

Fall 2025

Building Vibrant Communities

Broadway Street Corridor, Toledo, Ohio, Cecilia Lueza.

Foundation Matters

Building Vibrant Communities

Through Art and Cultural Investment

Northwest Ohio is home to communities with deep roots, rich cultural traditions and a vibrancy that makes each place uniquely special, playing a vital role in the region's success. Through art, we honor our history, express our resilience and open doors to connection and opportunity, fostering both a stronger sense of community and meaningful economic growth.

According to the newly released Ohio Creative Economy Report, creative industries in our region generated \$2.6 billion for the local economy, supported 13,856 jobs and contributed more than \$789 million in income for workers in the creative sector. The total value-added activity reached \$1.2 billion. Local businesses benefit from the increased foot traffic driven by performances and arts festivals. Property values rise. And young people discover new, inspiring pathways into creative careers that contribute to neighborhood renewal.

"The arts draw us out and into community together, building a sense of belonging, which is the foundation of a strong region. It's how communities build resiliency," says Marc Folk, president and CEO of The Arts Commission and a founding member of TACL.

Public art serves as a visual enrichment and acts as a catalyst for conversation, connection and community transformation. Murals on once-neglected buildings signal hope and investment. Sculptures in parks and plazas become gathering spaces that foster neighborly bonds. Street performances and community-based art events turn everyday spaces into platforms for shared experiences, breaking down barriers and sparking meaningful dialogue.

But the impact of public art goes even further. These projects engage residents in collaborative creativity and offer real-world workforce development opportunities for emerging artists. Performance arts—whether theater, dance, music or interdisciplinary work—provide training while inviting audiences to become participants, not just spectators.

A thriving community is one that invests in its cultural foundation—supporting belonging, education, workforce development and civic infrastructure. At its core, public art builds bridges: between neighborhoods, across generations and among newcomers and longtime residents. Performance art, in particular, creates temporary but powerful communities united around shared experience.

The arts and culture sector in northwest Ohio is strong, dynamic and full of promise. With strategic support and ongoing investment, it can continue to define our region—serving as a source of pride, economic vitality and social connection. It makes northwest Ohio not only a wonderful place to visit, but an even better place to call home.

"Public art enlivens neighborhoods and gives residents a positive feeling about where they live. It makes them feel valued and want to improve their surroundings."

Susan Palmer, community arts leader

Glass City River Wall Project, on the twenty-eight grain storage silos at the port in Toledo, Ohio, Gabriel Gault.

Celebrating Toledo's Cultural Partners

As a 2025 recipient of the prestigious Ohio Arts Council Governor's Award for the Arts and a Toledo Museum of Art board member, Sara Jane DeHoff learned about giving from watching her parents help others in their small Iowa town.

"They weren't loud about it," she recalls. "I would hear that my dad helped someone after the fact. It was quiet support." This early lesson in understated philanthropy would shape her approach to community involvement for decades to come.

When Sara Jane moved to Toledo in 1975 and started a business in Perrysburg, she discovered a community rich with cultural treasures. Meeting Roger Mandle, then Executive Director of the Toledo Museum of Art, opened doors to the region's vibrant arts scene. As her children

attended Maumee Valley Country Day School, her first fundraising experience supporting the school introduced her to like-minded community members committed to giving back.

From there, Sara Jane's involvement expanded organically. She joined the Arts Commission and Perrysburg Garden Club, and through environmental advocacy work, helped found the Black Swamp Conservancy. Throughout these efforts is a common thread: education.

"Education is very important because our future is dependent on it," DeHoff explains. Coming from a family of educators, she sees every philanthropic effort as a chance to inspire learning. "You open a door through educational experiences to inspire the next generation of thinkers. You never know what's going to wake up a child."

This philosophy drove Sara Jane to create the Young Artists at Work (YAAW) program, connecting youth with professional working artist experiences. Her commitment to nurturing the next generation of art supporters earned recognition when she received the prestigious Ohio Arts Council Governor's Award for the Arts in 2025.

Sara Jane's impact extends far beyond programming. She played an instrumental role in major capital campaigns that transformed Toledo's cultural landscape, including the Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art and the institution's Second Century Campaign. These efforts helped secure the resources needed to maintain Toledo's reputation for world-class cultural offerings.

"We try and put arts into a box," she reflects, "and there is no box big enough." For Sara Jane, supporting arts and culture means investing in Toledo's future.

Her fundraising success stems from her ability to help others see beyond narrow definitions of "the arts." "The word art frightens people—they think it's for a certain few," she notes. "They miss the importance of it as a community." Instead, DeHoff emphasizes how Toledo's cultural institutions serve as economic engines, drawing new businesses and tourists while enhancing educational opportunities.

Sara Jane believes Toledo's exceptional cultural institutions shouldn't be taken for granted. She worries about future support and advocates for broader understanding of the arts' community value, from economic development to education.



Sara Jane DeHoff



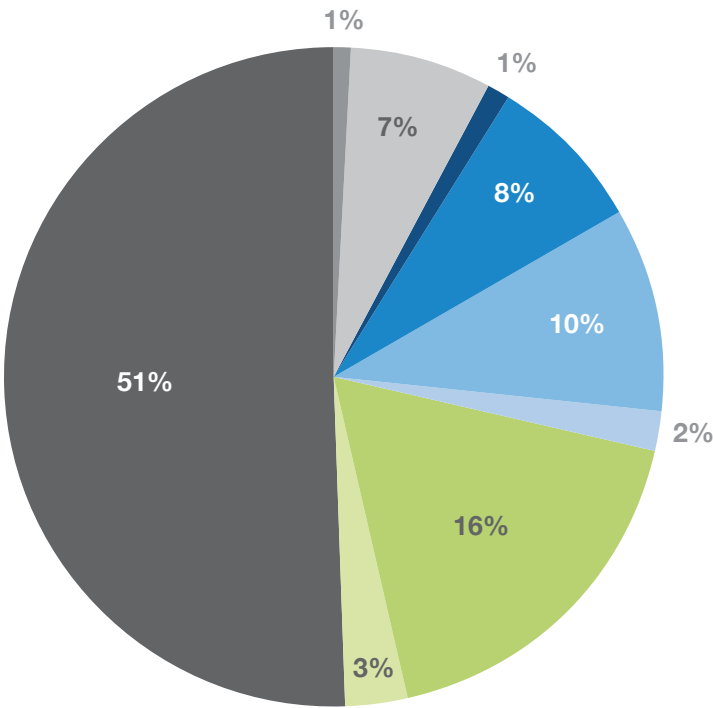
Your Generosity at Work

Grants Awarded

January 1, 2025 – July 31, 2025

Your generosity is transforming lives—from empowering over 900 underserved youth through music education to funding vital programs that prepare young people for life after high school through internships, skill-building and real-world experiences.

◀ Glass City Steel, Toledo School for the Arts Steel Drum Band.



Focus Area	Awarded
Animals/Animal Welfare	\$399,009
Arts & Culture	\$2,355,131
Economic Development	\$199,035
Education	\$2,596,958
Education - Scholarships	\$3,313,427
Environment/Natural Resources	\$635,280
Health & Human Services	\$6,059,946
Religious	\$1,013,167
Other	\$17,452,668

Totals \$34,024,621

Arts and Culture Fund

Recognizing both the potential and the challenges facing our regional arts ecosystem, the Community Foundation is launching a new Arts and Culture Fund designed to provide support for creative initiatives throughout the region.

This fund represents a local response to uncertainties in arts funding. By focusing on public art, community engagement, performances and artist professional development, this will create infrastructure that will support cultural initiatives for generations.

The fund will prioritize projects that strengthen connections between residents and neighborhoods, boost civic engagement and pride, and support artists as working professionals, helping to create a network of vibrant cultural hubs that celebrate what makes each community unique.



To learn more about how to get involved, contact the Philanthropic Services team.

^ Dogleg Alley, Bowling Green, OH, Andrea Pereira de Almeida.



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Our Mission

Greater Toledo Community Foundation is a public, charitable foundation which exists to improve the quality of life in the region.

Providing a flexible, informed, effective means for donors to achieve their charitable goals in perpetuity.

Addressing the changing needs of the region through efficient, prudent, high impact grantmaking.

Serving as a source of information about and as a catalyst in shaping the region's response to those needs.

Facilitating the work of other grantmaking organizations in order to achieve effective and efficient grantmaking practices.

> Toledo Ballet, The Nutcracker.

