
Grants that Grow

The Upper Arlington Community Foundation enhances the community through impactful fundraising



Bob Crane Community Center ground breaking

By Megan Brokamp

From raising \$8 million for the Bob Crane Community Center to helping fund methods to reconnect owners with their pups, the Upper Arlington Community Foundation can wear many hats when the community expresses a need.

Since 2007, the nonprofit has been committed to fulfilling community needs with a variety of grants and support initiatives. The foundation came to be after UA residents expressed interest in a community center 16 years ago. Ultimately, the center never materialized, but the funds were repurposed for the creation of a community foundation. Jessica Grisez, the foundation's executive director, says the goals of the organization come down to a simple principle.

"We help folks explore what's important to them in Upper Arlington," Grisez says.



The Upper Arlington Author Series

Photos by Ian Alexander Photography



UAPD accepts grant for runaway pet chip reader

Selling blue bricks for Community Center Capital Campaign

For many Upper Arlington residents, the desire for a community center never waned. The city knew the project would be lengthy and costly, and the foundation stepped up with a successful campaign. It quickly saw donations of up to \$1 and \$2 million, proving sup-

port for this project was overwhelming and widespread.

“We saw donors in their 20s to donors in their 90s,” Grisez says. “(It was) truly a community-wide initiative.”

While the foundation provides funding for large-scale campaigns, much

of its efforts go to smaller, yet equally important ventures. One notable example is the grant it provided to the Upper Arlington Police Division for the National Night Out.

This nationwide initiative promotes safe communities and builds



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relationships between police forces and their neighborhoods. Although National Night Out is not new nationwide, this past summer marked the first National Night Out in Upper Arlington. The foundation provided seed funding and the event was a massive success,

delivering an outlet for young families to connect with the community and the police through games and socialization.

The foundation also provided funding to the UAPD for pet microchip readers after a resident expressed the need for tools to keep pets safe. The founda-

tion's grant allowed the police to purchase two microchip readers and travel cages to help transport lost pets. With these new resources and volunteer support, the police have been able to efficiently rescue runaway dogs and cats and reunite them with their owners. Grisez says feedback for the program was immediate and positive.

"A simple grant of \$1,000 made all the difference to reconnect a runaway pet with their family," Grisez says, "which is priceless."

The foundation also provides opportunities for members of the community to participate in family or individual grants. One example is the grant the Upper Arlington Historical Society received from Don and Sharon Cook.

The historical society reached out to the foundation because it wished to preserve archives from *Norwester Magazine*, a historic Upper Arlington publication. The foundation was able to connect the Cook family to the cause, and through the Don and Sharon Cook Fund, a fire-safe box was purchased to protect the archives.

Courtesy of City of Upper Arlington



Plans for the exterior of the Bob Crane Community Center

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The foundation also provides grants to numerous nonprofits around town and works to educate the community about these organizations' resources. An example of this is the \$20,000 grant the foundation provided to the Upper Arlington Public Library to develop its early learning play area. The area serves as a space for children to develop emotionally and socially through play-based learning.

Although the foundation supports a long list of causes, it is always seeking new ways to support the community. It's currently in the process of crafting a 10-year strategic plan to outline its goals for the upcoming years. Whether it's through preserving old traditions or creating new ones, the foundation is ready to help build Upper Arlington in any way it can. If you have an idea on how to join in this goal, as well as apply for funding or learn more information, you can visit www.uacommunityfoundation.com.

The foundation is lucky to have a hardworking staff and committed partners, but what really makes this program shine is the people it supports.



UA Public Library is awarded a grant for its play area

"We have a very passionate community here," Grisez says. "You put people together that are passionate about something, and dreams come true."

Megan Brokamp is a contributing writer at CityScene Media Group. Feedback welcome at feedback@cityscenemediagroup.com.

Photo by Ien Alexander Photography

