

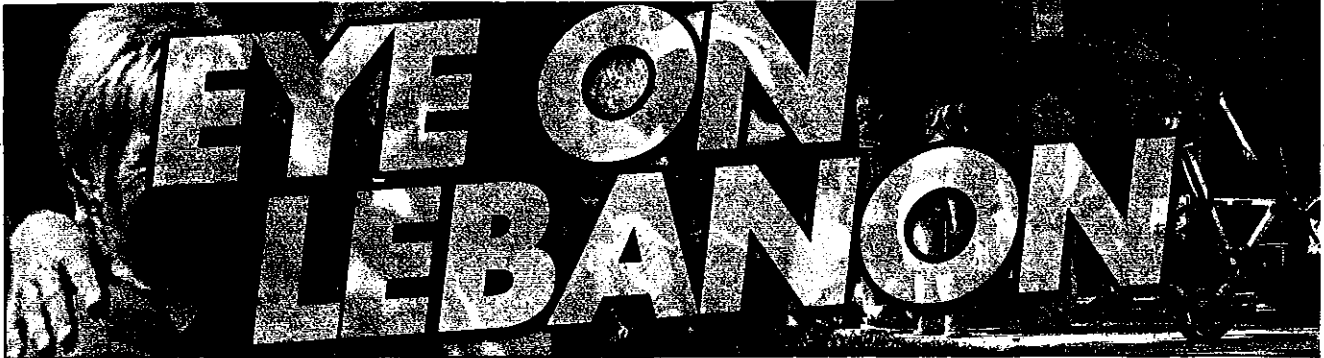


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Lebanon Educational Foundation helps others reach goals

This column is one in an ongoing series of columns written by community leaders at the request of the Community Vision Committee, with the goal of providing a deeper knowledge of the many aspects of the city of Lebanon.



CHERI GOODWIN

Guest Columnist

In April of 1990, the Willett H. Parr Foundation Inc. was established as a memorial to the founding partner of Parr, Richey, Obrensky & Morton. The name of the foundation was changed in September 1990 to the Lebanon Educational Foundation (LEF). Its mission is "to support the Lebanon Community School Corp. by partnering with donors to invest in our community's educational future."

Through the years, the foundation has stayed true to its mission and focused on educational opportunities for students and educators within the Lebanon school district, providing more than \$627,215.62 in scholarships to students or grants to educators. These efforts have helped many students attend higher education, and have given many educators an opportunity to provide innovative programs or learning tools in their classrooms.

LEF administers a variety of scholarships for the benefit of students. As a 501(c)(3) corporation, LEF administers scholarships that are permanently endowed, meaning a contribution is made to LEF from a donor in an amount in excess of \$10,000; or pass-through scholarships, where an individual, organization or company provides scholarships on a year-by-year basis in amounts less than \$10,000. All seniors at Lebanon High School have an opportunity to apply for LEF scholarships. Scholarship applications are available online or at the LHS Guidance Department, and are due in February of each year. The scholarship criteria vary and are often based on the donor's area of interest. Scholarships may or

may not be based on financial need, community and volunteer service, or may be focused on a particular field of study. LEF currently partners with more than 20 individuals and businesses to fund scholarships for 26 students.

LEF also offers several opportunities for educator grants. Any educator employed by the Lebanon Community School Corp. has two opportunities each year to apply for a grant. Grants may range from a few dollars to \$2,500. LEF and community partners have funded grants for everything from A to Z. A sampling of past grants includes: Hear the Roar, a program designed to provide a day of orientation for LMS 6th-grade students; Battle of the Books, literacy-based project at each elementary school; Academic Teams/Academic Letters, allows LHS students to participate in Spell Bowl, Math Bowl etc; and Video and Technology at LHS, allows LHS students the opportunity to learn videography and technology skills while serving the community by broadcasting school board meetings on Channel 19.

Another program adminis-

tered by LEF is the LHS Alumni Class Challenge Award. This successful project was the brainchild of the Class of 1968 as an avenue to impact the leadership talent of students at LHS. During its 25th high school reunion, the class challenged each classmate to pledge \$100 to the cause. Afterward, they challenged the Class of 1969 to exceed their total. The challenge has continued each year and alumni are encouraged to donate to the Class Challenge fund, which supports the LHS Tiger Leadership Camp.

Each year, one educator is named the recipient of the Dwight Booher Cragun Superintendent's Award for Distinguished Teacher. The award is supported annually through an endowed gift from the Cragun family in honor of Dwight Booher Cragun, a graduate of Lebanon schools, who later became superintendent and was recognized for improving education. The recipient receives a \$2,500 award to enhance or expand their classroom expertise.

While funding scholarships and classroom grants is a priority of LEF, many of the

funding opportunities would not be available without the support of the community. Each year LEF recognizes a business, individual or family in the community, who has gone above and beyond the norm through both personal and financial commitment to support the efforts of the Foundation, as the David S. Richey Award Recipient.

LEF generates its unrestricted funds through fundraisers, memorial and honor contributions and planned giving. LEF's fundraisers include the Firecracker Classic 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, the LEF Golf Outing, the Phone-a-thon and the Betting on Education. LEF recently established an online giving partnership with the National School Foundation Association through Give2Schools. Donations to LEF may be made by visiting the Web site at www.lebanonle.org, and selecting the Give Now icon on the bottom of the page.

LEF also offers the perfect gift-giving solution for parents, grandparents and friends to honor a teacher, principal, school assistant, bus driver, coach or other school employee who has

made a positive impact on the life of a child. The Thank-an-Educator program allows donors to make a minimum donation of \$10 in the name of an honoree. Upon receipt of the donation, LEF sends a "CARE" card to the school employee as an acknowledgment that the donor has made a contribution in his/her honor. Donors also have the option to include a personal note to the educator. "CARE" is an acronym for "Congratulating Amazing and Remarkable Educators."

Volunteer opportunities are available in many areas including serving on the board of directors, assisting as a committee member for a fundraiser or providing assistance in your area of expertise. If you are interested in becoming involved with LEF, please contact the office at (765) 482-1185 or via e-mail at lef@leb.k12.in.us. With ongoing financial support from donors, the foundation will continue supporting education and inspiring achievement.

Cheri Goodwin is executive director of the Lebanon Educational Foundation and lives in Lebanon with her daughter and husband.