

History of the Dearborn County Retired Teachers Foundation, Inc.

The Dearborn County Retired Teachers Foundation, Inc., DCRTF, is an affiliate of the Dearborn County Retired Teachers Association and the Indiana Retired Teachers Association.

Beginning in 2008 the retired teachers offered one \$500 Educator Grant/Award per year to an active teacher in the area schools. Two or three potential recipients were chosen during Educator Grant committee meetings by vote on the submitted applications with all identifying information blacked out. These potential recipients were then presented to the general assembly of the Dearborn County Retired Teachers Association for the final award winner. Bonnie Kelley was the original chair of this Educator Grant Committee.

The Dearborn County Retired Teachers wanted to continue giving Educator Grants. Under the leadership of the new chair, Betty Bourquein, the Dearborn County Retired Teachers Foundation applied for non-profit status with the federal and state governments. The Dearborn County Retired Teachers Foundation became a separate entity from the Association. The Association continued to work for the benefit of retired teachers, particularly in the area of pensions. The Foundation became the charitable branch of the retired teachers in November 2012.

By law the Foundation cannot work with the legislature to improve teacher retirements. However, the Foundation's non-profit status now made it possible for all donations to become tax-deductible.

The next step for the Foundation was to establish an endowment with the Dearborn Community Foundation. An endowment with the Community Foundation was established in 2013 and DCRTF immediately became a member of their Legacy Society. Judy Mosier became the Dearborn County Retired Teachers Foundation's first Heart of Gold award recipient for her Apple Pie Ministry with her church and the retired teachers. Later that year Mosier also won the national With Our Youth! Award for this ministry. Gerri Barber won the 2018 national With Our Youth! Award for the pillowcase dress project.

The Dearborn County Retired Teachers next applied for and was accepted into membership with the Indiana Association of Public Education Foundations (INAPEF). This organization provided leadership and donated \$400 for DCRTF to get started. Director Betty Bourquein was later asked to speak at a regional conference on the topic of volunteerism.

It was soon decided that a logo needed to be developed for the organization. Cara Enneking, a senior at Cincinnati State, worked with the Foundation to design the logo currently used by the Foundation. The logo depicted the retired teachers' vision for the future by building on the past--thus the pyramid with its broad base pointing upwards.

Because of the number of applicants, the retired teachers decided it was time to reach out to the community for additional support. An annual giving campaign was established and the retired teachers partnered with area businesses to prove additional Educator Grant/Awards.

Funding for the Educator Grant/Awards was done primarily from the Teachers' Treasures Sale. Each spring the retired teachers would collect used but usable materials from the local schools

and then provide these to beginning, parochial, home-school teachers and/or others. Unused materials were given to the Dearborn Recycling Center for distribution to other non-profit groups.

In 2017 the retired teachers, with the help of Dearborn County Hospital and Walmart, held a reception for the school nurses and their superintendents in both Dearborn and Ohio Counties. Money was given to each of the nurses to use in the school clinics. Many nurses purchased supplies for indigent students.

The following year a reception was held for the media specialists in the Dearborn County schools. \$500 was awarded to each corporation to make purchases as needed for their media centers.

2019 was a banner year for the Foundation as sixteen grants were distributed with the help of the Dearborn Community Foundation's granting of two grants, the Knights of Columbus, money from the Educator Grant Endowment at the Community Foundation, and local businesses.

COVID hit in 2020. This affected everyone, but it significantly affected the Foundation as the retired teachers did not meet as a group for a whole year. The retired teachers were not able to work its one fund-raiser (the gates at the 4-H Fair), the reception planned for the special ed paraprofessionals was postponed, the August presentation of awards was canceled, and the DCRTF Executive Board decided not to send out applications for the 2020-21 school year. Many of our business associates said that they could not promise support because they were unaware of how their business would be impacted by the COVID. The Knights of Columbus did agree to fund three parochial school projects and the Foundation supported one public school project and found a sponsor for another.

The following year, 2021, though COVID was still around, many of our senior population had received their vaccinations. Although the Foundation had not distributed any applications, six applications were still received. The Knights of Columbus awarded three grants, CIVISTA and the Betty McLaughlin Endowment awarded one grant and the Foundation gave one grant. A special Legacy Award was given to E. G. McLaughlin for his continued support of the grant program.

By 2022 the Foundation was post COVID and back on track. Seven awards were given to area teachers. Also, the amount of the grant was increased to \$750. With the help of St. Elizabeth Dearborn Health and Valley Utilities, each of the school corporations received \$1000 for use by the school nurses to help those students in most need.

With rampant inflation, in 2023 the DCRTF Board voted to grant up to \$750 for needed equipment requested by an active teacher. It was also decided to give each school corporation \$500 for the schools' media specialists to combat illiteracy. An effort was made to find sponsors to match the \$500 gifted by DCRTF. The Media Specialists were to meet the same requirements as other teachers applying for a grant.

Director Betty Bourquein, who has served in this position since 2009, first as chair of the Educator Grant Committee and then as Director of the newly-formed Dearborn County Retired

Teachers Foundation which was formed in 2013, announced her up-coming retirement after the 2024-25 school year. Christelle Middendorf was unanimously elected as Vice-Director and began training for the position of Directorship.

Plans for the future are to continue giving the Educator Grant. Donations, bequests, and memorials are always welcome. Retired teachers feel particularly qualified to assess the needs of the classroom teacher and are perhaps their biggest supporters giving of themselves as volunteers in the schools and through the Educator Grant program.