

ACCF awards Workforce Alliance its first Strategic Grant

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Ashland County Community Foundations newly formed Strategic Grants Committee consists of trustees, from left to right, Peggy Yoder, Anne Cowen, Jim Cutright, Matt Miller, Erv Howard and Dr. Andy Stein.

The Ashland County Community Foundation recently awarded its first ever "Strategic Grant" to the North Central Workforce Alliance. This grant will provide seed funding for a new NCWA program designed to inform local educators about career opportunities that exist for graduating high school students who may not necessarily be pursuing a college education.

NCWA representatives Matt Miller and Erv Howard describe this pilot program as "Our Jobs. Our Students. Summer Teacher Workshop." It will link one middle school teacher, one high school teacher and one guidance counselor, from each of Ashland County's school districts, to local employers, in an effort to better prepare our area's young people for jobs available in our community.

Howard further explained, "The educators will participate in a bus tour of several area businesses representing a variety of fields, including manufacturing, construction, health care, agriculture and information technology to see and hear firsthand from local employers about the jobs they have to fill and the skills required to be successful in these positions."

Miller added, "The tours will be followed by a first class awards ceremony, where each teacher will receive a \$250 grant along with sample curriculum to be used in their classroom to translate what they have seen and heard into a lesson plan for their students. We are hoping that these teachers will be able to then direct interested students to specific potential employers who can mentor them and prepare them for successful careers within their respective organizations."

ACCF's newly formed Strategic Grants Committee consists of trustees Anne Cowen, Peggy Yoder, Dr. Andy Stein, Ken Milligan and executive director Jim Cutright.

"We feel privileged to, effectively, partner with NCWA on this important initiative," Cutright said. "Our funding is not a continuing sponsorship, but we are hopeful that by providing seed dollars to establish the program, that NCWA will have an opportunity to build a successful model that can be sustained by attracting ongoing support from the community. This concept is also a great complement to ACCF's scholarship program, as it's important for our young people to recognize that there are many paths that can lead to a bright future."

Cutright went on to say, "For the first time in our 21-year history, through careful management of our available resources, ACCF has a pool of unrestricted dollars with which to make an impact in our community, through proactive grant-making, allowing us to be strategic and not always just reactive to requests from our nonprofit organizations."

Miller offered, "We are extremely grateful for the support of the Foundation in this effort. It certainly lends credibility to our project."