

Friend of Philanthropy



Stephen and Cheryl Shapiro

When Steve and Cheryl Shapiro first married, they moved to his hometown of Wooster, Ohio. He promised her it was only for a year and then they would be off to the big city. That was nearly 50 years ago; and Wayne County has reaped the benefits of that one broken promise ever since.

Growing up within the Jewish faith, the idea of philanthropy was instilled in both Steve and Cheryl from a very young age. *Tzedakah*—a Hebrew word often translated as charity—is a mainstay of Jewish life. It means being good stewards of and planning to give a portion of one’s personal substance for the common good. Although it is related to charity, the translation of *tzedakah* is broader—it means righteousness, fairness or justice. In Judaism, giving to the poor is not viewed as a generous act; it is simply an act of justice, the performance of a duty, giving the poor their due. It is the right thing to do.

The Shapiros are passionate about helping at-risk youth and focus on projects that will

remove roadblocks for young people, allowing them to grown into good, productive citizens. Both Steve and Cheryl have served on the Board of Trustees for The Village Network (TVN). Their most recent project was the creation of the *Cheryl and Stephen Shapiro Center for the Expressive Arts* on the Wooster Campus of TVN. The center is an integral part of TVN’s focus on the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics, which involves training the brains of children and youth to repair the areas in which development was impaired by trauma. The new center offers a state-of-the-art facility for residents to express themselves through art and music.

In addition to The Village Network, where Steve is a Trustee Emeritus, the couple are involved with a number of nonprofit and community organizations. Steve has been an active member of Wooster Rotary and served on numerous boards including Wayne County Community Foundation, Goodwill Industries of Wayne and Holmes Counties, STEPS (now OneEighty, Inc.), Wayne Economic Development Council, and was co-founder of The SPOT, a youth center operated by



Above: The Cheryl and Stephen Shapiro Center for the Expressive Arts on the Wooster Campus of The Village Network.

Right: Artwork created by a participant in TVN's Art Therapy Program.



Wooster YMCA. Cheryl is a Trustee Emerita of Wayne Center for the Arts and a current member of *The Women's Fund*, an affiliate of the Foundation.

Both consider themselves fortunate to have had parents who were strong philanthropic role models, giving whatever they could – whether time, talent, or treasure – an ideal they are passing on to their own children, William, Rachel and Joshua. By establishing the *Stephen and Cheryl Shapiro Family Fund* at the Foundation, they are encouraging their children to be philanthropic and to discover the causes they care about most.

Their advice to others is simple: find the cause you are passionate about and don't wait! Do what you can during your lifetime – whether that is by giving your time or financial resources – and enjoy watching the fruits of your labor flourish.

In establishing the *Friend of Philanthropy*, the Foundation recognizes the difference that individuals can make through personal commitment and leadership, taking into account the impact such individuals have on our community, and the role their creativity and advocacy can play in a project's success. Steve and Cheryl Shapiro exemplify all these qualities, and have repeatedly shared them with the members of this community. We are forever grateful.

Previous Award Recipients

- Stanley C. & Flo K Gault, 2013
- The J.M. Smucker Family, 2014
- The Donald & Alice Noble Family, 2015
- Greg & Kathy Long, 2016
- Barry Romich, 2017

The Friend of Philanthropy Award was created to honor those who make a difference in our communities with their philanthropic activities – the giving of time, talent or treasure – for the betterment of the Wayne County area. The award is presented at Wayne County Community Foundation's Annual Dinner. For more details on the award and nomination process, please visit us online at WayneCountyCommunityFoundation.org or call 330.262.3877.