



Good morning. I am Susie Nelson, Executive Director of the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley.

It has been way too long since we have hosted a Donor Appreciation event. We are thrilled that you have joined us this morning.

I want to take a moment to thank the board of directors of the community foundation. Could I ask our board members in attendance to please stand so that we can recognize you?

Next, I want to thank the staff of the community foundation. Our team works extraordinarily hard day in and day out...

Debbie Stanton

Jess Puglisi-Sanders

Lexi Ricker-Smith

Nick Musgrave

And Janet Nolan is holding down the fort at the office this morning.

I also want to send out a special thank you to Sarah's on Main for the delicious breakfast.

There's a reason we decided to have our event today in the historic Capitol Theatre.

In 2009, this building was in terrible condition due to years of delayed upkeep.

Fortunately a group of community-minded individuals got together and devised a plan to save it.

A part of that plan was to open a fund at the Community Foundation for its renovation.

And while there is still work to be done, this building has come a long way in just a few short years.

Thanks to the hard work of the Wheeling Convention & Visitors Bureau and their partners, Wheeling Heritage and the City of Wheeling, many projects have been completed, and many more are planned.

Currently, the fund at the community foundation is supporting the renovation of the dressing rooms under the stage.

We are proud to be a part of this building's future. And you can still "buy" a seat for just \$250!! See Frank O'Brien and I'm sure he'd be happy to tell you how!

These past two years have been challenging for us all. In March of 2020 our collective worlds were turned upside down thanks to COVID-19. We were all forced to quarantine, work from home, attend school from home, and limit our interactions with each other in an effort to stop the spread of the virus. We learned how to use Zoom and Teams and Google Meet.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time on the doom and gloom of the past two years, but I do want to highlight the work of the community foundation during this time. Shortly after the shut downs, our staff and board established an Emergency Impact Fund and started accepting donations. Donations were large and small – from individuals, businesses, and foundations. As quickly as the gifts were coming in, we were accepting simplified grant applications to respond to the needs of our nonprofit partners across the region. In a few short months, we were able to raise and grant more than \$330,000 in COVID response. All while working from home.

Grants from that Emergency Fund reached all corners of our 8-county service area. We addressed food insecurity, internet access for children learning from home, homelessness, healthcare, mental health, and childcare. We made general operating support grants to organizations that were canceling their fundraisers and seeing an increase in need for their services.

But this success would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors – many of them in this room with us today. And for that, I thank you... your community thanks you.

Each of you are here today because you have some connection to the community foundation. Some of you have started a fund of your own. Some are members of our Women's Giving Circle. Some of you give generously to our Community Impact Fund. Some are members of our Legacy Society, ensuring that your gift will benefit the community well into the future.

And while each of your charitable intentions may be slightly different than the person sitting next to you,

we all have a common goal of wanting to put our resources to work, for the betterment of our community.

That's what a community foundation does – and can do. We are a trusted agent of philanthropy. Whether we are responding locally to a global crisis, or building an endowment to respond to future community needs, we are continuously working with those who wish to give back, to be that next philanthropist.

This November, we will begin a celebration of the foundation's 50th anniversary. It was 1972 when a group of local businessmen got together and started the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley.

Those founding members would be incredibly proud to know that today we are gathering, celebrating more than 260 charitable funds, with \$80 million in assets, awarding more than \$3 million annually in grants and scholarships.

A few years ago, we visited each of the 8 counties we serve to identify the greatest community needs. We wanted to focus our community impact grant program on common needs identified across the region.

At that time, we narrowed our focus on four areas:

- Substance Use Disorder
- Next Generation & Mentoring Programs
- Youth Activities & Recreation
- & Economic Development.

Thanks to a partnership with the Ohio County Family Resource Network, the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley, and the WVU Extension, a new Community Needs Assessment was conducted in 2021. As a result of that assessment, we are now going to be adding

Mental Health, Access to Affordable Childcare, and Transportation to that priority list.

For those of you who give to our Community Impact Grant Program, we thank you. Your support will help us fund programs that improve these areas of greatest need as they change over time.

Today we want to know what you think. In front of you on the table should be a card. We would like you to tell us what you would like your community foundation to support. What do you believe is the greatest need right now in our region?

Please give the questions some thought and then leave the card with one of our staff before you leave today.

As I mentioned previously, we have a small, but very dedicated, staff at the community foundation. In many cases, it is not by traditional advertising that new donors find us. Oftentimes, community-minded professional advisors identify their charitably-inclined clients as potential partners with us. And they make an introduction.

It is with that in mind that we have established a new award this year – the Professional Advisors Appreciation Award.

Our inaugural recipient is someone who has quietly directed new philanthropists to us over the years. The funds he has helped establish address

Poverty
animal protection
education
healthcare
public safety
historic preservation.

Most of the time, when an advisor makes a connection between the potential donor and the community foundation, his work is done. His name doesn't get listed in the fund agreement or even the annual report. A professional advisor doesn't get to see the positive outcome to this arrangement. He mostly just makes an introduction and steps back. That is why this new recognition is so important.

I want to give you some perspective on the impact of making a referral. In just the last fiscal year, the funds established as a result of this person's introductions awarded grants and scholarships totaling more than \$200,000. And these are endowed funds that will continue to grow and grant, forever.

It is my honor, to present the first ever Professional Advisor Award to WesBanco Vice President & Senior Trust Officer, Mr. Kim McCluskey.

We will be making a grant of \$1,000 to a nonprofit of Kim's choosing in his honor.

When I was hired to be the Executive Director of the Community Foundation back in 2007, the incoming Board President was Jerry Schmitt. Sadly, Jerry passed away in 2013. Jerry had served on the board of the community foundation for many years. It is in Jerry's memory that we present an award to a worthy individual who exemplifies community service.

This year we are pleased to recognize a true leader in our community. 31 years ago, Darrell Cummings arrived in Wheeling to be the pastor at the Bethlehem Apostolic Temple Church in North Wheeling. He also serves as the pastor at Shiloh Apostolic Faith Assembly in Weirton.

Darrell's impact on the community is immeasurable. Darrell leads his church members and other community volunteers to carry out massive events to help fill the gap for people in need, right around the times of the year when the need is the greatest.

His projects include:

Summer Programs for kids

Tutoring Programs

School Backpack and Supplies Giveaways

He even used his Dream Center for a mobile COVID vaccine site.

But what he's most known for are the

Holiday Food Basket Giveaways for Easter and Thanksgiving, and an even bigger giveaway event at Christmas that includes toys and clothes.

You may wonder what inspires Darrell to take on all of these wonderful projects. Well, there was a time when Darrell faced hard times himself.

Many years ago, he was laid off from his job around the holidays. He was worried about keeping his family housed and fed, let alone providing a good Christmas for his children. In his hour of need, he prayed, and vowed that if God helped him, he would work to help those facing hardship in the future.

It is a similar story that we hear often at the community foundation. Someone is inspired to help others through their own difficult experiences. Darrell has definitely paid it forward, time and time again.

At each giveaway, Long lines form of people waiting to get in. The volunteers wonder, – how are they going to help all these people? Every year, they are able to accomplish their mission.

The volunteers leave exhausted, but feeling good about helping people in need. The families they have helped leave happy, relieved that they are able to have a good meal and presents for the holidays.

And there are Toys. Lots of toys! The children who show up are wide-eyed and excited to see the mountain of toys that await inside the doors of the Dream Center.

It is Darrell's hope to inspire those he helps to see that life can be good. They may be in a bad situation now, but they can still have hope. There are people who care.

Over the years, the volunteers have grown to include more than just church members. Other community volunteers step in and help. It is not uncommon to also see law enforcement and the Wheeling Fire Department participate. They leave feeling the joy of giving as well.

Darrell will probably say, this is a group effort – volunteers, donors, community members, but none of it would be possible without Darrell's leadership.

Darrell, our community is a much brighter place with you in it. This small recognition doesn't seem nearly enough to recognize your work, but I hope you will accept it anyway. As a small token of our appreciation, we will also be making a \$1,000 grant to the North Wheeling Community Youth Center in your name.

It is my honor to present the Jerry Schmitt Community Service Award to Rev. Darrell Cummings.

Before I wrap up, you should each have a CFOV coffee mug at your place. If your mug has a green or orange dot on it, you get to take home the tulips on your table.

I would again like to thank each one of you for attending our event today. And thank you for your continued support of the community foundation. Enjoy your day.