

Foundation receives \$1.8 million grant

Lilly Endowment Inc. grant will help fund Child Care Network child-care center

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The Community Foundation of Jackson County received a boost on #GivingTuesday with news it was awarded a \$1.8 million Large-Scale Community Leadership Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The grant, funded through the seventh phase of Lilly Endowment's Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow initiative, will help Child Care Network develop and operate a 120-seat community child-care center. The facility is expected to open next spring following a remodeling of a former church building at Chestnut and Fifth streets in downtown Seymour.

The center will be open to children from throughout Jackson County.

"It is exciting for our community and our children and their families who are in need of quality child-care options and addresses Jackson County's designation as a child-care desert," Foundation President & CEO Dan Davis said.

The need for a community child-care center in Jackson County has been a long-simmering issue, Davis added, one that Child Care Network aims to address.

"Child Care Network is so excited to hear that the Community Foundation has been approved for the large-scale grant from Lilly Endowment," agency Executive Director Kate Garrity said.

"Child care has been a great need in Jackson County for many years. This funding will make it possible to meet that need for so many families. We look forward to working with the Community Foundation and so many others throughout Jackson County to make this project a reality.

The Foundation is one of 11 in Indiana to receive a Large-Scale Leadership Grant as part of a competitive component of the GIFT VII initiative. Lilly Endowment encouraged Indiana's community foundations to deepen their understanding of the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing their local communities, rank them and develop plans to address those challenges and opportunities.

The Large-Scale Leadership Grants are in addition to non-competitive GIFT VII Community Leadership Grants that Lilly Endowment made earlier this year to 87 of Indiana's community foundations. The Community Foundation of Jackson County received a \$100,000 leadership grant earlier this fall.

Funds from the \$1.8 million Large-Scale grant targets three areas:

- It will provide \$1 million for the remodeling and furnishing of the child-care center.
- It will provide \$530,000 spread over five years to help provide tuition for low-income families.
- And it will provide \$270,000 in an endowment fund that will generate an annual grant for ongoing operating costs.

Without the Large-Scale grant, getting the new center remodeled and up to full capacity could be delayed by at least two to three years, Garrity said.

Architectural plans for the remodel are under way with hopes of work getting under way soon, she added.

Over the last several years, the Foundation partnered with Jackson County United Way and others to conduct community conversations and a series of Poverty Simulations to help determine important, basic needs in the community. The need for quality child-care and the issue of poverty bubbled to the top in those conversations.

Currently, there are only five licensed child-care centers located in the county, with one being Head Start and the other four being the preschool classrooms operated by Child Care Network. Otherwise, there are 15 child-care homes and six ministries located within Jackson County.

Working with data from the 2019 Indiana Kids Count Data for Jackson County, Child Care Network calculates the county has 7.9 children per child-care seat, more than double the 3.0 children-per-seat ratio that earns the child-care desert designation in Indiana.

The agency receives three to five phone calls daily from parents seeking child care. The majority of them voice frustration with the lack of available care, Garrity said.

Addressing the need for quality child care is an example of what the Lilly Endowment initiative hoped to tackle around the state.

“The 11 grants Lilly Endowment is funding through the highly-competitive component of GIFT VII hold great promise of helping community foundations strengthen the leadership roles they play in improving the quality of life for their communities’ residents” said Ronni Kloth, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for community development. “We are truly impressed by the collaborative projects these community foundations have developed to address the compelling needs they have prioritized and look forward to seeing the impact of their efforts in the years to come.”

The project has strong community support.

“The Foundation is pleased to have helped bring together many community partners in addressing Jackson County’s designation as a child-care desert and help Child Care Network with this project,” Davis said.

Those partners committing funds and resources to the ongoing project include Seymour Redevelopment Commission, the Jackson County United Way, Royalty Companies, Child Care Network, the Schneck Foundation, Turning Point Domestic Violence Services and Kocolene Development Corp. The Community Foundation of Jackson County will also provide Impact Grants over the next three years.

Providing letters of support for the grant were Aisin Holdings of America Inc., Cummins Inc. and Jackson County Industrial Development Corp.

Kocolene President Doug Prather said the lack of child-care seats stresses both workers and their employers. He was excited about the grant being awarded.

“I see firsthand every day the challenges people in our businesses and community have with affordable, safe child care,” Prather said. “As an employer and as a volunteer, we are challenged every day with child-care issues. Having a center in Seymour run by Child Care Network would be very beneficial to businesses and their employees and a Godsend to some.”

Prather also serves a chair of the Jackson County Education Coalition Board of Directors. The coalition is a supporting organization of the Foundation.

BREAKOUTS:

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of Lilly Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location.

In keeping with the founders’ wishes, Lilly Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. It funds significant programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion. However, it maintains a special commitment to its founders’ hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

About the Foundation

The Community Foundation of Jackson County was established in 1992. It made its first grants in 1994 and has since funded more than \$7 million in grants and scholarships. The Foundation administers 217 funds and oversees more than \$15 million in assets. For information about how to make a gift to the Foundation or to start a fund, call 812-523-4483 or send an email to president@cfjacksoncounty.org. The Foundation’s office is at 107 Community Drive, Seymour. Donations may be mailed to Post Office Box 1231, Seymour, IN 47274, or made online at our website, www.cfjacksoncounty.org. Click on the DONATE NOW button.