

# Mother's Day Card Initiative honors Ashland county women

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By Kristi Schweitzer / Staff Writer

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JoAnn Ford Watson, Sandy Sexton, Carol Rogers, Connie Marble, Gayle Akkerman, Kay Kick and Jane Taylor, members of the ACCF Women's Fund, stuff envelopes for the Ashland County Community Foundation for their Mother's Day Card solicitation Tuesday. - Tom E. Puskar, Times-Gazette.com

Every mother likes to know she is appreciated during Mother's Day, and what better way to show honor than making a lasting contribution in her name? The Women's Fund's Mother's Day Card Initiative of the Ashland County Community Foundation seeks to do just that.

Women's Fund committee members and volunteers spent Tuesday morning stuffing over 1,300 envelopes with Mother's Day card forms, inviting the community to participate in the experience. For the past 10 years, the Women's Fund has offered a way for mothers and other special women to be honored by allowing family and friends to make a contribution in their honor to the Women's Fund.

"It's a way to honor mothers or special women in our lives, and it has grown," said Susan Shafer, a founding committee member and card designer.

Each woman honored in this way will get a beautiful custom-made card, designed by Shafer, a local artist, noting a contribution was made in her honor. Every year Shafer designs water color prints ranging from tulips to hydrangeas to poppies and everything in between. Cards can also be made in memory of a special woman, given to family members.

Started in 2008 as a way to honor women and raise funds to empower other women in the county, the Mother's Day Card Initiative has honored or memorialized 2,803 individuals, with \$122,554 contributed to the Women's Fund. A total of 408 women were honored or remember last year with a card, with \$17,025 contributed to the Women's Fund.

"The idea was we wanted to help women and girls and we felt the best people to do that were women who know the needs," Shafer said.

"It's all ages (being helped)," said Margaret Ann Hess, a founding member. "It's all through the county and it's women in the county helping others in the county."

All money given stays in the endowment fund and interest earned goes into grants for several schools, churches and nonprofits each year, including Ashland Care Center, Salvation Army Kroc Center, Fostering Family Ministries, Kno-Ho-Co, Associated Charities, Hospice of North Central Ohio, Ashland County Cancer Association and Appleseed Community Mental Health Center/Rape Crisis Domestic Violence Safe Haven, to name a few.

The deadline for grant applications is May 15 and can be picked up at ACCF or online.

A portion also goes to the women's scholarship fund, to provide aid for a non-traditional student.

"Without the Mother's Day card we couldn't have this money to give," committee chairwoman Connie Marble said. "And so that's why this initiative is so important."

Cards have been distributed all throughout the country and the foundation has received positive feedback from women who were touched.

"People keep these and frame them ... they're works of art," Marble said.

Marble, Hess and Shafer have all received and sent out cards, too.

"I send them to my mother and my daughters," Marble said. "People in the community who've lost a parent, a mom during the year like in my sorority or my

garden club or whatever. I honor her memory and I send a card to them to honor their mom.”

Marble, who also receives a card from her husband every year, finds it more valuable than a gift.

“We don’t need another sweater, you know, we don’t need something else, but this is cool,” she said.

The deadline to fill out a form for the card is April 20. Forms can be picked up at the foundation building on College Avenue or online at <https://www.accommunityfoundation.org>.

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