

# Community Connections

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## Patton set to retire as Executive Director



Sara (Sally) Patton has informed the Board of Trustees of her intention to step down as Executive Director at the end of 2021. She joined the Foundation in 2013 as the fifth Executive Director in the organization's history, following a 32-year tenure as Vice President for Development at The College of Wooster.

"WCCF has been fortunate to have the right director at the right time, beginning with Bob Seiwert in 1978," said Mark Auble, WCCF President of the Board of Trustees. "Each brought their own skill sets at the time in our evolution when we needed them most."

"Sally is a highly sought-after fundraiser and consultant. During her tenure, the Foundation's assets grew by over 150 percent. The community's awareness of the Foundation has steadily grown with the addition of inclusive programs, such as The Women's Fund and GIVE 365," Auble added.

Under Patton's leadership, the Foundation increased its visibility throughout Wayne County and grew to over \$125 million in assets, with more than 490 separate funds to benefit the community. Patton credits this growth to the generosity of the community.

"When people talk about all the good things the Foundation does in the community, I always note that our work is made possible because of the people of Wayne County who give through the Foundation to meet local needs," says Patton. "I am impressed every day by the unusual generosity of this community. It's really inspiring."

Last year, during the early stages of the pandemic, she worked with the Foundation Board to establish the Wayne County Emergency Response Fund to address needs of our community that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Patton said she believes WCCF will continue to thrive as a valuable asset for Wayne County because of strong Board leadership and continued community support.

"It has been a true honor to be part of the Foundation and to work with many generous donors, dedicated nonprofits, a fully committed Board of Trustees, and a stellar staff. Barb, Lacie and Penny are the best!" Patton continued. "I am confident that WCCF will continue to grow, and that its impact on our community will increase."

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## Garcia named Executive Director



The Wayne County Community Foundation (WCCF) Board of Trustees has named Melanie Garcia its new Executive Director.

“The Foundation is at an exciting place in its 40 plus year history,” said Board President Mark Auble, “and we feel Melanie is the right person to work with our Board to move the Foundation toward its strategic goal of building endowment so the Foundation can increase grant funding to the community. The Executive Director will lead the way as the Foundation continues to explore and identify opportunities to fulfill our mission.”

The transition will begin in November, with Melanie officially taking the reins on January 1. She will be the sixth Executive Director in WCCF history.

Garcia most recently served as an Executive Coach and Corporate Training Account Executive for The Ohio State University’s Business Training and Educational Services Department. In this role, she consulted with companies to find solutions to challenges – from strategic planning to employee development and retention. Prior to that, she spent 15 years in corporate roles including international business, mergers and acquisitions, new product development, sales, and manufacturing management. She has been actively involved in the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce, Orrville Area Chamber of Commerce, Junior Achievement, Wayne Center for the Arts, and the YMCA of Wayne County. Garcia holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations from Miami University and an MBA from Ashland University. A native of Orrville, Garcia has called Wooster home for the past 25 years, with her husband Stefan and two children.

“I am honored to be chosen to lead Wayne County Community Foundation in this next chapter,” said Garcia. “I am grateful to Sally for the meaningful work she made possible during her 8 years at the helm and look forward to continuing to grow the Foundation and our impact.”

## Community Foundation receives 4-star rating

The Wayne County Community Foundation recently earned the coveted four-star rating from Charity Navigator, the world’s largest guide for philanthropic decision making, which evaluates a sizable portion of the more than 1.5 million charities in the U.S. The four-star rating is the highest possible and is reserved for organizations that exceed industry standards, adhere to sector best practices, and execute their mission in a financially efficient way.

The core components of Charity Navigator ratings – financial health, accountability and

transparency – are measured annually. Charity Navigator accepts no funding from the organizations it evaluates, ensuring unbiased evaluations, nor does Charity navigator charge the public for this trusted data. For more information, interested parties can visit: [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).

