



# 100 Years and Growing!

A century ago, Rudolf Henry Pfaff had a vision and \$5,000 in Liberty Bonds. Today, that vision and that \$5,000 have become the Ashtabula Foundation with assets of over \$21 million.

Since 1922, the Foundation has provided grants worth many millions of dollars to scores of non-profit organizations and for student scholarships. During 2021 alone, the Foundation provided more than \$950,000 to organizations and students in the county.

Pfaff was born in Frieberg, Germany, on Oct. 17, 1851. He and his family immigrated to America when he was 3 years old. He lived in Pittsburgh until he moved to Ashtabula at age 24 in 1875 and went to work as a carriage trimmer for the Ashtabula Bow Socket Co.

During his 60 years in Ashtabula, Pfaff became an executive at the Bow Socket, served as mayor of the city and as president and a major benefactor for Ashtabula General Hospital, now the Ashtabula County Medical Center. He donated \$250,000 to the establishment of the hospital. Dedicated to her memory, The Amelia E. Lewis Nurses residence adjacent to the hospital was built with \$100,000 generously provided by RH and Amelia Lewis Pfaff's daughter and Fred K. Lewis son.

In 1922, Pfaff created the philanthropic corporation now known as The Ashtabula Foundation. The Foundation's earliest mission, as found in the original minutes, was "the principal and income shall be applied and used by the trustees and their successors in and for religious and charitable purposes, in the relief of the needy and the benefit of humanity in Ashtabula ..." Board Members, known as the original incorporators who witnessed Pfaff's signing on September 5, 1922:

<b>C. E. CASE</b>	<b>E. P. HALL</b>
<b>LORENZO T. CARLISLE</b>	<b>GEORGE C. HUBBARD</b>
<b>J. P. DODGE</b>	<b>FRED K. LEWIS</b>
<b>GEORGE E. DUCRO</b>	<b>C. D. TYLER</b>
<b>J.H. GOODARD</b>	<b>A. T. ULMAN</b>

The original trustees of the Foundation included some of the most prominent names of the Ashtabula area, a tradition that continues to this day. The current volunteer board of trustees includes civic-minded community leaders in the areas of education, religion, healthcare, and business. The eleven trustees have a combined service to The Ashtabula Foundation of over 140 years.

As investments grew, the Foundation made its first grants in 1924 to the Community Chest (now United Way) of \$300, and the YWCA, Young Women's Christian Association of Ashtabula of \$100. The Board of Trustees has continued its support of the ACMC, YMCA and United Way, Ashtabula to the present day. In addition to the annual distributions from donor designated accounts, the Foundation has given outright grants for expansion and upkeep of the facilities, as well as supporting programs of those organizations.

Through contributions from other philanthropy-minded people, the Foundation's assets have grown. By maintaining the original contributions, and granting only the income from the investments, the Foundation has been able to preserve Pfaff's vision of supporting agencies which improve the quality of living in Ashtabula County.

Through the years, several designated funds have been established to provide annual distributions to non-profits. Some of the beneficiaries of those funds include, the Ashtabula Arts Center, KSU, Rising Scholars, Edward J. Harvey, and the William H. Searcy Scholarships. More new designated fund donations begin at \$100,000 and are always welcome from donors with special interests.

The Board currently gives grants in the categories of Human Services, Recreation & Conservation, Education, Religion, Arts/Culture/Historical, and Community Development. The Board is required to grant five percent of its asset value annually to non-profit, 501(C)(3) organizations in Ashtabula County.

Watch for next month's article to learn more about the Ashtabula Foundation. Celebrating 100 years of service!