

Heather Ziegler



Stick To Skipping Rope

I'm not proud of it, but I skipped school a couple of times when I was in high school. And I got caught each time. It wasn't a pretty outcome when the principal, Doc Viglietti, reminded me that he loved me, and all his students, but yes, I would suffer the consequences of my misdeeds. I guess writing all those essays for Doc was an omen for my future career in journalism.

By my senior year, the only day I skipped was the actual planned senior skip day that the faculty all knew about ahead of time just before graduation. There is a big difference between skipping a day of school and actual truancy.

Eight times this past week, Ohio County Sheriff's Department deputies made house calls. No, they weren't responding to burglary calls or domestic battery incidents. They were sent to eight residences in response to students being truant from school.

Now you may say, but hey, kids have been on and off going to class online or in person, so how can they be truant? Well, if some students never turn in their schoolwork or attend classes in any form — it's truancy.

If a child misses seven unexcused days in a row or 10 unexcused days in a school year, they are considered truant. And while kids, nor their parents, can serve jail time for truancy, there are consequences. I'm not a member of the legal community, so I will not expand on those consequences, but trust me you want to pay attention to your children.

The bottom line is kids need to be in school one way or another. Preferably, it better serves students when they actually sit in classrooms with their peers. That contact and those friendships are as much a part of learning as opening a book or computer. Ask any longtime educator and I'll bet they'll agree.

Sadly, the deputies found empty houses or no one responding to the door. It's possible people moved away. It may be a grandparent or someone else home with the children but the kids were not completing their work. Whatever the circumstances, it's nice to know someone is looking out for the kids.

This school year has been a learning process for everyone. Students, parents, teachers, bus drivers, cooks and administrators all have had to adjust to what the pandemic has done to a "normal" school year. All I know is that it's a joy to see children boarding school buses, sitting in classrooms and practicing their sports. Let's hope the future is on the playground.

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Photo by Eric Ayres

The Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce welcomed city officials, local dignitaries and grant recipients during a ribbon cutting for River Valley Health Foundation Inc. at 1226 Chapline St. in Wheeling. The River Valley Health Foundation also announced the distribution of \$71,500 in grants to local nonprofits as well as \$37,000 to four local health departments for help with COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

River Valley Health Foundation Provides Healthy Amount of Help

By ERIC AYRES
Staff Writer

WHEELING — The River Valley Health Foundation Inc. this past week celebrated its new location and announced the distribution of grants to several local nonprofit organizations, as well as funding to assist COVID-19 vaccinations for local health agencies.

The Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce on Thursday welcomed local dignitaries, chamber representatives and city officials to the River Valley Health Foundation's new location at 1226 Chapline St. With headquarters now located in the same downtown building that houses the Community Foundation of the Upper Ohio Valley, the River Valley Health Foundation relocated there last year, but because of the ongoing pandemic, an official ribbon-cutting ceremony and other traditional events have been delayed in light of these unprecedented times.

In total, 13 local nonprofit organizations received grants totaling \$71,500 for the Foundation's 2020 funding year. Each nonprofit agency received a grant award based on the Foundation's annual 2020 grant application for amounts ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

"The Foundation's grant committee and board members awarded these grants in mid-December and focused on health care needs arising out of food security and COVID-19," Cynthia Morrison, executive director of River Valley Health Foundation, said. "The Foundation is proud to provide funding to our communities during such difficult times."

Serving nine counties in Ohio and West Virginia, the River Valley Health Foundation awards grants on an annual basis each year. During a typical year, this process takes place in November.

"The fact that we can help is wonderful and very rewarding to myself and for our board members," Morrison said. "What we try to do is focus on health and wellness in the Ohio Valley. This year, specifically with COVID, we looked very specifically at food insecurity and COVID needs. So we really had a lot of applicants this year, which made it a little more difficult, but we tried to hone in on who needed the most money and who will be most impactful."



Amounts of the grants awarded, organizations receiving them and their intended purposes included: \$10,000 to Change, Inc., for hygiene products for Steubenville City School children; \$5,000 for Family Service Upper Ohio Valley Inc. for feeding senior citizens in Ohio and Marshall counties in West Virginia; \$2,500 to King's Daughters Child Care Center Inc. for COVID-19 supplies; \$5,000 to The Linsly School for COVID-related health emergency funding; \$5,000 to Tri-State Health Services Inc. for an upgrade of the kitchen area to feed senior citizens in Jefferson County; \$5,000 to the St. Clairsville-Richland City School District for general health care needs for students; \$1,500 to the Valley Grove Volunteer Fire Department for the purchase of a defibrillator; \$5,000 to the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley Inc. for the holiday feeding program; \$5,000 to West Liberty University Foundation to support distance learning for the physician assistance program; \$5,000 to Wheeling Country Day School for COVID-related classroom updates; \$10,000 to Wheeling Health Right for continuing primary care being provided amid COVID; and \$10,000 to

Youth System Services, Inc., for family emergency housing.

Applications for annual grants can be found and submitted on the website rivervalleyhf.org.

"We primarily look at indigent, the elderly and children, but we are here for any non-profit," Morrison said, noting that she hoped the COVID-themed needs come to an end soon. The Foundation focuses on the health and wellness needs of those in the Ohio Valley, and non-pandemic needs will still exist once the area's coronavirus era becomes history. But until then, the Foundation is focusing on the vital health needs that are still at hand.

In fact, the River Valley Health Foundation was able to assist four local health departments by funding vaccination assistance requests for grants totaling \$37,000. Each local health department received a grant award based on the Foundation's emergency grant application arising out of the need for COVID-19 vaccination assistance.

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Artworks Around Town Celebrates Its Own: Anne H. Foreman

WHEELING — Anne Hazlett Foreman has found her second home at Artworks Around Town. She heard about the new Gallery the month after it was established and submitted her work for jurying. She was accepted and has been a member for more than 20 years.

Foreman has drawn ever since she was very small. While at Wheeling Country Day, she had lessons with Wes Wagner, who later became a good friend and fellow member of Artworks. At Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy, she studied for four

years under Sister Cecilia. She praises the sister for teaching her the basics, composition, color, design and perspective. In the fourth floor art studio, she learned first how to use charcoal, then moved on to tempera, oil and finally watercolor in her four years culminating in an exhibit in her senior year.

She attended Wheeling College and later Chatham College in Pittsburgh. She credits The Mount with instilling in her the discipline to succeed. Sister Cecilia was a 6-foot-tall nun with a wooden leg.

She wore the traditional floor length black habit which made her seem even more formidable than she was. Her teaching style was that of a classic atelier and she taught her students with patience and grace.

Foreman has won awards both locally and nationally. Best known for her pet portraits, she has also depicted homes and public buildings, illustrated books for four authors and painted murals.

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Photo Provided

Artworks Around Town artist Anne Hazlett Foreman showcases her talents for pet portraits in this painting titled "Stare on the Stair."

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“We’re pleased to be able to assist with the COVID-19 vaccination process in our area,” Morrison said, noting what an exceptional and atypical year this past 12 months has been.

Emergency aid applications were sent to all health departments in the counties served by the Foundation. The health departments located in Jefferson County in Ohio and in Brooke, Marshall and Ohio counties in West Virginia each submitted an emergency application detailing the specific needs arising out of the COVID-19 vaccination process currently underway.

The funds will be used to coordinate a communications program to further vaccine information, assist with signage, personal protective equipment or PPE, and expenses arising out of the vaccination facilities, electrical upgrades, phone upgrades, employee overtime, temporary workers and the purchase of vaccination cards.

The River Valley Health Foundation was founded in 2017. Morrison, who joined the Foundation the following year, said a portion of funds from their endowment is used to provide money for the grants that are distributed. Although the

Foundation did not hold any fundraising activities over the past year because of COVID, they are looking forward to holding fund raising activities in the future, and of course, donations are welcome.

A nonprofit public charity that provides support of health education for members of the community and for healthcare professionals, the River Valley Health Foundation serves Brooke, Ohio, Marshall and Wetzel counties in West Virginia, and Belmont, Jefferson, Monroe, Guernsey and Harrison counties in Ohio.

For more information, visit rivervalleyhf.org.