

ACCF: Endowment = Empowerment

In observance of its 22nd year of operation, the Ashland County Community Foundation recently held its Annual Donor Appreciation Reception at Ashland University's Convocation Center to honor its many donors who have created permanent endowment funds, making possible the numerous grants and scholarships that are provided by the Foundation throughout the county each year.

Board chair Ken Milligan welcomed the 150 guests gathered for an evening of fellowship, and introduced executive director Jim Cutright, who expounded on the theme of the Foundation's 2016-17 Annual Report, entitled "Empowering Others".

"Your gifts to ACCF have resulted in the creation of 390 permanent endowment funds, which are allowing you, as donors, to feel empowered as you witness your gifts making a difference in the lives of others in Ashland County. As a result, during our brief 22-year history, over \$11.2 million has been re-invested in our community," Cutright stated.

He went on, "Students pursuing higher education are empowered by the prospect of having someone who doesn't even know them, being willing to invest in their future, through ACCF's scholarship program. 187 scholarships were awarded this past spring, for nearly \$250,000.

Our Women's Fund provides a grantmaking framework for women to empower other women in our community, having funded such initiatives totaling over \$98,000 in its relatively brief existence.

Non-profit agencies are experiencing the empowerment of knowing that sustainability can exist for their respective organizations through the strength of endowment-building.

At ACCF, a special youth envoy has been empowered through participation in our IMPACT Youth Council. Our high school-aged council members have become grantmakers, further empowering other young people in Ashland County, by providing much-needed support for youth-oriented programs and projects."

Cutright finished his presentation by saying, "Interestingly, a synonym for the word, "empower" is "endow". So, "endowment" equals "empowerment". Empowering others through the creation of endowment is why a community foundation exists. At ACCF, 35 new endowment funds, or *empowerment* funds, were created just this past year."

The executive director also recognized his staff, honored retiring trustees, Pat Byerly and Mike Huber, and welcomed two new trustees, Connie Marble and Kathy Davis. "Those who serve as our trustees are vital to our success in so many ways. First of all, they are also donors, making a financial commitment when they join our board, but their experience and stature in the community is a hallmark of the community foundation."

Anyone can donate to the Ashland County Community Foundation and may do so in any amount, at any time. For more information, call 419-281-4733 or visit www.accommunityfoundation.org.