

Summer 2020

*The* .....  
**CHARITABLE CONNECTION**  
..... newsletter of the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas

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# Remembering Rita



## A Memorial Tribute to Our Friend, Rita J. Bicknell

The staff and Board of Trustees of the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas were saddened to learn in April of the passing of Rita J. Bicknell, a lifelong philanthropist and co-founder of the Foundation. We choose to celebrate her by acknowledging her contributions across our community, to women's health in Southeast Kansas, and to CFSEK.

While undergoing cancer treatments in 2006, Rita observed the imbalances that exist in women's healthcare. Being of curious mindset and with a giving soul, she began to explore and learn about these inequities. She was disheartened and saddened by the

lack of financial resources to afford such things as transportation to cancer treatments, eyeglasses to perform a job effectively, or dental work needed to allow a woman to feel comfortable even applying for a job.

As she started having conversations with like-minded ladies, the scope of a life-changing project unfolded. In 2007, the RJB Women's Health Fund Giving Circle was formed with the mission "To improve the health and well-being of women by supporting education, increasing awareness and sharing quality of life opportunities to benefit all women in the region." In 2013 that mission was expanded with the addition of ● ● ●

### ***Rita J. Bicknell Memorial (cont.)***

another giving circle, the Circle of Friends.

To date, over \$300,000 has been granted through the two Women's Health Fund giving circles to organizations that meet the needs and challenges of women in our community.

Rita was grateful to the women who participated in the Giving Circle, and to the organizations who champion ways to help women one by one in our region. Rita's vision will continue to be carried out by a group of

compassionate women who are dedicated to the mission of the Women's Health Fund.

Contributions can be made to the Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund.

Instructions for how to do so, along with remembrances from some of the many women who loved, respected, and admired her, are [available on our blog \(bit.ly/rjb-memorial\)](https://bit.ly/rjb-memorial).

Today and always, Rita will be remembered for her charity and as a generous and gracious lady! 🌻



## **Current CFSEK Grant Opportunities**

August brings with it three grant opportunities for Southeast Kansas nonprofits. Our affiliates, the Fort Scott Area Community Foundation and the Girard Area Community Foundation, are currently accepting applications for their respective annual grant cycles.

And until August 31, CFSEK is accepting Future Fund Giving Circle grant applications. The Future Fund is a giving circle made up of friends of

Crawford County who pool their resources to make a difference in their communities. Grants are available for nonprofit organizations, schools, and religious and governmental institutions in Crawford County, Kansas. 🌻

Learn more about the Future Fund:

[bit.ly/cfsek-ff20](https://bit.ly/cfsek-ff20)

Get notified when grant cycles open:

[bit.ly/cfsek-email](https://bit.ly/cfsek-email)

# CFSEK Disaster Relief Fund Provides Support to Local Nonprofits

Since March, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on our health, the businesses we rely on, the strength of our economy, and the way we live our daily lives.

Through it all, countless volunteers and nonprofit organizations have worked tirelessly to support SEK residents when they needed it most.

On June 25, the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas announced that it has granted a total of \$25,000 from the Disaster Relief Fund in support of the critical work being carried out by four local nonprofit organizations:

- Catholic Charities Southeast Kansas Services
- Salvation Army in Pittsburg, KS
- The Lord's Diner of Pittsburg
- Wesley House

The funds granted by CFSEK will be used to support these organizations' food-security and rent-and-utility-assistance programs.

Thank you to each of these organizations and to everyone else working to improve our SEK communities! 🌻



The Community Foundation continues to accept donations to the Disaster Relief Fund. You can donate at <http://bit.ly/cfsek-donate>

Learn more about the Disaster Relief Fund:  
<http://bit.ly/drj-covid>

The graphic features the Latin phrase "Ad Astra Per Aspera" in a dark blue, serif font. A small yellow star is positioned between the words "Ad" and "Astra". The text is set against a light orange rectangular background that has a torn-edge effect on its right side. This entire graphic is centered on a larger background with a repeating pattern of light blue squares, each containing a darker blue diagonal line pattern.

**Ad Astra  
Per Aspera**

**#ADASTRASTRONG**

## **Area Organizations Prove SEK is #AdAstraStrong**

We are excited to share that CFSEK has been selected to receive a \$10,000 donation from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas as part of its #AdAstraStrong campaign.

Earlier this summer, BCBS invited Kansas community foundations to share the stories of Kansans who have been helping others during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering to donate to five foundations whose stories BCBS picked to highlight on its blog.

So far, we've published six #AdAstraStrong stories on Facebook and Twitter. In late July, BCBS chose one of those stories to include on its own blog, meaning that it will be donating to our Disaster Relief Fund.

We're including the full text of the post BCBS selected for [its blog](https://www.bcbsks.org/blog) ([bit.ly/bcbs-hs](https://www.bcbsks.org/blog)) and truncated versions of our other posts on the following pages.

Thank you, BCBSKS!



# The SEK Humane Society Helps Pets and Their People Stay Together

Earlier this year, a rising wave of unemployment forced countless local families to make impossible choices. The Southeast Kansas Humane Society, like many other animal shelters throughout the country, saw increasing calls from individuals and families who had to give up their pets because they could no longer afford to feed them.

The Humane Society, already over capacity and with no volunteer help because of the pandemic, couldn't have taken in all those cats and dogs. So, the staff came up with an alternative solution that would enable desperate pet owners to have their cats and feed them, too (and also their dogs): They would start a free pet-food pantry, distributing pet food at no cost to Crawford County residents in need every Wednesday and Saturday.

The pantry was launched on April 25. Within the first week, the new program had helped to feed 109 dogs and cats, distributing more than 400 pounds of food. The pantry was kept stocked through the generosity of



local residents, businesses, and organizations; help from The Humane Society of the United States; and the tireless efforts of SEK Humane Society staff, who diligently worked to source inventory and made hours-long drives to collect pallets of food.

By the time the program ended in early July, more than 6,000 pounds of pet food (that's three tons!) had been given out to help feed hundreds of SEK cats and dogs.

Thank you so much, SEK Humane Society, for all you've done to care for Southeast Kansas pets and their people! ([View the original post here.](#))

# The City of Pittsburg and Local High Schools Team Up to Celebrate Graduates



The Pittsburg City Commission proclaimed May 26 as Class of 2020 Day at a meeting attended by a senior representative from Pittsburg High School and St. Mary's Colgan High School. The City also worked with Pittsburg Community Schools, St. Mary's Colgan Catholic Schools, US Awards, Inc., and Miller's Professional Imaging to create banners to be displayed in downtown Pittsburg recognizing PHS and SMC 2020 graduating seniors. ([Original post.](#))

## Pittsburg Public Library Gets Creative to Keep Serving Patrons

With its building closed to the public, the Pittsburg Public Library has spent the last several months innovating to keep serving its patrons, including by offering ebooks, creating a new Dial-a-Story phone line, scheduling online events, and providing curbside pick-ups and deliveries with its brand new bookmobile. ([Original post.](#))



Keep an eye on the PPL Facebook page ([@PPLonline](#)) to learn about their StoryWalk project, one of CFSEK's 2020 grant recipients!

# Jake's Fireworks' T-Shirts Raise Funds for Local Businesses

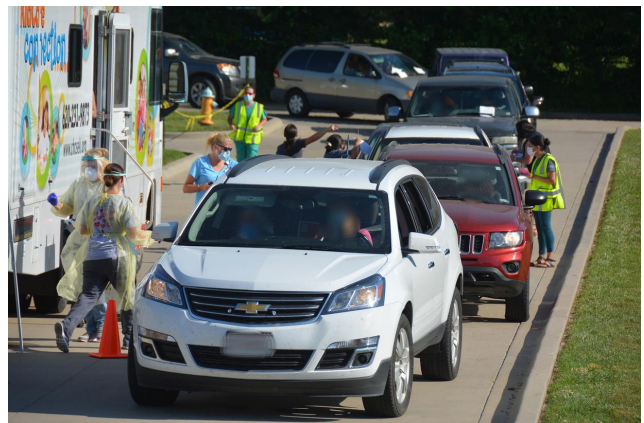


In partnership with the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce and over 70 more sponsors, Jake's Fireworks created #PittsburgStrong T-shirts that it donated to local businesses, which sold them for \$10 each and kept all the proceeds. This project helped raise \$70,000 for local businesses impacted by stay-at-home orders.

The Chamber of Commerce has a list of businesses with T-shirts still in stock [on its website](#). ([Original post](#).)

# The Community Health Center Moves Quickly to Address Urgent Testing Need

CHC/SEK pulled out all the stops in response to an urgent need for widespread COVID-19 testing in Pittsburg. Within hours after a local meat-processing plant decided that all its employees would be tested for the virus, CHC leadership had developed a plan for drive-through testing.



Over that weekend, staff tested over 550 individuals--and then they kept testing, opening their drive-through operation to the community at large. ([Original post](#).)



# Miller's Helps Businesses Reopen and PSU Students Return Safely



In partnership with US Awards and the Pittsburgh Area Chamber of Commerce, Miller's manufactured 5,000 face masks and donated them to more than 300 local businesses for their employees to use.

Then, in July, Miller's did it again, announcing it would donate 7,000 Pitt State face masks to Pittsburgh State University students for the fall semester. ([Original post.](#)) 🌻

## Grant Celebration 2020 Update

Each year during the spring and summer, the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas and some of the funds we manage provide grants to organizations in the Southeast Kansas region for projects in arts and culture, human needs, children and youth activities, youth volunteerism, at-risk youth, and women's health through competitive grant-application processes.

Then, each fall we host a Grant Celebration to highlight the wonderful things CFSEK grantees are doing for our communities.

This year, because of the continuing risks posed by COVID-19, we won't be able to host the Celebration in person—but we'll still be celebrating! Stay tuned for more details about Grant Celebration 2020. 🌻



#SEKscholarships

<b>At a glance:</b>	231 applicants	62 recipients	\$73,113 awarded
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## 2020-2021 Scholarships

In January 2020, CFSEK scholarship applications for the 2020-2021 school year became available for area students. CFSEK is home to more than a dozen different scholarship funds established by local residents, businesses, and organizations to help SEK students pursue a postsecondary education.

Applications were due by March 15, and we are pleased to announce that the following students have received scholarships from the scholarship funds listed below. You can learn more about each of these scholarship opportunities by visiting [bit.ly/SEKscholarships](http://bit.ly/SEKscholarships) in your Web browser.



### Lee & Noretta Caldwell Scholarship

- Darbi Forbes - Labette County High School
- Alison Gardner - Southeast High School
- Emma Humble - Fort Scott High School
- Sydney Kielman - Girard High School
- Macy Lindberg - Erie High School
- Mariah Reeves - Parsons High School
- Darci Summervill - Erie High School
- Kasie Vincent - Erie High School
- Trevor Yarnell - Erie High School





## Commerce Bank Scholarship

- Grace Kafka - Pittsburg High School
- Thomas Spachek - St. Mary's Colgan High School

## Craig Crespino Memorial Scholarship

- MacKenzie Coester - Girard High School
- Aubri Hoffman - St. Mary's Colgan High School

## Pat Forbes Scholarship

- Andrew Lomshek - St. Mary's Colgan High School

## Stacy Goedeke Memorial Scholarship

- Slater Blick - Kansas State University

## Haberbosch Family Scholarship

- Ty Scharff - Marmaton Valley High School

## Bill House Hereford Foundation Scholarship

- Tyler Black – West Elk High School
- Braxton Butler – Madison High School
- Joshua Butler – Cowley College
- Wesley Jahay – Girard High School
- Colby McManis – Girard High School
- Lindsay Noland – Arkansas City High School
- James Osburn – Sedan High School
- James Rock – Cedar Vale High School
- Kayla Signer – Oklahoma Panhandle State University
- Madelyn Signer – Sedan High School
- Jon Wells – Kansas State University

Image credit: Forbes: Pittsburgstealer on [Wikipedia](#); [CC BY-SA 4.0](#); cropped and overlay and text added





## Gabriel John Ison Memorial Scholarship

- Jordan Akins – Pittsburg High School
- Anderson Meek – St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Scout Peery – Pittsburg High School
- Marissa Vail – Pittsburg High School
- Derek VanBecelaere – St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Abigail Voss – St. Mary's Colgan High School



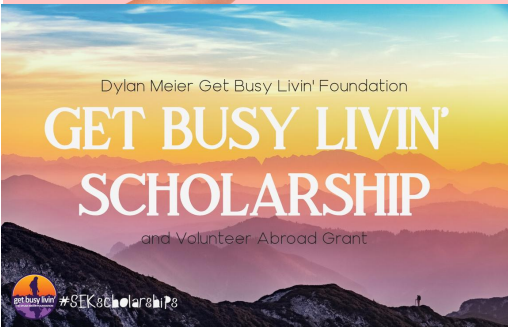
## Tyler Jeck Scholarship

- Andrew Lomshek - St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Derek VanBecelaere - St. Mary's Colgan High School



## Daniel & Jeannette Minnis Scholarship

- Kyler Siebert - Pittsburg State University



## Dylan Meier Get Busy Livin' Scholarship\*

- Karma Fields – Frontenac High School
- Alison Gardner – Southeast High School
- Johnathan Goetting – St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Rylee Johnson – Pittsburg High School
- Shay Mahnken – Pittsburg High School
- Colby McManis – Girard High School
- Jayden Meyer – Frontenac High School
- Taylor Michael – Girard High School
- Colin O'Brien – St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Laken Robinson – Pittsburg High School
- Marissa Vail – Pittsburg High School
- Taylor Wixson – St. Mary's Colgan High School



## Joe & Margarita Sauer Scholarship

- Molly Adams - Girard High School
- Isabella Crumpacker - Girard High School

\*GBL Dragon Award: Shay Mahnken;  
GBL KPREPS Player of the Year  
Award: Tyler Green - Mill Valley High School



## Short Fine Arts Scholarship

- Gabe Anderson - Pittsburg High School
- Marissa Vail - Pittsburg High School

## William J. Sollner Family Scholarship

- Haley Claffey - Northeast High School

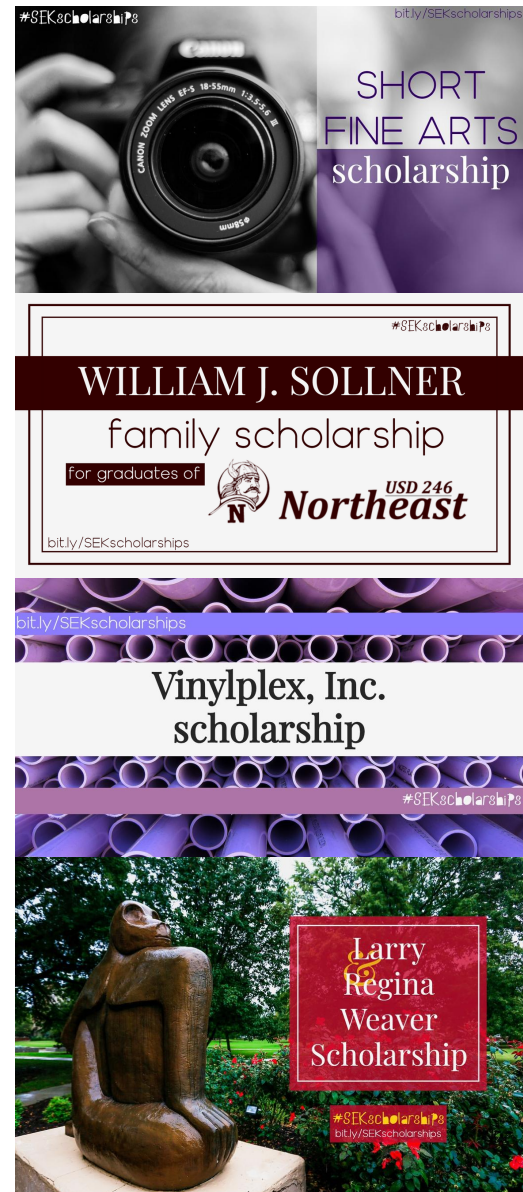
## Vinylplex, Inc. Scholarship

- Sapphire Blakemore - Pittsburg High School
- Bria Ginavan - Frontenac High School
- Rylee Johnson - Pittsburg High School
- Shay Mahnken - Pittsburg High School
- Thomas Spachek - St. Mary's Colgan High School

## Larry & Regina Weaver Scholarship

- Garrett Evans - St. Mary's Colgan High School
- Grace Kafka - Pittsburg High School 🌻

*Image credits:* Vinylplex: "[fpx051913-08a](#)" by Dennis Hill on Flickr; [CC BY 2.0](#); cropped and overlay and text added || Weaver: "[long equip 4](#)" by Laikyn Long on Flickr; [CC BY 2.0](#); overlay and text added



A scholarship fund established with the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas is another way families, friends, students, teachers, or colleagues can leave a legacy or establish a memorial and impact the future of our community.

And CFSEK makes creating a new scholarship fund easy! Learn more: [bit.ly/SEKscholarships](https://bit.ly/SEKscholarships)

# Temporary Tax Changes To Know

In March, Congress enacted the CARES Act. Among other things, the Act made several temporary changes to federal tax laws for tax year 2020, including:

- An above-the-line deduction for up to \$300 in charitable contributions of cash for individuals who claim the standard deduction.
- Removing the 60%-of-AGI limit on the charitable deduction for cash contributions by individual taxpayers who itemize their deductions.
- Increasing the limit on the charitable deduction for cash donations by corporations from 10% of AGI to 25%.

If you are interested in taking advantage of these changes to help support SEK nonprofits, you should talk to your financial or tax adviser to understand how these opportunities affect you. 🌻

## Mark Your Calendars

Match Day 2020  
is  
December 1



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Stay connected with CFSEK

