

A Mile In Their Shoes



BCF Staff Members Sandy Tardi, Lisa Cripps-Downey, Susan Matheny and Brittney Rogers said goodbye to their cars for a week for the BCF Transportation Challenge

So what is it like to get around Berrien County without a car? Many have talked about the struggle but in August Berrien Community Foundation staff members decided to see just how difficult it really is.

“We walked in a torrential rain storm, waited for buses, rode bikes and called friends,” said BCF President

Lisa Cripps-Downey. “It was an exhausting, stressful week.”

BCF staff member Brittney Rogers went from Niles to Benton Harbor and back in a day. “In my car it would have taken a little over an hour,” she said. “It took eight and a half hours!”

“The people who make it to and from work using public transportation are determined and resilient employees,” Cripps-Downey said. “We also found that the public transportation services are doing the best they can with the resources they have. The buses are clean and the employees are kind and helpful.”

As a result of the challenge, BCF recognized the New Heights CCDAs Cars Ministry with the 2018 Golden Acorn Excellence in Innovation Award and a \$4,000 grant. The Cars Ministry works with families in need of transportation to help them with family budgeting and then purchase a reliable car on payments for a total cost of \$500. The ministry also has volunteer mechanics who turn donated vehicles into reliable modes of transportation.



David Colp and Chris Britton of New Heights CCDAs receive a grant for The Cars Ministry from Lisa Cripps-Downey.

“We are doing this one family, one car at a time,” said New Heights Board President David Colp. “But it makes a difference. For that family it can be life changing. Without this kind of support we couldn’t keep doing the work we are doing.”



Berrien Springs resident Dick Bartz was honored with the 2018 Golden Acorn Volunteer Award for his work on the Berrien Springs Area Endowment along with \$1,000 grant directed to the non-profit of his choice.

To date the endowment has made almost \$100,000 in grants to 25 different organizations serving the Greater Berrien Springs area.

Bartz has served on the committee since it began in 2000 and works diligently on publicity, grant review, fundraising and team building.

“We cannot begin to estimate the number of envelopes he has stuffed or people he has gathered to make all of the work happen,” said BCF Trustee Bill Schalk. “He is an ideal volunteer who leads with humility, determination and appreciation for all of the people who are working alongside of him.”

Leaving a Legacy - “Dr. Bob” Ticknor

Dr. Robert Ticknor, best known as “Dr. Bob” was an optometrist in St. Joseph since 1938. He was in practice with his brother and served the community faithfully for years.

However, his service didn’t begin with setting up shop in St. Joseph. Dr. Bob also served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He spent four and a half years in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. His Navy cap displayed ribbons from 28 different missions. He was witness to the official surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay aboard the USS Missouri.

With the help of his church family at First Congregational Church in St. Joseph he continued to make it to church on Sundays from his home at the Whitcomb Tower. Dr. Bob passed away in December at the age of 104.

His church family took great care of him and in turn, he wanted to take care of them. He had been a faithful member of the congregation, and as part of his legacy of giving, Dr. Bob remembered First Congregational Church by leaving an endowment fund with the Berrien Community Foundation which will allow him to continue his tithing forever.



Dr. Robert Ticknor was a war hero, an optometrist, and a centenarian.

Harbor Country Rotary - Keeping The Community Fit



A representation of the exercise equipment soon to be installed in New Buffalo

Harbor Country Rotary and New Buffalo Township collaborated to use the William J. Deputy Grant for an outdoor workout space in the park! The goal of this park is to encourage both young and old to get outside and enjoy the benefits of fresh air, exercise and community that only a park can provide.

The William J. Deputy Fund is an endowment established in 2008 by Bill Deputy, a quiet philanthropist who wanted to support projects that benefit all of the communities in Harbor Country. It is open to all municipalities in Harbor Country and in this case, was a great opportunity for the HC Rotary to work with the Township to make something great for the whole community!

Many individuals and organizations pitched in to support the project including personal donations, fundraising events and even a bake sale!

Boys & Girls Club will “Be There”

The Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor received the \$50,000 Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant through the Berrien Community Foundation. The award was announced at the 66th Annual Meeting and Celebration of the Berrien Community Foundation.

The grant funds the “Be There” program to help kids learn to cope with loss, trauma and develop skills to handle trials and adversity in life.

“This is quite a surprise,” said Brian Saxton, CEO and Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor. “We had lost four of our teen members... It turns out the skills you need to deal with loss are the same as you need to deal with adversity... We have every evidence that this program is saving lives.”

The Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant is an annual award to a non-profit organization in Berrien County.



Steve & Elizabeth Upton present the 2018 Love Your Community Grant to Brian Saxton of the Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor.