

Hands Up for Education

Plesac committed to helping students

You may know Leslie Plesac as a community leader, a supportive mother and a passionate advocate for education. However, she was also the first person in her family to graduate from college. "My mom was the valedictorian of her high school class, but passed on a scholarship to get married and have five kids," said Plesac, who credits her mother with supporting her dreams for an education.



It wasn't easy for Plesac's family to fund a college education. "In my junior year, finances were particularly tight, and my tuition at Miami of Ohio did not get paid. I returned to school after Christmas break to a canceled schedule," she said. Plesac was able to piece together the funding and ended up graduating from Miami of Ohio and then earned a Master's degree from Marquette University.

Yet Plesac never forgot both the struggles and the rewards of her education. In 1994, the Plesac family established a private family foundation to help students realize their dreams of higher education. The family soon decided to place their funds with the Porter County Community Foundation.

"Scholarships provide students with the support and resources to reach their full potential. I believe we owe it to our young people to offer a hand up when it comes to education."

Combining our gifts with others through the Foundation and utilizing their expertise meant the funds could go further and make a bigger impact for more students," said Plesac. She also became involved with the Foundation's Scholarship Committee, chairing it now for nearly a decade. "Being a part of the Scholarship Committee allowed me to focus on what I was passionate about and that is when this became about something much bigger than me," she said. In fact, the Foundation has awarded more than 205 scholarships since 1998.

Plesac is inspired by the stories of students she's met through the Scholarship Committee. Students like the one who lost both of his parents before he graduated from high school who is now a sophomore Engineering student at Purdue. Or the student who was identified as learning disabled and told she should think about something other than college and then proved everyone wrong by earning a degree at IUPUI. "Scholarships provide students with the support and resources to reach their full potential. I believe we owe it to our young people to offer a hand up when it comes to education."

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Plesac is chairing the Foundation's upcoming 15th Anniversary Celebration. Called FAB FIFTEEN, the celebration will help the Foundation to grow the scholarship endowment so that we can help more students reach their potential. Learn more in this issue!

FAB FIFTEEN - 15th Anniversary Celebration **November 12, 2011 • Porter County Expo Center**

This very special college tailgate FUNdraiser, which includes a live performance by Second City, will benefit the Porter County Community Scholarship Fund. The goal is to raise \$150,000 - that's \$10,000 for each inspiring year since our founding.

For information on tickets or sponsorship opportunities, contact the Foundation at 219-465-0294.



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IMPACT 2011

Parents as Teachers Awarded \$45,000 Women's Fund



Pictured left to right are: Barb Young, Foundation President; Jenny Vidimos, Parents As Teachers Board Member; Jill Stricker, Parents As Teachers Executive Director; and Joanne Urschel, Impact member.

More Porter County kindergartners will be better prepared to enter school thanks to a \$45,000 grant to Parents As Teachers of Porter County. The grant was awarded by Impact Porter County, a women's giving circle with the Porter County Community Foundation.

"I can't tell you how many families will benefit from this gift," said Jill Stricker, Executive Director of Parents as Teachers of Porter County (PAT). "This takes our organization to the next level. This grant will help us expand our early intervention and school readiness services for low-income families," said Stricker. "We will reach 200 more beneficiaries thanks to these grant funds." PAT is a universal access, early childhood family education program, created to assist families in preparing their children (birth to age 5) to be ready to learn as they enter school.

Two other finalists, The Caring Place and Discoveries Unlimited, each received a \$2,500 grant. "I think all our nonprofits are wonderful and our community thanks them for the work they do," said Joanne Urschel, Impact Porter County Grant Committee Chairperson. "We are thrilled that we can help them make an impact."

What is Impact Porter County?

Impact Porter County is a giving circle, introduced in 2007, with a simple and ambitious goal: Raise \$100,000, half of which would be given away immediately to causes that advance women, and half would be endowed at the Porter County Community Foundation to continue helping women forever. In the past four years, Impact Porter County has awarded over \$170,000 in Women's Fund grants and the endowment currently has more than \$350,000. To learn more about getting involved in the Women's Fund, contact the Foundation at 219-465-0294.

Celebrating Outstanding Achievement

Each year the Foundation acknowledges extraordinary contributions and awards each recipient \$1,000 to direct to the nonprofit endowment of their choice. This year the Foundation was pleased to recognize the following extraordinary contributions.

Outstanding Nonprofit Staff Member Laura Harting, Visiting Nurse Association

Harting has been at the helm of the Visiting Nurse Association of Porter County since its inception in 1970, recently retiring as Executive Director. Under her leadership, the VNA grew from serving 126 patients during its first year to serving more than 2,700 patients and clients in 2010. Harting helped the VNA launch a full range of care services for the community, build the Arthur B. and Ethel V. Horton Hospice Center and establish the new Phoenix Center, a bereavement center for children.



Outstanding Nonprofit Staff Member Debbie Lambert, Hilltop Neighborhood House

Lambert joined Hilltop Neighborhood House in 2004, recently announcing her retirement as Executive Director. She was instrumental in strengthening the organization's business model while advancing the mission to provide quality childhood education rather than simply childcare. More recently her efforts helped expand Hilltop's outreach by opening Walt's Place, a center for afterschool programs and adult learning classes.

Pictured left to right are: Laura Harting, Visiting Nurse Association; Caroline Shook, Housing Opportunities; Rocco Schiralli, Porter-Starke Services; and Debbie Lambert, Hilltop Neighborhood House.

Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Housing Opportunities

Housing Opportunities (HO) was recognized for extraordinary leadership in addressing homelessness. HO worked with community partners to purchase and re-open the Spring Valley Shelter and has led the way in providing the full continuum of housing needs in Porter County. HO is also leading the Porter County Coalition for Affordable Housing in the effort to create a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Porter County.

Outstanding Nonprofit Organization Porter-Starke Services

Porter-Starke Services has been providing behavioral health care services in our community since 1975. When Christian Community Action of Porter County was struggling to keep the Spring Valley Shelter open, Porter-Starke Services was one of the first community partners to come to the table and offer assistance. They provided financial management assistance, case management oversight and facilities maintenance through the shelter's management transition to Housing Opportunities.

Foundation Receives Certification

The Porter County Community Foundation has been certified as compliant with the Ethical and Operational Standards for Indiana Community Foundations. In addition, because of a reciprocal agreement with the Community Foundation National Standards Board (CFNSB), the Foundation is also considered to be in compliance with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations.

"We are proud to be recognized for our work and our commitment to excellence," said Mark Maassel, chair of the Porter County Community Foundation Board.

"From our beginning, 15 years ago, our board and staff have always been committed to excellence in operations, governance and programming," he said.

The Foundation leads, unites, and supports giving to make a difference in Porter County today, tomorrow, and forever. To learn more, contact the Foundation at 219-465-0294 or visit www.portercountyfoundation.org.



Life Insurance – *the Gift of a Lifetime*

If you've been looking for a great way to support the good work of the Porter County Community Foundation, life insurance may be the answer – and it may empower you to do more than you ever thought you could. Life insurance can be used to create a major gift in a variety of ways:

1. Name the Foundation as beneficiary

Perhaps the simplest way to use life insurance to make a gift to the Foundation is to name the Foundation as the beneficiary of all or a portion of the benefits that will be paid on your death. Or, if you feel that a family member should have priority, you could name the Foundation as a contingent beneficiary, which means that the Foundation would only receive the benefits if your primary beneficiary is not living on your death.

2. Acquire a new policy and then transfer ownership of the policy to the Foundation

In this way, you can create a generous gift at a fraction of the cost and without decreasing the estate you want to leave to your family. Or, if you have an existing policy that you believe your family will not need on your death you can assign the ownership of that policy to the Foundation. This would not only create a major gift on your death, but could also provide you with an immediate tax deduction for the fair market value of the policy or the cost basis. You may also be able to deduct any future premiums that may be due on your policy.

Life insurance offers many different ways in which you can protect your family, receive tax benefits and leave a legacy of your values. The Foundation can work with you and your professional advisors to help you find a plan that works best for you.

A Delicious Way to Give

Strongbow Inn shares with Foundation all year



Diners at Strongbow Inn are finding a tasty new item on the menu these days and it benefits the Foundation. Strongbow now features a Charity Choice on both the lunch and dinner menu, with 10 percent of the sale going to charity. For 2011, Strongbow has chosen the Porter County Community Foundation as the recipient of the charity funds for this year.

Check out the daily charity choice and be sure to thank Strongbow for their generosity!