



otto SCHOITZ FOUNDATION

Press Release

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FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES SPRING 2021 AWARDS

The Otto Schoitz Foundation is pleased to announce the award of \$2,055,000 to organizations aligned with the mission of improving the health and wellbeing of the Cedar Valley. With this announcement, the Foundation's total grantmaking surpasses \$9.6 million since its 2016 inception.

Grants are directed to local nonprofit agencies providing transformative services across the social determinants of health. Social determinants are root causes in an individual's health/wellbeing and include conditions in which we are born, live, learn, work, play, and age. Reducing disparities, including racial inequities, across the determinants is a priority for the Otto Schoitz Foundation. Features from their recent awards highlight this focus.

24/7 Black Leadership Advancement Consortium (24/7 BLAC) – 24/7 BLAC invests in entrepreneurs and Black owned businesses in Waterloo thereby strengthening the community, growing the local economy, reducing inequities, and fostering job creation. The Otto Schoitz Foundation award to 24/7 BLAC's accelerator programming will help bridge networking, education and capital challenges that African American entrepreneurs face. 24/7 BLAC functions as a collaborative initiative with Grow Cedar Valley, University of Northern Iowa Business and Community Services, The Iowa Center for Opportunity Resources & Equity, and Red Cedar. Through this collaborative, each partner brings experience in entrepreneurial and small-business assistance programs to address the challenges faced by participants including the need for access to capital, mentorship, and comprehensive education.

Friends of the Family - Most minority groups in the United States experience homelessness at higher rates than nonminority groups, and therefore make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. In 2019 in Black Hawk County, although Black/African American residents make up 10 percent of the general population, they comprised more than 44 percent of the homeless population. A three-year award to Friends of the Family will enable the organization to develop, staff, and lead a collective team of support agencies to systemically address homelessness in Black Hawk County. Securing safe and stable housing for those experiencing homelessness is fundamental to improving one's quality of life.

Hawkeye Community College - Over 5,000 students are served by Hawkeye's credit programs, many of whom attend school part-time. Nearly two-thirds of the student population are first-generation undergraduates. Eighty percent (80%) of the students receive financial aid, half of whom receive Pell grants, which are awarded to students demonstrating the highest level of financial need. Upon graduation, these students have increased opportunities to obtain high-demand, high-tech, high-paying employment. The Otto Schoitz grant will go towards Hawkeye's state-of-the-art Health Sciences building, allowing the College to increase access to healthcare education. A key project component, the 10,000 square-foot simulation center, will quadruple student access to critical life-like scenarios in a safe environment. Not only is the students' education enriched, but the larger community benefits with an increase in the skilled healthcare workforce to meet current and future needs.

One City United - Data on incarceration has historically shown racial and ethnic minorities are imprisoned at disproportionately higher rates. A host of collateral consequences follow incarceration, one being restricted employment prospects. Once released from incarceration, men and women have difficulty finding work and are usually employed in low-wage jobs that offer little opportunity for advancement. An award to One City United seeks to address these types of barriers through its Momentum Urban Employment Initiative, connecting unemployed and underemployed individuals with opportunities. Through intense training, coaching and networking with local business partners, Momentum participants, regardless of their past, are prepared for gainful employment. During a 6-week employment readiness and life skills training program, Momentum engages participants in reducing and eliminating barriers on an individual basis, while simultaneously, empowering them on a road of self-discovery, healing, and ultimately preparing them to be successful in the workforce.

Additional organizations advancing the health and wellbeing in the Cedar Valley and funded in Otto Schoitz Foundation's Spring 2021 Grant Cycle include:

• **Black Hawk County Health Department** • **Cedar Falls Schools Foundation** • **Cedar Valley Bicycle Collective** • **Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center** • **Community Educational Outreach, Inc.** • **Exceptional Persons, Inc.** • **Family & Children's Council of Black Hawk County** • **Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois** • **Grin and Grow Ltd.** • **Inclusion Connection** • **Iowa Legal Aid** • **Lutheran Services in Iowa** • **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Black Hawk County** • **North End Cultural Center, Inc.** • **Riverview Center** • **SuccessLink** • **The Job Foundation** • **Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony**

Visit the Foundation's website at www.ottoschoitzfoundation.org for further details on each of these awards. Also on the website, interested parties can learn about the newly opened Fall 2021 Grant Cycle. Foundation staff are available to answer applicant questions and can be reached at 319-232-2870.