Team	Curt and Kathy Sowers	Frank and Carolyn Altepeter	Jennifer Eberly
Beth Naylor	Curt and Tracy Albertson	Freedom Community Church	Jennifer Lamie
Bethany Abbott	Curt and Tracy Sondgerath	Gabe and Amanda Widmer	Jennifer Sheetz
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BE THE CHANGE

Benton Community Foundation

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