



Meigs County Foundation
An affiliate of
FOUNDATION FOR APPALACHIAN OHIO

Meigs County Schools Food Pantry | 2025 grant recipient



Racine Methodist Church | 2025 grant recipient



Meigs County Farmers' Market | 2025 grant recipient



Meigs County Foundation

2025 Annual Report

ADVANCING A FLOURISHING MEIGS COUNTY



Pictured (from left, front row) are Meigs County Foundation committee members Paul Reed, Candice Hess, Erin Morgenstern, Jennifer Sheets, Barbara Musser, Laura Sheets and Charlene Rutherford, (back row) Sherri Simons, director of outreach at the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, and MCF committee members Travis Abbott, David Shaver, Susan Clark, Linda Warner, John Hoback, Tricia McNickle and Dru Reed.

ABOUT US

The **Meigs County Foundation** (MCF), a geographic affiliate of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO), provides a way for anyone with a heart for Meigs County to support our people and communities, today and for years to come.

Donor generosity fuels the work of doers who give their time and talent to meet our communities' greatest needs and opportunities – all while building a strong foundation for Meigs County's future.

With the support of our donors, we award grants annually to nonprofit and public organizations for projects and programs that advance opportunities across five funding areas, known as our Pillars of Prosperity.



Our investments improve health, create educational opportunities, advance economic development and environmental stewardship, and provide access to arts and cultural experiences.

Our committee

- Travis Abbott
- Ryan Buckley
- Susan Clark
- Candice Hess
- John Hoback
- Tricia McNickle
- Erin Morgenstern
- Barbara Musser
- Dru Reed
- Paul Reed
- Charlene Rutherford
- David Shaver
- Jennifer Sheets
- Laura Sheets
- Perry Varnadoe, *secretary*
- Linda Warner

Want to learn more?

For more information about planned giving, to make a gift to the Meigs County Foundation or to create a fund to support a cause closest to your heart, please contact us!



✉ Meigs@ffao.org

☎ 740.753.1111

📍 Meigs County
Foundation

www.AppalachianOhio.org/Meigs

2025 GRANTS

The Meigs County Foundation, with support from our donors and in partnership with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, awarded a total of \$95,323 in grant funding in 2025.

CARLETON SCHOOL

Carleton School was awarded two grants:

- To purchase equipment and supplies for life skills lessons in cooking, cleaning, laundry and self-care
- To purchase supplies for the playground space, toileting areas and classrooms

CHESTER SHADE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

A 2024 MCF grant enabled the Chester Shade Historical Association to purchase a 75-inch Smart Board – the first step in establishing an education floor at the Chester Academy. A 2025 grant is funding equipment and materials to further develop this space, where Meigs County students and others are immersed in hands-on lessons on local history.

EASTERN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Eastern Local School District received three grants, funded by the Buckley family:

- To purchase study materials, safety equipment, labware and building supplies for the Science Olympiad Team
- To purchase start-up equipment for an after-school esports club
- To fund a new drone team



MCF grants, funded by the Buckley family, have supported the Eastern Local School District's Science Olympiad team for three years. A 2024 grant funded the supplies and tools necessary to compete at the state level in both junior high and high school Science Olympiad.

GOD'S HANDS AT WORK

Through its Meigs County mobile food pantry, God's Hands At Work delivers non-perishable, refrigerated and frozen food to residents in remote areas who cannot reach the organization's service center. A 2025 grant is extending MCF's support for this essential outreach to a fifth consecutive year.



MCF AWARDED 2025 COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

During its 2025 Awards Gala, the Meigs County Chamber of Commerce celebrated 35 years of service and honored businesses, organizations and individuals who embody the spirit of leadership, service and innovation that strengthens our community.

The Meigs County Foundation, led by Jennifer Sheets, received the Chamber's 2025 Community Impact Award, given to those dedicated to supporting local initiatives and meeting community needs.

2025 GRANTS

LOYALTY IS FOREVER

This grant is supporting the 2026 Meigs County Back to School Bash, which provides students with essential school supplies, clothing and resources while connecting families to community services. This free event brings together local nonprofits, health agencies, businesses and volunteers to help families prepare for the start of the school year, driving stronger academic outcomes, healthier households and a more engaged community.



The first Meigs County Back to School Bash was held in 2024, galvanizing our community and its resources around the well-being and educational success of our students. An MCF grant is supporting the 2026 event at the Meigs County Fairgrounds.

MEIGS BAND BOOSTERS

It's "like a second home." That's how one Meigs High School student described participating in the Marauder Band. MCF grants have supported the band for the past two years, helping to fund equipment, new instruments and instrument repairs as well as uniform repair, replacement and cleaning for the marching, concert and jazz bands.



The Marauder Band performs during Meigs Local School District's 2025 Homecoming festivities. MCF grants have supported the band for the past two years, investing in a program that educates students on everything from music and performance to leadership and teamwork.

MEIGS COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

Meigs County leaders have been seeking solutions to one of our county's most pressing problems: the lack of daycare and non-school-based after-school activities – an issue that strains families and costs local businesses employees. This grant is providing seed funding for a formal study to assess the feasibility and long-term sustainability of a new facility to meet this need.



Since launching the Meigs County Schools Food Pantry on March 18, 2021, the Meigs County Foundation has sustained the pantry's monthly, year-round food distributions through the support of dedicated volunteers, donors and sponsors – including those who helped meet increased community needs during the 2025 winter holiday season.

MEIGS COUNTY FARMERS' MARKET

A 2024 MCF grant supporting the Meigs County Farmers' Market's 2025 veteran food voucher and Music Along the River programs served 200 veterans and filled 26 Saturdays with music. A 2025 grant is helping to fund the market's 2026 Donation Station, Kids Korner activities and a new voucher program for seniors.

MEIGS COUNTY SCHOOLS FOOD PANTRY

More than 20 percent of Meigs County residents are food insecure, according to the latest data from Feeding America. The Meigs County Schools Food Pantry – with support from donors, volunteers, businesses and organizations – helps meet this need for school-age children and their families, typically serving up to 150 households each month. This grant is supporting those efforts.

MEIGS LOCAL BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

For the past 13 years, Meigs Local Blessings in a Backpack has helped nourish students facing food insecurity over the weekends. A 2024 MCF grant funded the program for the second half of the 2024-2025 school year, providing 173 K-5 students with nonperishable food to address the weekend nutrition gap. This grant is continuing that critical support.

Stephanie Rife

2025 Jenco Award Recipient



Each year, the Jenco Foundation Fund and FAO recognize Appalachian Ohioans who go and above beyond in service to others.

Stephanie Rife was among the 2025 Jenco Award recipients, recognized for the many ways she finds and creates opportunities to make Meigs County a more vibrant place to live, work and visit. From her leadership and work with the Meigs County Farmers' Market and Pomeroy Merchants Association and her service at the Mulberry Community Center, Stephanie is a steadfast champion for Meigs County.

2025 GRANTS

RACINE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

The Racine Fire Department lacked the proper safety attire for firefighters responding to traffic incidents. This grant is outfitting every firefighter with a Class II traffic safety vest, ensuring they can operate confidently and safely on busy roadways and protecting both themselves and the public.

RACINE METHODIST CHURCH

Charlotte's Cupboard Food Pantry at Racine Methodist Church opens its doors to anyone struggling with food insecurity and serves 35-40 families each month. This grant is helping the pantry expand its food options to include meat, eggs, bread and produce and helping our neighbors better meet their basic needs.

RIVER CITY PLAYERS

A 2024 MCF grant enabled Middleport-based River City Players to maintain its lavalier mics and packs, to add digital projections for moving image backdrops and to invest in new marketing efforts. A 2025 grant is funding a marketing intern and advertising for the community theater's 25th anniversary season, as well as sound engineering consultation, training and possible system repairs.



An MCF grant is funding traffic safety vests – equipment required by the National Fire Protection Association and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration – for the entire Racine Fire Department.



Local youth perform in River City Players' 2025 children's production of "Annie" at The Blakeslee Center. MCF grants have supported the Middleport-based community theater and its four annual productions for the past two years, growing the theatrical arts in Meigs County and giving our residents opportunities to develop their talents.

"The heart of Meigs County can be seen in the people who give and the people who do. Thanks to the generosity of many donors, we are seeing record investment in Meigs County and in the people here who give of themselves to make a difference in the lives of others. We are overwhelmed with gratitude."

JENNIFER SHEETS, MCF COMMITTEE MEMBER



River of Life Care Closet's food pantry in Rutland distributes more than 100,000 pounds of food each year to Meigs County residents who don't have enough to eat. This outreach is made possible by many donors, including grant funding from MCF.

RIVER OF LIFE CARE CLOSET

In 2025, River of Life Care Closet's food pantry in Rutland served 6,264 individuals, many of whom reported a heightened sense of uncertainty when it comes to making ends meet. This grant is funding food purchases and extending MCF's support for the pantry to a fourth consecutive year.

RURAL ACTION

Since 2022, Rural Action has provided more than 310,000 pounds of Ohio-grown food to 60 pantries across nine Ohio counties, including Meigs. This grant is funding local food purchases – protein, produce and staple crops – to distribute to Meigs County food pantries, supporting our farmers, feeding our families and helping the volunteers working on the front lines of food insecurity.

SAGE TEACHINGS

Treatment services exist for Meigs County residents grappling with substance use, mental health challenges and related barriers to wellness, but needs remain for a community-based drop-in center. This grant is helping establish and sustain a recovery and wellness center in Meigs County, where individuals and families can access resources, peer support and wellness education.



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT **MEIGS MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELD** **TRIP TO THE HOCKING HILLS**

In May 2025, Meigs Local Schools eighth graders were treated to an extra special lesson on Ohio's state parks, thanks to funding from a 2024 MCF grant. More than 100 eighth graders spent the day at Hocking Hills State Park, exploring the trails, caves and waterfalls of Ohio's most-visited park and connecting with nature through guided lessons from a park naturalist.

2025 GRANTS

SOUTHERN ELEMENTARY K-8 PTO

For members of the Southern Elementary K-8 Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), concern for our children doesn't end when students leave school grounds. This grant is increasing the amount of food the PTO provides to about 100 students at risk of hunger over the weekends.

SOUTHERN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

This grant is supporting plans to implement the ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences) Program at Southern Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year. The program is designed to help girls develop supportive relationships, navigate challenges they face during the critical adolescent years and acquire life skills that help keep them safe, strong and empowered.

VILLAGE OF MIDDLEPORT

A scenic 2.6-mile multipurpose trail along the Ohio River links the villages of Middleport and Pomeroy, providing recreational opportunities to walkers, runners and cyclists. This grant is enhancing the trail with the addition of mile markers and signage identifying corporation limits, which will improve navigation, safety and the overall trail experience.

VILLAGE OF POMEROY

Ohio's Appalachian Community Grant Program is investing more than \$8 million to revitalize downtown Pomeroy's riverfront. A series of murals along Court Street and in O'Brien Park will enhance the project. This grant is funding a signature "Pomeroy" mural on the Hartwell House, with each letter illustrating a historic or contemporary scene that defines our community.



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT EASTERN ARCHERY PROGRAM

During the 2025-2026 school year, the Eastern Eagles Archery Teams competed in the Ohio Championship Tournament – with the high school team placing third, the middle school team placing 14th and both teams qualifying for nationals.

A 2024 MCF grant, funded by the Buckley family, provided the Eastern Local School District's archery program with equipment needed to compete at the local, state and national level, allowing the more than 40 students who participate in the program to grow as archers and teammates.



BRINGING CAREER AND SPACE EXPLORATION TO OUR YOUTH

Baking soda rockets. Virtual reality labs. Lunar landers – and more!

That's what Meigs County youth experienced last fall when MCF partnered with the Center of Science and Industry (COSI), Janet's Planet, the Ohio University Performing Arts and Concert Series, local employers and FAO to bring science-based learning to our community.

Our COSI programming provided middle and high school students with hands-on learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering, math and medicine – all tied to in-demand career opportunities in our communities. A special thanks to our industry partners – AEP, Buckley Group, Buckley Ironworks, DPC Fabrication and New Era Broadband – who led many of the day's activities.

Our Janet's Planet programming enabled elementary students to explore space – right from their schools. Janet Ivey-Duensing, CEO and creator of the award-winning Janet's Planet education program, delivered performances at Southern Elementary School. During each event, students brought the learning to life by designing and building lunar landers and launching stomp rockets.

The Meigs County Foundation allocated some of its 2025 grant funding to help make these opportunities possible. From elementary school students exploring space to middle and high schoolers exploring future careers, we are encouraging our youth to dream big and empowering them to believe they can be – and do – anything.





Pictured are the many individuals who donated to the Meigs County Foundation during our 2025 Summer Garden Gala, where we announced that our endowment fund, which funds the grants we award each year, was \$200,000 away from reaching \$2 million. We issued a challenge that night to reach \$2 million by the end of the year – and thanks to many, we surpassed that goal.

ANSWERING THE CALL TO LEAD AND SERVE IN MEIGS COUNTY



Ally Durst

Through the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio's **Growing Home Fellowship**, Meigs County educators Ally Durst and Kathryn Matson have created a summer STEM enrichment program at The Blakeslee Center for children ages 7-12. The program aims to provide Meigs County youth with opportunities to connect locally and explore new hobbies and possible career paths. In its first two summers, the program – through collaboration with community partners and senior volunteers – has provided intergenerational, hands-on learning experiences as well as 6,500 free meals for the youth of Meigs County.



Kathryn Matson

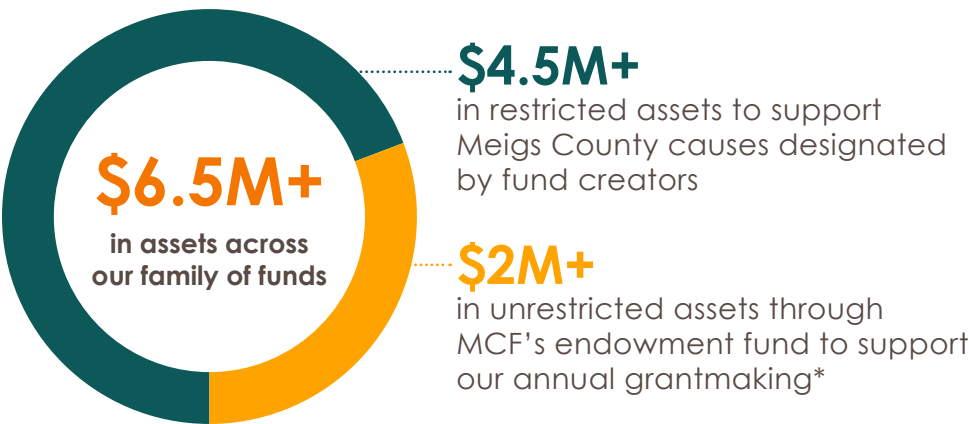
Ally is leading the design of curriculum and marketing materials for the program while Kathryn is connecting with local partners to help bring new experiences to the attendees.

They are two of six individuals living and/or working in Meigs County serving through this inaugural fellowship. The fellowship is investing in emerging leaders across the region, both financially and through a targeted program that teaches them how to identify community needs, develop solutions and assemble a network of partners to address local challenges.



OUR IMPACT

OUR ASSETS

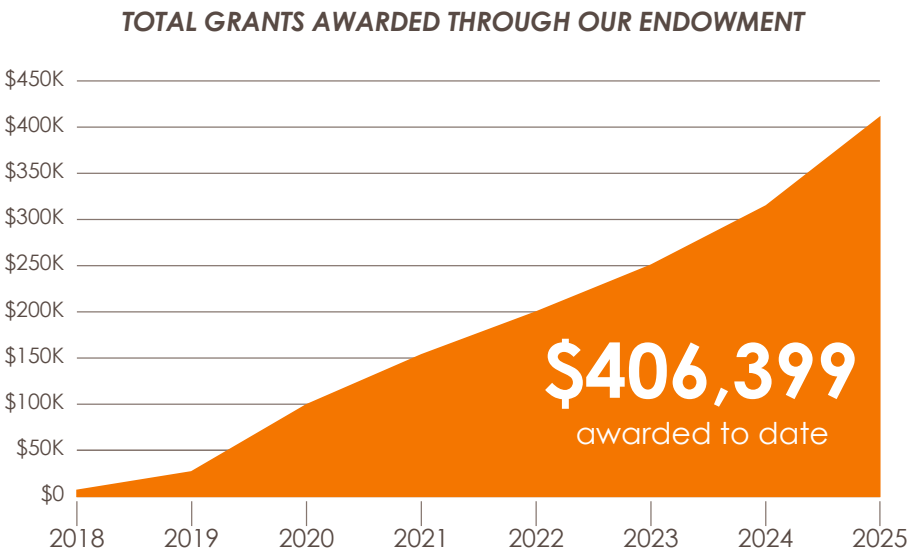


* Our endowment fund is designed to provide continuous investment in Meigs County. Our endowment is invested. The earnings generated from those investments fund the grants we award each year, providing resources to meet the community's needs today while preserving the fund to serve Meigs County for generations to come.

OUR IMPACT IN 2025



OUR IMPACT TO DATE



OUR FAMILY OF FUNDS

- **Meigs County Foundation**
(This is the endowment fund that fuels our annual grantmaking.)
- Bachtel Scholarship Fund
- Bedford Township Community Scholarship
- The Blakeslee Center Endowment
- Brandi Thomas Memorial Scholarship
- BraylynStrong Childhood Cancer Awareness Scholarship Fund
- Buckley Family Fund
- Camp Kiashuta Endowment
- Charles A. and Joan Corder Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Chester-Shade Historical Association Fund
- Eastern Local Alumni & Friends Endowment
- Gary G. Lee Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Karr-Aanestad K9 Foundation Fund
- Leifheit-Michael Family Scholarship Fund
- Meigs County Schools Food Pantry Fund
- Meigs Performing Arts Fund
- New Haven School Fund
- Reed Family Fund
- The William M. and Janet P. Betcher Memorial Endowment for Library Services



Meigs County Foundation

An affiliate of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

Help support the people, places, programs and future of Meigs County

GROW MCF'S ANNUAL GRANTMAKING

Gifts to the Meigs County Foundation's endowment fund are invested. The earnings generated from those investments fund the grants MCF awards each year to nonprofit and public organizations working to increase quality of life in our communities.

Give to MCF's endowment fund by:



Scanning the QR code or visiting
www.AppalachianOhio.org/Meigs/give



or mailing your gift to
Meigs County Foundation
P.O. Box 109
Pomeroy, OH 45769

You can also establish an unrestricted fund – named in honor of your family or a loved one – that will contribute to MCF's grantmaking each year.

FUND WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU

Provide sustained support for what's closest to your heart by establishing a restricted fund through MCF. We can help you create endowments to support specific charitable organizations or schools; scholarships to provide educational opportunities; donor-advised funds for family or corporate giving; funds that benefit an area of interest; and more.

LEAVE A LEGACY WITH A PLANNED GIFT

Include charitable giving in your estate planning, giving you the peace of mind of knowing the communities and causes closest to your heart will continue to receive your support beyond your lifetime. The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio can assist you and/or your advisors with charitable research, provide options and create necessary documents or language for your plan.

Gifts to the Meigs County Foundation are tax-deductible and can be made in a variety of ways, including:



CASH



STOCK



REAL ESTATE



ROYALTIES



QUALIFIED CHARITABLE
DISTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAs

Gifts of all sizes and kinds make a difference!

For more information about establishing a fund or planned gift, **contact us today!**

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