

Summer 2026
Newsletter

 **LEGACY**
FOUNDATION
Lake County's Community Foundation

INVESTING IN

*People. Places.
Possibility.*



Planting Seeds for **LAKE COUNTY FOREVER**

Give one. Grow two more.

Triple your impact with our
Lake County Forever
\$2:\$1 match

The Power of Place

High Demand Signals Strong Momentum for 'Love Where You Live'

On April 23rd, the launch of the 'Love Where You Live' placemaking initiative drew more than 100 residents, local artists, and civic leaders to the IBEW Local 697 hall in Merrillville. This landmark initiative marks a \$4 million investment in grant funding supporting, revitalizing, and building vibrant public spaces across Lake County. The high attendance at the launch underscored a shared regional priority: a collective readiness to invest in and optimize our communities.

The response to the program over the subsequent weeks confirmed that local demand for public space development is significant. By the time the Phase 1 Letter of Intent (LOI) window closed on June 7th, the total volume of project concepts submitted exceeded initial expectations, demonstrating a robust pipeline of civic engagement looking to tap into this historic funding opportunity.

Looking ahead, the Legacy Foundation grants committee is executing a rigorous review process for each submission. Proposals are being evaluated based on feasibility, community impact, and their potential to transform underutilized areas into sustainable hubs for culture and connection. Selected projects will be announced in October.

BY THE NUMBERS: PHASE 1 INSIGHTS

\$4M Total grant funding available for Lake County public spaces

55 Public space project proposals submitted by local groups

\$443M Total capital requested

Proof that Lake County does not dream small!
While the community's brilliant imagination naturally outpaced our available funding, this staggering number shows that our local municipalities and nonprofits have a breathtaking, high-stakes vision for what Lake County's public spaces can become.

Grants Awarded this Spring!

\$441,219 to 30 Organizations

True community resilience is measured by how we care for one another in times of transition. This spring, Legacy Foundation deployed **\$441,219** across **30 vital local organizations**.

These aren't just line items on a spreadsheet. This capital represents hot meals delivered to homebound seniors, secure shelter and trauma-informed advocacy, and care packages for foster youth. Your support funded free veterinary clinic access and training for local firefighters. From childhood literacy initiatives and youth mental health ambassadors to essential community food pantries, these dollars meet real, everyday human needs across our neighborhoods.

In a highly competitive cycle featuring **77 grant applications** requesting a total of **\$1,703,031.88**, your generosity ensures that Legacy funding remains a critical safety net.

FARMED AND FORGED HAMMOND

Legacy Foundation recently awarded a **\$34,350 grant to The Collective Events, Inc.** to support their Farmed & Forged Hammond: Food Access and Cultural Programming Initiative.

"Legacy Foundation's investment is helping us expand access to healthy food while creating vibrant community spaces throughout Lake County. A key component of this work is our Triple SNAP Matching program, which allows eligible families to turn \$20 in SNAP benefits into \$60 to spend on fresh, locally grown food at our markets. The grant also supports expanded cultural experiences, including the launch of Hammond's Third Thursday Art Walk, helping us create welcoming spaces where residents can come together and build connections."

-Mandy Krickhahn, Founder and CEO

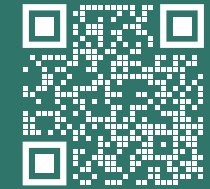
SPOTLIGHT: SISTERHOOD SOCIAL

Legacy Foundation recently awarded a **\$15,000 grant to Sisterhood Social Co.** to fund their community wellness and connection series. The nonprofit brings women together through experiences that blend expression, reflection, and lasting connection.

"This \$15,000 investment from Legacy Foundation allows us to keep our biweekly wellness events accessible and affordable while also providing scholarship tickets to women who need them," says a representative from the organization. "Every woman in Lake County deserves a seat at the table and this grant helps us make sure price is never the reason she can't be there. We're not just hosting events. We're building something that outlasts any single gathering, and this grant gives us the fuel to do that."

-Jessica Enriquez, Founder of Sisterhood Social

Learn More About Farmed and Forged Hammond!

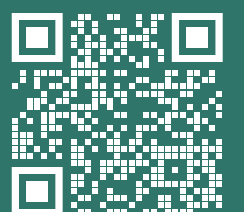


Summer 2026



Legacy Foundation

WANT TO SEE THE FULL LIST OF OUR GRANT RECIPIENTS?



itl.innk/GrantRecipients

Tribute Gifts: January - May 2026

Alexandra Gardner Riddle Fund

In Memory of Alex Riddle

Donors | Mr. Roger F. & Mrs. Elizabeth G. Kapla

Demetrius Tirrell Williford Memorial Scholarship

In Memory of Demetrius Williford

Donor | Ms. Tyesha Ohuoba

Friends of Marquette Park Fund of Miller Citizens Shoreline Committee

In Memory of Matt Dilts

Donors | David T. Owen, Mr. Gary Johnson, Michael & Lisa Giglio, & Dr. Janet Seabrook

In Memory of Anna Jeanette Peterson Daronatsy

Donor | Linda Simon

Hometown Happenings Community Fund

In Honor of Tim Fealy

Donors | Lacey Swick, Edith Valdes, Rick Fenno, Rachel Anne Brazil, & Kelly Anoe

IBEW Local Union #697 Memorial Scholarship Fund

In Memory of Henry Dates III, Terrance Stachelski, Feleciano Bucio Jr., Rob Rosenbaum, David Webb, Bernard Dennis, Don Johnson

Donor | IBEW Local #697

Joseph and Marla Dernay Future Teacher Scholarship Fund

In Honor of Joe & Marla Dernay (Mom & Dad)

Donors | Julie & Clay Dilts

Lake County Forever Fund

In Honor of Gwendolyn Woodard

Donor | GFWC Lowell Woman's Club

Lake County Public Library Fund

In Memory of Sophia Thanos-Misner

Donors | Catherine C. Danigelis, Suzanne Van Cleef, & Peter Bereolos

TrueWealth Advising Group Endowment

In Memory of Kenneth Hirata, Roger Croft, & Joseph Zatorski

Donor | TrueWealth Advising Group

Lake County Forever

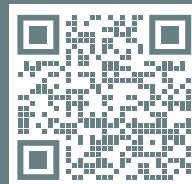
OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE. OUR PERMANENT LEGACY.

The **Lake County Forever Campaign** is our collective commitment to building a permanent, self-sustaining endowment for our region. When you give to this fund, your principal investment is preserved forever, generating continuous, reliable funding to support local solutions for generations to come.



DONATE TO LAKE COUNTY FOREVER

itl.ink/LakeCountyForever



TRIPLE YOUR LEGACY: THE LAKE COUNTY FOREVER \$2:\$1 MATCH

You can maximize your philanthropic impact through Legacy's Lake County Forever Campaign. Every dollar you contribute to the Lake County Forever Campaign is matched \$2-\$1.

Invest	→	It Becomes
\$500		\$1,500
\$5,000		\$15,000
\$50,000		\$150,000

Press Forward Lake County

Shaping the Future of Local News

Press Forward Lake County

On May 28th, we gathered at Indiana University Northwest (IUN) for the official local launch of **Press Forward**—a national initiative dedicated to reinforcing local news, revitalizing communities, and ensuring our neighbors have access to vital information.

The energy in the room was electric, fueled by an insightful conversation on the critical state and powerful future of local journalism. A massive thank you to our incredible speakers who brought so much depth and vision to the stage:

Eric Deggans, NPR's Critic-at-Large and the Knight Chair in Journalism and Media Ethics at Washington and Lee University, whose perspective on local storytelling reminded us all of the deep impact independent reporting has on our daily lives.

Marisa Kwiatkowski, Director of Journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, who shared brilliant insights on how data, equity, and community-centered reporting can transform local news ecosystems.

When we invest in local journalism, we invest in the very fabric of our democracy and community. We are so grateful to everyone who joined us at IUN to launch this vital chapter for Northwest Indiana!



HOW LEGACY FOUNDATION IS DRIVING CHANGE

The launch was just the beginning. Legacy Foundation is proud to lead the Press Forward Lake County chapter, moving from conversation to direct action. Moving forward, our commitment to strengthening our local information ecosystem includes:



Fostering Collaboration: We are supporting active collaborations among local newsrooms and other information providers to build a stronger network.



Grant Opportunities: To directly combat "news deserts," we are providing targeted grant opportunities aimed at increasing information sharing and closing gaps in coverage throughout Lake County.



Skill-Building Workshops: Legacy will host workshop opportunities specifically designed for newsrooms and community-based information providers.



Public Awareness Campaigns: We are dedicated to increasing public awareness of the essential value that reliable local news and information bring to our daily lives.

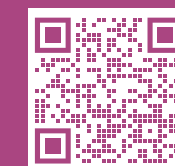


Ecosystem Convenings: We will bring creators, leaders, and journalists together by hosting information ecosystem convenings to discuss shared goals and challenges.



Investing in Tomorrow: We are supporting the next generation of information providers and innovative ideas through hands-on internships and training opportunities.

Get Involved: Local news keeps our communities connected and accountable. Stay tuned for upcoming workshop dates, grant announcements, and ways you can support Press Forward Lake County!



DONATE TO LAKE COUNTY FOREVER

itl.ink/LakeCountyForever

Scholarship Awards

Investing in the Next Generation

Philanthropy achieves its highest return on investment when it is directed toward human potential. At our annual Scholarship Dinner, the Legacy Foundation celebrated a historic milestone in regional education, officially awarding **\$1.3 million in scholarships to more than 165 deserving Lake County students.**

This evening did more than provide crucial financial aid; it brought the region's future academic, civic, and business leaders face-to-face with the visionary donors investing in their success.

An operation of this magnitude requires rigorous community stewardship. Behind these awards stands a dedicated network of volunteer reviewers who contributed over **700 hours of collective volunteer time** to evaluate applications, ensure merit, and maintain the highest standards of accountability for our funds.

"When you fund a scholarship, you aren't just paying tuition. You are sending a definitive message to a young person that an entire community believes in their capability and stands behind their future."

-Jodi Kateiva, Scholarship Administrator

SCHOLARSHIP PORTFOLIO AT A GLANCE

\$1,280,148

Total educational capital deployed into the community as of June 1, 2026

165

Local students receiving critical tuition funding for higher education

700+ hrs

Invested by local volunteer reviewers to select this year's cohort



Shaping Tomorrow

A New Chapter of Leadership

Summer in Lake County arrives with an undeniable sense of momentum. Walk through our neighborhoods, attend our public forums, or speak with our local organizers, and you will feel it: a shared, vibrant collective energy focused entirely on building a better tomorrow.

Steering this momentum into our next chapter is a dedicated group of regional leaders who champion the Legacy Foundation's mission every day.

WELCOMING OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS

We are equally proud to welcome the fresh perspectives, deep local expertise, and diverse community insights of our incoming board members.



Board Member Spotlight: Kimberly Ferrell

Kimberly Ferrell joins the board with 26 years of leadership experience at NIPSCO, where she currently serves as Vice President of Customer Care Centers. Born in East Chicago and raised in Gary, she is a deeply rooted civic leader who has supported regional initiatives like the YWCA, United Way Day of Caring, and Sojourner Truth House. Kimberly is passionate about sustaining a multigenerational culture of

philanthropy and looks forward to supporting strategies that deepen donor engagement, expand community participation, and help the Foundation respond to Lake County's emerging needs.



Board Member Spotlight: Kathy O'Donnell

A resident of Dyer, Indiana, Kathy O'Donnell brings 40 years of experience as a registered nurse and currently serves as a community liaison and manager of bariatric programs at Franciscan Alliance. Her deep commitment to the region is reflected in her service on the boards of the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and the Challenger Learning Center. Kathy looks forward to supporting Legacy Foundation's

mission by actively participating in efforts to promote and grow our vital work throughout the community.



Board Member Spotlight: Marc Ruiz

Marc Ruiz joins the board as a Partner and Senior Wealth Manager at Oak Partners, where he provides individual asset management and financial planning services to clients in Northwest Indiana. Raised in Hobart and an alumnus of Purdue University West Lafayette, Marc has a long history of regional service, including involvement with the Share Foundation, Planting Possibilities, and the Special Olympics. He brings invaluable expertise in fiscal control, planned giving, and strategic planning, which he balances with his love for outdoor recreation, wilderness hiking, and spending time with his family.

Together with our dedicated staff and visionary donors, this leadership team is poised to deepen the Legacy Foundation's roots, expand our reach, and amplify our regional impact.

INTRODUCING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are thrilled to welcome **Sean Egan** as our new Board Chair and **Lisa Goodnight** as our new Vice Chair! They join forces with our returning officers, **Matt Doyle** and **Sherri Ziller**, to lead our Board of Directors with a dynamic, shared vision for equitable community growth.



Sean Egan
Board Chair



Lisa Goodnight
Vice Chair



Matt Doyle
Treasurer



Sherri Ziller
Secretary



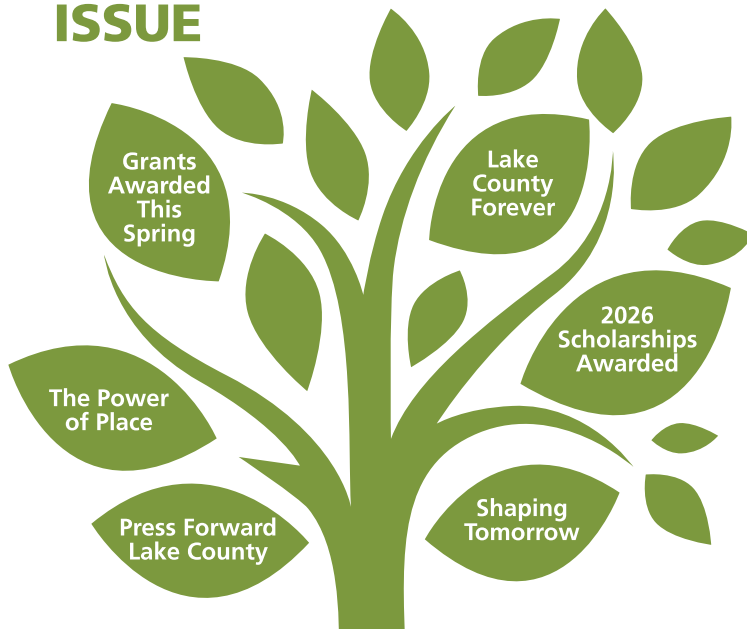
The future of Lake County is bright, and the work is already underway.



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES



FALL GRANT CYCLE OPENS:
Tuesday, September 1, 2026



**LILLY SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION DEADLINE:**
Sunday, September 20, 2026 @ 11:59 PM



**LEGACY FOUNDATION'S
ANNUAL CELEBRATION:**
Thursday, August 20, 2026
South Shore Convention & Visitors Authority
Hammond



**WITCHES & SPRITZES: A WOMEN IN
PHILANTHROPY EVENT**
Tuesday, October 13, 2026

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

John W. Anderson
Foundation



Lilly Endowment Inc.
A private foundation since 1937



Franciscan
HEALTH



METHODIST
HOSPITALS

Peoples
Bank

A FINWARD
COMPANY



NORTHERN
TRUST

WINTRUST



TrueWealth
Advising Group

NiSource
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

NIPSCO
A NiSource Company

VIEW ALL EVENTS

Register for events at:
legacyfdn.org/upcoming-events



legacyfdn.org | legacy@legacyfdn.org | 219-736-1880

