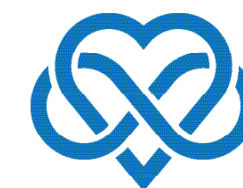




Journey
Through
The
Decades



BERRIEN
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For Good. For Ever.™

BCF Board Chairs

- 1952–1967 **William Vawter**
- 1967–1973 **Andrew Grootendorst**
- 1973–1983 **A. Edward Brown**
- 1983–1987 **Robert C. Upton**
- 1987–1990 **John Stiemle**
- 1990–1993 **Richard Whiteman**
- 1993–1994 **Jim DeLapa**
- 1994–1997 **Larry Bubb**
- 1997–1998 **Marilyn Schanze**
- 1998–2002 **Mark Miller**
- 2002–2005 **B. David Allen**
- 2005–2007 **Joanne Sims**
- 2007–2009 **Greg Vaughn**
- 2009–2011 **Sharon Vargo**
- 2011–2014 **Tim Passaro**
- 2014–2016 **Hillary Bubb**
- 2016–2019 **Hon. Mabel Mayfield**
- 2019–2022 **Dr. Robert Harrison**
- 2022–Present **Philip Maki**

Special thanks to our “Decades Super Models”

- 1950s – **Lisa Welch and Janine Harrison**
- 1960s – **Heidi Peters and Anja Bitzer**
- 1970s – **Gloria and Erik Ender**
- 1980s – **Sarah Jollay and Mark Miller**
- 1990s – **Emily and Erich Kirchner**
- 2000s – **Zaundra and Ray Lipscomb**
- 2010s – **Hon. Mabel Mayfield and Bob Harrison**
- Fund The Future – **BCF Board Chair Philip Maki, Vice Chair Sarah Jollay, Secretary Ray Lipscomb, and Treasurer Christina Hardy**



A Look Back

2022 marks 70 years of philanthropy at the **Berrien Community Foundation**. It all started as a small volunteer group of leaders with a desire to take care of their community forever. While the organization has grown, the purpose remains the same.

This foundation belongs to you. Over the years, the faces have changed and the grants have increased, but volunteers remain at the center of the **Berrien Community Foundation**. This is a place where community volunteers work together to decide what is best for the community they love.

The mission of BCF is to connect the power of people who care with the causes and organizations that strengthen our communities. The words of that mission have evolved over the last 70 years, but the heart of the mission stays steady.

As we celebrate 70 years of giving back, we wanted to share some milestones that happened along the way. We also wanted to thank all the volunteers, donors and grantees who continue work to make our home a better place.

It's always good to look back and be grateful. The past is a launching pad for a stellar future!





1950s

The Beginning...

November 20, 1952 - William Vawter holds a meeting at Holly's Restaurant in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Mr. Vawter and eight other gentlemen from Berrien County meet to discuss forming a community foundation, a relatively new type of philanthropic organization that could help care for Berrien County forever. At the time, there are only 148 other community foundations in existence. At that meeting, Berrien Community Foundation becomes Number 149.

Defining Moments:

- 1952** BCF Board Chair **William Vawter** gives the first gift of \$1,000 and names BCF as beneficiary of a \$4,000 life insurance policy.
- 1953** BCF receives its first gift of \$85 from a community member outside of the Board of Directors.
- 1956** **William Vawter** announces that a Benton Harbor businessman has pledged a yearly contribution to BCF from the profits of his company.
Vere Beckwith names BCF in his estate plan.
- 1958** **Andrew Grootendorst** makes BCF's first **Charitable Remainder Trust** of \$10,000 in Whirlpool stock.



"All of us here take care of the everyday needs of our families and children and the extras that we want them to have; and we also take pride in laying aside something for their future needs. There seems to be a real analogy between our duty to our families and to the people in our community."

- William Vawter, 1956

Founding Board Members:

- President** - William Vawter
- Vice President** - John DeVries
- Members** - Vere Beckwith, Victor Ferguson, Andrew Grootendorst, Leon Harris, Dickson Jackson, Arthur Leckner, Elmer Orniston

Notable Grants:

- 1957** BCF makes its first grants:
 - \$100 to **Mercy Hospital Nursing School**
(now Spectrum Health Lakeland)
 - \$200 to **Benton Harbor Junior College**
(now Lake Michigan College)
 - \$100 to **Michigan's Children's Aid Society Building Fund**
(now The Avenue)



Benton Harbor Junior College, now Lake Michigan College, is one of the first BCF grant recipients.



BCF is launched at Holly's Restaurant in Benton Harbor on November 20, 1952.



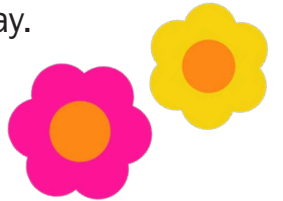


1960s

Decade of Change



The 1960s is a decade of great change for both the country and the Berrien Community Foundation. Women are re-inventing their role inside the home and outside of it. Grassroots efforts to affect change become commonplace and our Board of Trustees is no exception. There are several “firsts” for the foundation and many seeds are planted that continue to benefit Berrien County today.

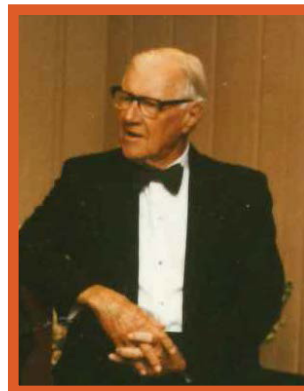


Defining Moments:

- 1961** The **Dorothy and William Vawter Fund** is established in honor of their 50th anniversary. This is the first separate fund from the **Berrien Community Endowment**.
- 1962** **Florence VanAntwerp** becomes the first female trustee.
The **Elizabeth Upton Vawter Fund** to support crippled children is established.
- 1963** In an effort to get the word out about the work of the foundation, the first small brochure is created to publicize the foundation and solicit donations.
The board forms a separate investment committee to track and advise foundation investments.
- 1967** **Robert C. Upton** becomes a trustee.
- 1969** The **Heritage Fund** (now the *Heritage Museum & Cultural Center*) begins as the first nonprofit fund.



Malcolm S. Ross is the longest serving trustee in the history of the Berrien Community Foundation – 33 years. To reflect his spirit and passion for the environment, his estate gift to BCF was used to create the Malcolm S. Ross Sustainable Endowment, forever helping to support and sustain the environment.

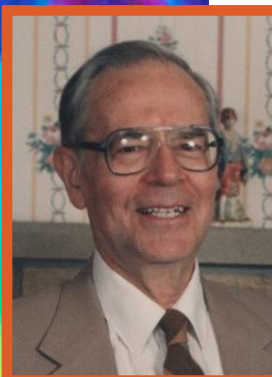


Notable Grants:

- As requests increase, the foundation forms an investment committee to review grants and make recommendations to the trustees.
- 1961** BCF makes its first of many grants to support the **Twin Cities Symphonic Society** (now *Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra*), giving \$500 for a music library.
 - 1967** A grant of \$2,500 is made to the **United Community Fund** (now *United Way of Southwest Michigan*) to begin its first information and referral service in the community.
 - 1969** A grant of \$3,500 is made to assist the restoration of the **Morton House** in Benton Harbor.



Florence VanAntwerp becomes the first of many female trustees and leaders at BCF. She lead the grant investigation committee in making funding recommendations for the full board.



Lester Page began his service on the BCF Board of Trustees in 1961. A prominent attorney in the area, he served on the board for 29 years. Upon his death in 2017, Lester Page remembered the Berrien Community Foundation in his estate, creating the Lester & Barbara Page Sr. Endowment Fund to support general grantmaking throughout Berrien County.





1970s



Times Are Changing



The 1970s is a time of social change. As the war in Vietnam comes to an end, many new issues emerge, especially environmentalism. The Berrien Community Foundation makes significant efforts to address these issues as well as continue grassroots efforts to promote its work in the communities of Berrien County.



Defining Moments:

1972 At the annual meeting, **William Vawter** reviews the foundation's 20-year history. Growth went from the first gift of \$1,000 to almost \$300,000 with gifts ranging from \$20 to \$17,500.

Andrew Grootendorst leaves an estate gift to the foundation of over \$100,000. To put that in perspective, the average annual household income in 1972 is \$11,000.

1973 The stock market becomes more volatile and **BCF President A. Edward Brown**, noted for his stalwart leadership, reminds trustees, "The market is the market" as they watch assets go up and down.

1975 **BCF Trustee Steve Sizer** says the board must make a better effort to inform the community about the work of the foundation and uses his marketing skills to increase public awareness and understanding of what the foundation is and how it benefits the community.

1979 **William Luebke** and **Magda Zoschke** establish an endowment for the **Twin Cities Federation of Womens Clubs** to provide care for the 400-year-old oak tree near the **Morton House Museum**.



As the oak tree is a symbol of the growth from a small acorn to the mighty oak tree, the fund is a symbol of the care the foundation gives to the community.



Notable Grants:

1971 Grants of \$1,500 are awarded to both **Mercy Hospital** and **Memorial Hospital** for equipment needs. The trend of supporting hospital equipment grant requests continues through the decade.

1972 A grant of \$1,600 is made to **Lake Michigan College** to cover the full tuition and fees for five students.

1973 A grant of \$1,600 is made to the **Berrien County Council on Aging** to furnish a new senior center.

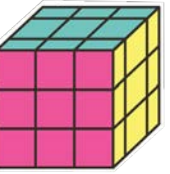
1976 Trustees award a grant to the **Niles Parks and Recreation Department** as well as a grant to the **North Berrien Senior Center** as part of a commitment to be a foundation for all of Berrien County.



Multiple Berrien Community Foundation grants contribute to the renovation and upkeep of the Morton House.



STEADFASTNESS



The 1980s sees great growth and downfalls in America. From the space program to the stock market, many are moved by how high we could reach and how quickly tragedy could occur. To that end, the Berrien Community Foundation looks to the future and takes steps to strengthen the systems that protect and care for our community.



1980s



DEFINING MOMENTS:

- 1980** A bequest from **Elizabeth Upton Vawter** establishes a \$200,000 endowment for **Sarett Nature Center** within the Berrien Community Foundation. Her gift continues to provide a steady stream of annual support for programs and operating expenses.
- 1985** The board begins looking at long-range objectives for the foundation. **Perry Ballard Advertising** conducts a community survey to identify needs and gain insight into the right path for the foundation to follow for the future.
Kay Delle Koch is hired as the **first paid executive director** for Berrien Community Foundation, working part-time from her home.
- 1986** Robert Upton announces plans to double the foundation's size from \$2 million to \$4 million.
- 1987** At the BCF Annual Meeting, **President John Steimle** promises to focus on broadening the scope and awareness of BCF throughout Berrien County.
- 1988** **Berrien County** partners with BCF to create the **Berrien County Parks Fund** to support the growth and maintenance of the parks system.
- 1989** The **Michigan Tax Credit for Community Foundations** goes into effect creating a greater tax incentive for people to support endowments through their local community foundation and spurs growth at BCF.

NOTABLE GRANTS:

- Based upon findings from the **Perry Ballard Advertising** surveys, the foundation begins sponsoring trainings to strengthen the administration and fund development capabilities of nonprofits in Berrien County communities.
- 1980** A grant for \$850 is made to aid in the launch of the **Y Uncles** mentoring program at the **YMCA**.
- 1981** A \$2,000 grant is made to support **Fernwood** in Niles.
- 1986** BCF makes its largest grant to date: \$25,000 to support the purchase of a linear accelerator in the new cancer center at **Mercy Memorial Medical Center**.



Kay Delle Koch, the first executive director of the Berrien Community Foundation.



William Vawter and Elizabeth Upton Vawter establish an endowment that continues to support Sarett Nature Center today.



"The foundation should not be merely a 'me too' organization, but instead the foundation should develop new initiatives, broaden its perimeters and be a catalyst for community betterment."
- Robert C. Upton, 1986



Berrien Community Foundation elects officers, trustees for '89



A PROSPEROUS TIME

Prosperity seems to reign in the 1990s. The economy is growing, unemployment is down and Harry Potter is the most successful literary creation the world has seen in decades. As a result of all this growth, the Berrien Community Foundation sees an influx of people who feel compelled to give back and add their support, ideas and enthusiasm to the growth of the foundation.



1990s

DEFINING MOMENTS:

- 1990** The **Kellogg Youth Initiative Fund** begins and **Teens Exhibiting Able Minds (T.E.A.M.)**, a youth advisory committee, is created. These teens contribute to fund development, grant making and learn the importance of philanthropy.
- 1992** After years of asking others to make copies and driving around town to get copies made for meetings, desperation warrants the purchase of BCF's first copy machine.
- BCF, the Frederick S. Upton Foundation, Whirlpool Foundation, Tiscornia Foundation and United Way** launch the **Coalition of Community Funders** for the purpose of good stewardship of community funds.
- 1993** The **Education Endowment** is BCF's first **Field of Interest Fund**.
- 1994** **Donor Advised Funds** begin with the creation of the first scholarship – the **John E. N. and Dede Howard Instrumental Music Scholarship**.
- 1998** **Richard and Marilyn Schanze** make a surprise announcement at the BCF Annual Meeting that they will donate a \$2 million charitable trust.

NOTABLE GRANTS:

- 1994** BCF makes its first scholarship award – the **John E. N. and Dede Howard Instrumental Music Scholarship**.
- 1995** In response to this new and unknown virus striking the world, **T.E.A.M.** makes a grant for the **AIDS Awareness Campaign**.
BCF makes a grant to help fund the **WWII Memorial** on the bluff in St. Joseph.
- 1998** **100 Women Strong** is launched and grants of \$500 are made to aid women in crisis throughout Berrien County.



John E.N. and Dede Howard establish the first scholarship at the Berrien Community Foundation, awarding it to harpist Meg Rodgers.



Berrien Foundation receives \$200,000

The Berrien Community Foundation has received a matching grant of \$200,000 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The money has been placed in the foundation's youth endowment fund, where it will be used to fund youth-oriented programs and organizations in Berrien County.

According to Margaret Poole the foundation's executive director, the foundation first had to raise \$400,000 in local gifts to qualify for the grant.

Established in 1991, the endowment fund now stands at \$417,000 and has provided more than \$95,000 in grants to help address youth issues in Berrien County. Recipients of grants from the endowment fund are identified and evaluated by members of T.E.A.M. (Teen Exhibiting Able Minds), a group of Berrien County junior and high school students formed and sponsored by the foundation for this purpose.



Margaret Poole is named the first full-time executive director of the Berrien Community Foundation in 1990.



BCF partners to launch 100 Women Strong to help women in need in Berrien County.

SPECIAL THANKS



Richard & Marilyn Schanze

SPECIAL APPRECIATION...

... goes to Richard & Marilyn for their public philanthropic gift. By doing so, they have set an example that has inspired others to realize their charitable goals through the Community Foundation for the benefit of all generations.



2000s



NAVIGATING THE UNPREDICTABLE

For Americans in the wake of September 11, 2001, it seems our very way of life is under attack. There is no denying that a new reality has emerged and everything, from the stock market to the way we travel is affected. With careful planning, Berrien Community Foundation navigates this unpredictable decade and shows that compassion and kind acts will always win out over fear and destruction.



DEFINING MOMENTS:

- 2000** BCF adopts a new logo and mission.
BCF receives a \$37,000 grant from the tobacco settlement to start health programs in Berrien County.
- 2001** The foundation establishes the **September 11, 2001 Fund** in response to the terrorist attacks in New York.
The foundation leads philanthropy in education initiatives to help teach children about “**Learning to Give.**”
BCF receives a \$1,000,000 donation to establish **The Phoenix Fund**, a donor advised fund by an anonymous donor to support multiple programs in Berrien County.
- 2003** BCF begins providing grant and scholarship services to the **Heart of Cook Foundation**, the charitable arm of the **D.C. Cook Nuclear Plant**.
- 2006** An anonymous donor provides \$130,000 for a fund for **River Valley School District**.
- 2008** The **William J. Deputy Fund** is established to support projects and programs in the Harbor Country area.
- 2009** Thanks to the generosity of donors, the **BCF Scholarship Program** continues to grow and is now awarding over \$120,000 in scholarships each year.

NOTABLE GRANTS:

- 2000** BCF awards largest amount of grant dollars in its 48-year history. Grants totaling \$240,000 are given at a reception at the **Berrien Springs Courthouse Museum**.
T.E.A.M., the BCF Youth Advisory Committee, gives a \$20,000 grant to **Link Crisis Intervention Center** to try a creative approach to sentencing for juvenile offenders in the form of an after-school program.
- 2003** BCF provides a \$15,000 grant to **Berrien County Health Department** for a county-wide smoking cessation program.
- 2007** Joining with **United Way**, BCF makes a \$50,000 commitment to sponsor the community room at **Lakeland Hospital**.



H-P photo by Elberta McKnight
TAKING STOCK: Retired Berrien Springs High School business teacher Edna Bender has created a \$100,000 scholarship endowment from stock dividends that humbly began when Bender and her students bought one share of AT&T as a class project in 1956.

Stock market lesson grows into \$100,000 endowment



The Greater Berrien Springs Community Endowment is born out of the “Give Where You Live” program. A dynamic group of committed volunteers work to grow an endowment dedicated to programs and projects in the Berrien Springs area.



Ted and Elaine Lucker have a flower cart in their front yard with sales going to provide for the needs of children. After Elaine’s death, Ted wanted to make sure there will always be resources available for children in need. A \$1.5 million gift establishes The Theodore & Elaine Lucker Endowment for Underprivileged Children to forever provide for children in Berrien County.



Nanette Keiser is hired as the new BCF executive director in 2003.



BCF re-imagines their logo, keeping the oak tree to signify strength.





2010s

Continued Growth

This decade brings significant growth and change to the foundation. More scholarships, grants and volunteer opportunities allow BCF to deepen its impact in Berrien County.



Defining Moments:

- 2011** Berrien Community Foundation celebrates its 60th anniversary with a plan that includes making matching gifts to encourage agency endowments.
- 2013** **Lisa Cripps-Downey** is hired as the new president of the foundation. BCF begins providing grant services to the **Frederick S. Upton Foundation**.
- 2014** **Joyce Gouwens** leaves a legacy gift through a \$500,000 life insurance policy to establish **The Fund of Joy** to serve the needs of women and children.
- 2016** BCF announces a \$500,000 scholarship fund for low-income students from the estate of **Josephine Trefz**.
- 2017** BCF holds the **65th Anniversary Sapphire Jubilee** and gives the **Spirit of Philanthropy Award** to **Steve and Carol Sizer**.
- 2018** BCF introduces the **For Good Grant** program and celebrates grant awards with check presentations on **For Good Fridays**.
BCF volunteers wrap gifts for senior citizens as part of **Giving Tuesday – Senior Care Kits**.
- 2019** A legacy gift from **John E.N. Howard** creates **The Howard Youth Endowment, The Howard Community Projects Fund** and **The Program Endowment for Howard Facilities**.



Backpacks for Good is born in Coloma/Watervliet, providing over 700 backpacks filled with school supplies for the community.



Notable Grants:

- 2015** In response to the courthouse shooting of three Berrien County officers, BCF issues a challenge grant to raise \$30,000 for safety equipment. The community responds by raising over \$50,000.
- 2016** **Steve and Elizabeth Upton** provide a \$1 million gift to endow the **Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant**, providing a \$50,000 grant each year to a local nonprofit - forever. The first \$50,000 grant is awarded to **Therapeutic Equestrian Center** for their veterans program.
- 2018** **T.E.A.M.** funds and hosts the **Be A Voice, Not An Echo** program, bringing teens from all over Berrien County to learn how to speak up and act on things they feel passionate about.
- 2019** The innovative **Alamar Nonprofit Sustainability Grant** is first awarded to **St. Joseph Today**. This \$75,000 grant is focused on helping nonprofit organizations be more sustainable and create better working conditions for employees.



Awarding over \$120,000 in scholarships to Berrien County students is cause for celebration!



John E.N. and Dede Howard create legacy gifts to forever care for the community.



Carol Sizer accepts the Spirit of Philanthropy Award at the Sapphire Jubilee for the charitable work done by her and husband Steve Sizer.



BCF staff shine a light on the transportation issue facing Berrien County residents by going "A Week Without Cars."

2020s

Flexibility is Key

With COVID-19 in the forefront, BCF pivots quickly to meet community needs.

Defining Moments:

2020 BCF staff moves from the office to home to keep working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BCF acts as the **2020 Census Hub**, finding creative ways to count hard-to-count populations in Berrien County all while dealing with COVID-19 restrictions.

Southwest Michigan Cares Fund is created in partnership with **United Way of Southwest Michigan** and **South Haven Community Foundation**. The fund raises just over \$1 million to support community needs during COVID-19.

2021 **Backpacks for Good** is extended to all students who live in the 49022 ZIP code through a collaboration with **Whirlpool Corporation**.

An estate gift from **Bonnie Benson** becomes the largest estate gift in BCF history, funding programs throughout Berrien County with a focus on Harbor Country.

2022 The **BCF Scholarship Program** grows, providing over \$350,000 in scholarships to area students.

Notable Grants:

2020 BCF develops the **For Ever Grants**, giving nonprofits general operations support to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic.

BCF Arts Challenge raises \$215,538 to support local arts organizations that are closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

2021 A \$60,000 grant from the **Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan** lets BCF partner with **Carol's Hope** to increase access to drug-addiction intervention and overdose prevention services.

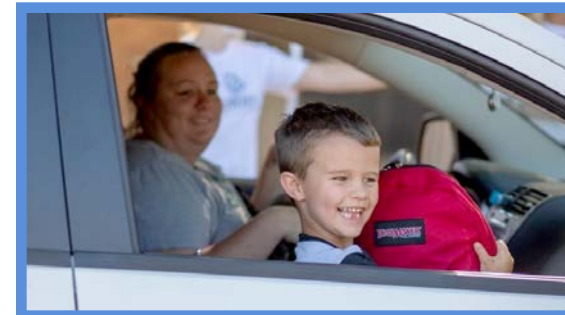
2022 BCF joins **National Network to Innovate for COVID and Adult Vaccine Equity** and works with local grassroots nonprofits to promote adult vaccines in minority populations. This results in hundreds more adults vaccinated against COVID-19.

Carolyn's Kids grant program is introduced in partnership with **Carolyn Hanson** to help support youth in our community. The first recipients of the \$50,000 grants are **Readiness Center** and **Well of GRACE Ministries**.

Carolyn Hanson presents the first Carolyn's Kids grants.



The Annual Meeting & Celebration is held in cars in the Mendel Center parking lot on Lake Michigan College's campus.



Backpacks For Good events are held at Coloma, Niles and Brandywine schools but due to COVID-19 are done as drive-throughs, distributing over 1,600 backpacks and food boxes to more than 500 families.



Fund The Future



So what is next? The BCF Board of Directors is working to take care of our community today while always looking toward the future. We want to grow our ability to serve and give back. **Our donors and volunteers make this possible.**

We hope you see the future in Berrien County as brightly as we do. We also hope you will join us by making a donation to **Fund the Future** which will build the assets of BCF to forever give in the areas of most need in our community. Or, talk to us about how you can create your own legacy gift through the Berrien Community Foundation.

These unrestricted gifts are key to allowing the foundation to respond to the most urgent and ever-changing needs in the community. BCF will be here to take care of our community, as our pal from the 1990's Buzz Lightyear would say,

"To Infinity And Beyond!"

