



**LILLY SCHOLARS  
NETWORK**

Indiana's future. Our focus.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

**Lilly Scholars Network Selects Inaugural Round of Lead Forward Community Grants  
Bringing Lilly Endowment Community Scholars and Charitable Organizations Together to  
Impact the Lives of Hoosiers**

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**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** – In collaboration with [Independent Colleges of Indiana, Inc. \(ICI\)](#), the [Lilly Scholars Network \(LSN\)](#) has selected 10 organizations around the state to receive the inaugural round of Lead Forward Community Grants (LFCG), which pair charitable organizations with a Lilly Endowment Community Scholar (or multiple scholars) in their Indiana communities. Organizations could apply for up to \$2,500 in funding and scholars were encouraged to be part of the application process and to lead subsequent work on the projects.

The Lilly Scholars Network is pleased to announce that grants totaling \$22,812 were awarded to fund the initial projects. The grant recipients selected in this inaugural round are:

- Blue River Community Foundation, Shelby County
- Early Learning Shelby County, Shelby County
- enFocus, Inc., St. Joseph County
- Fueled for School, Hamilton County
- Headwaters Church, Allen County
- Huntington County Community Foundation, Huntington County
- Ripley County Community Foundation, Ripley County
- Rush County Community Foundation, Rush County
- Wabash College, Montgomery County
- Warren County Community Foundation, Warren County

See full project descriptions below.

The Lilly Scholars Network, with funding to ICI from [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) and oversight and support from ICI, works to engage Lilly Endowment Community Scholars in topics and with people focused on advancing Indiana's future, inspire and equip the scholars to be active changemakers in their communities and cultivate meaningful connections.

"The Lead Forward Community Grants Program is rooted in one of the fundamental reasons for the Lilly Scholars Network - to help improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state," said Isaac Janson, chair of the LSN Advisory Council and a 2002 scholar from St. Joseph County. "Scholars are known for their talent and

community involvement. As a network, we believe scholars can identify potential for community improvements, have the energy and drive to test ideas, and can provide impetus and enthusiasm for trying new approaches to create positive change.”

Project descriptions of the Fall 2020 LFCG recipients:

- Wabash College, Montgomery County (\$2,500)
  - Brief Description: Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD) is a program at Wabash College founded on the belief that the core of democracy is the right of free expression. In partnership with the City of Crawfordsville and the Mayor’s Special Commission on Racial Equality will host a Community Conversation on Diversity and Inclusion.
  - Scholar Partner: Jeremy Wentzel, 2010 scholar from Brown County
  
- Fueled for School, Hamilton County (\$2,500)
  - Brief Description: Fueled for School is a meal program that provides Hamilton County youth with nutritious meals packs. Grant funds will help meet the nutritional needs of 300 food-insecure students during winter break school closures by purchasing and delivering nutritious food.
  - Scholar Partner: Pete Freeman II, 2014 scholar from Hamilton County
  
- Early Learning Shelby County, Shelby County (\$2,488)
  - Brief Description: On behalf of the Learning Diversity Through Reading program, books focused on diversity and inclusion will be purchased for six public preschools in the county.
  - Scholar Partner: Hope Fenton, 2006 scholar from Shelby County
  
- Headwaters Church, Allen County (\$2,500)
  - Brief Description: This project will comprise the first steps in a larger, ongoing project to serve up to 60 families annually by 2022 through a new nonprofit women’s and children’s homeless shelter in Ft. Wayne’s historic Wells Street Corridor. According to the Fort Wayne Area Planning Council on Homelessness, women who are likely to have children are underserved by current resources. In the short term, the impact will be indirect but will build momentum among collaborating individuals and organizations, including the church’s 1,000 members.
  - Scholar Partner: Gwendolyn Leininger, 2004 scholar from Rush County
  
- Blue River Community Foundation, Shelby County (\$2,487)

- o Brief Description: The foundation will host Friends of the Blue River inaugural volunteer cleanup day to help tackle the trash and invasive species along the Blue River Trail.
  - o Scholar Partner: Lauren Ruble, 2008 scholar from Shelby County
- Warren County Community Foundation, Warren County (\$1,497)
  - o Brief Description: The community foundation will help establish an ESL library at Seeger High School in Warren County.
  - o Scholar Partner: Holli Beckett, 1999 scholar from Warren County
- enFocus, Inc., St. Joseph County (\$1,350)
  - o Brief Description: enFocus, Inc. partners with local organizations to provide value on sponsor projects and give enFocus Fellows the tools to launch businesses or social ventures of their own. enFocus will work with the City of South Bend to host convenings for community stakeholders regarding the design of the South Bend Mid-Career Fellowship program.
  - o Scholar Partners: Evelyn Bauman, 2012 scholar from Monroe County, and Andrew Wiand, 2007 scholar from St. Joseph County.
- Huntington County Community Foundation, Huntington County (\$2,490)
  - o Brief Description: A speaker event featuring Elizabeth Friedman, who worked in cybersecurity, will be held at the Huntington County Public Library to inspire young women attendees to pursue an education and career in cybersecurity.
  - o Scholar Partner: William Murray, 2015 scholar from Huntington County
- Ripley County Community Foundation, Ripley County (\$2,500)
  - o Brief Description: To prepare teachers for the unique mental health challenges faced by students, this grant will expand on an existing training program for teachers launched by "Genesis: Pathways to Success," an initiative of the Ripley County Community Foundation. The new modules will focus on Social Emotional Learning, Trauma, and Stress & Anxiety.
  - o Scholar Partners from Ripley County: Eric Benz, 2001 scholar; Christina Record White, 2001 scholar; and Holly Toops Swinney, 2005 scholar.
- Rush County Community Foundation, Rush County (\$2,500)
  - o Brief Description: First5 Early Learning Coalition, a program of the Rush County Community Foundation, will spearhead a community-wide Diaper Pantry at area pantries and churches.

- Scholar Partners from Rush County: Katie Pickering Gardner, 2004 scholar; Jessica Cole Vogel, 2009 scholar; and Beth Liggett Buzzard, 2002 scholar.

"A gracious thank you goes to the Lead Forward Community Grants Committee for choosing us as a recipient of this grant. We are excited to use these funds in creating a healthier environment for the youngest members of our community and a lifted burden from those parents in need of access to diapers. We are excited to take action," said Jessica Vogel.

LSN plans to offer this grant opportunity again in Spring 2021.

"With the number of quality applications submitted in this inaugural round, we are grateful for a strong response to this opportunity," said Bryana Schreiber, Lilly Scholars Network Lead Forward Community Grants Coordinator and a 2004 scholar from Posey County. "As a network, we are committed to empowering our community of scholars to work alongside these organizations to address the needs of Hoosiers in their communities. We look forward to seeing these projects come to life and continuing to build this program to empower more scholars and organizations to positively impact their Indiana communities."

For more information and updates on the LSN Lead Forward Community Grants program, visit [lillyscholars.org/leadforward](https://lillyscholars.org/leadforward) or follow LSN on Twitter at [@LillyScholars](https://twitter.com/LillyScholars). If you have additional questions or wish to cover an event in your community, please contact Bryana Schreiber, LSN Lead Forward Community Grants Coordinator at 317-965-6747 or [info@lillyscholarsnetwork.org](mailto:info@lillyscholarsnetwork.org).

### **ABOUT THE LILLY SCHOLARS NETWORK**

With support from Lilly Endowment Inc., Lilly Endowment Community Scholars have the ability to connect with each other, their community and the state through the expanded, volunteer-led Lilly Scholars Network (LSN), which is organized to:

- Engage Lilly Endowment Community Scholars in topics and with people focused on advancing Indiana's future.
- Inspire and equip Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to be active changemakers in their communities.
- Cultivate meaningful connections.

For more information, visit [lillyscholars.org](https://lillyscholars.org) and [lillyscholars.org/leadforward](https://lillyscholars.org/leadforward).

### **ABOUT THE LILLY ENDOWMENT COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program (LECSP) is designed to raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana and increase awareness of the potential of Indiana's community foundations to improve the quality of life of the state's residents and encourage and support efforts of current and past Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to engage with each other and with Indiana business, governmental, educational, nonprofit and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state. Begun in 1998, the program offers four-year, full-tuition scholarships to Indiana students who intend to work toward a baccalaureate degree at any accredited public or private college or university in Indiana.

The program is administered statewide by Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) in collaboration with community foundations in each of Indiana's 92 counties. Since the scholarship program began, more than 4,700 scholarships have been awarded by ICI. Persons interested in information about the program should first contact their local community foundation. To learn more, visit <http://www.icindiana.org/page/LillyScholarship> or contact [LECSP@icindiana.org](mailto:LECSP@icindiana.org) Mary Dickerson, Director of Programs at Independent Colleges of Indiana at [mary@icindiana.org](mailto:mary@icindiana.org).

**ABOUT LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.**

Lilly Endowment is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

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