

The SCCF's 20th Anniversary Series

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The SCCF Supports Arts and Culture

At the Starke County Community Foundation (SCCF), we believe that supporting the arts and preserving our culture are very important to our community. The SCCF aims to give grants to organizations which fall under certain 'pillars of need', and the category 'arts and culture' is one of the pillars to which we provide grant dollars each year. We do our best to ensure that our grants enhance the quality of life in Starke County by bringing personal enjoyment, broadening perspectives, providing intellectual opportunities, and promoting community involvement. Since 1996, hundreds of thousands of dollars have supported arts and culture.



Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum has received \$205,140 from the SCCF to support their contribution to culture in Starke County.

Museums are important assets to a community. Some museums reflect the rich history of the area, and others display qualities that make the community unique. In Starke County, two museums are doing great work to exhibit Starke County's unique qualities. Both of these have been supported by the SCCF's community fund grant dollars, as well as from funds of their own that were established with the SCCF.

The Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum (HVRM) in North Judson has welcomed visitors from many states across the U.S., as well as from Canada and England. It has been in operation since 1988. Its volunteers work to preserve this area's rich railroading history and to enable visitors to experience an old-fashioned train ride. The museum has even displayed a steam engine that weighed about 850,000 pounds! The HVRM has received over \$205,140 from the SCCF to support their contribution to culture in Starke County.



Jerry and Cherry Gumz at the HVRM

The Starke County Historical Society Museum is another entity that works to keep the history of the county alive for future generations. Its expansive collection houses interesting artifacts, such as a life-size picture of Che Mah, who was only twenty-eight inches tall. He lived in Starke County for many years. The SCCF has supported the museum with over \$115,313 in grants. \$51,400 of this total was awarded to support the Historical Society's Gateway Project, which included the train depot welcome center located on the north side of Knox on Highway 35. Another \$80,000 has been pledged from The Hardesty Memorial Endowment and will be distributed to the Museum through 2020.



Starke County Historical Society's Welcome Center in Knox

In addition to museums, music is an important part of arts and culture in the community. In 2007, the SCCF granted \$3,100 to the Community Choir/Knox United Methodist Church Christmas Cantata. The grant helped to purchase music folders for the entire choir, as well as headset microphones for soloists. Every year from 2006 through 2010, the Starke County Choralaires received funds for music, musical instruments, and accompanist fees.

Various other artistic and cultural projects in Starke County have been supported by the SCCF. The Psi Iota Xi Young Artist Conference has received seven separate grants in support of its promotion of the arts in Starke County. The conference provides a variety of workshops in music, storytelling, photography, dance, and musical instruments for children. The SCCF also helped to bring the Chicago Shakespeare Theater to the community to perform Shakespeare plays for Starke County students.

Arts and culture are about crossing boundaries, seeing things in different ways, and preserving our shared history. The SCCF will continue to promote the arts and culture in Starke County. Through these grants, the SCCF hopes to promote togetherness and community pride. Join us next week to learn about how the SCCF supports another pillar of need in the community.