Wean Foundation invests in Mahoning Valley policy and STEM-related curiosity in Warren City School District students

(March 10, 2020, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded a grant at its March board of directors meeting to Policy Matters Ohio in support of the organization’s work protecting Mahoning Valley residents from exploitive financial products and practices.

The second of two Community Investment Grants totaling $63,000 went to the National Inventors Hall of Fame’s (NIHF) Invention Project. Both support resident empowerment, collaboration and equitable solutions to enhance the quality of life for the Valley’s residents.

Policy Matters Ohio has nearly 20 years of experience building relationships to create economic mobility for low-income and working families in Ohio. Its Ohio CASH Coalition project will leverage the organization’s expertise in job quality, wages, transit, childcare and higher education access by engaging local partners to advance Ohio’s state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and to protect consumers from dishonest financial practices, such as predatory land contracts and payday lending.

“Policy Matters is an ally of our community and its partners. Their CASH Coalition’s work will protect residents from harmful financial practices, as well as move our community forward towards a more equitable Mahoning Valley,” said Corrie Adams, Wean Foundation Program Officer.
The Foundation will support NIHF’s Invention Project, for two cohorts, totaling 50 students in the Warren City School District, as well as provide classroom teachers with relevant professional development. NIHF addresses opportunity gaps in STEM-related careers, invention and entrepreneurship by providing high-energy, hands-on, experiential learning activities to students in the summer.

Implementation of Invention Project in Warren City School District will target historically marginalized students to participate in the program, with cohorts being mostly composed of students of color and young women. The program will introduce students to entrepreneurship, business innovation – from product prototyping to launch – as well as expose them to economics and to solving real-world challenges.

The Wean Foundation’s five-year Strategic Direction, now in its second year of implementation, includes a combination of grantmaking, capacity building and convening and partnerships; executed by staff dedicated to community partnerships that create a vibrant Mahoning Valley. As of February 24, 2020, Danielle Dillon joins the Foundation team, serving as its Program Associate, Data Management.

A 2012-15 member of the Foundation’s Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants Program Resident Council, Dillon most recently worked as the assistant project manager for Sandy Hook Promise Northeast, an organization dedicated to preventing gun violence through smart programs and policy solutions.

Danielle has a bachelor’s degree in English from The Ohio State University and a Master’s in Public Health Policy and Management from Kent State.
Wean Foundation Board Renews its Support for Two Neighborhood-focused Community Development Corporations

(Dec. 13, 2019, Warren, Ohio) – Over the next two years, The Raymond John Wean Foundation will award more than $2 million to the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) and Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (TNP) to expand the Foundation’s support of resident engagement, race equity and inclusion, social equity, collaboration, community investment and learning.

At its December meeting, Wean board members awarded Community Investment Grants to the Youngstown-based YNDC and the Warren-based TNP, community development corporations that have been operating as strategic partners for the Foundation due to their strong leadership roles in resident empowerment and sustained community development in Warren and Youngstown neighborhoods.

“With input from community stakeholders, this decision will uphold a shared vision between partners ‘to collectively build capacity to provide voice to residents and leaders throughout the Mahoning Valley,” said Jennifer Roller, president of the Wean Foundation.

In addition to its support for YNDC and TNP, the Wean Board also celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants program with a reception and the release of SUCCESS: A Decade of Transformation, a book chronicling the history and impact of the grassroots grantmaking program.
The Wean Foundation partnered with PolicyLink’s Founder-in-Residence Angela Glover Blackwell, to reflect on the progress of the last 10 years, in addition to providing a call to action to Mahoning Valley residents for the next decade.

“Led by residents, the Neighborhood SUCCESS grants offer a strong example of how true collaborations can lead to intergenerational changes,” says Blackwell. “While celebrating the transformation and learning of the last 10 years, we must also take the opportunity to map a path into the coming decade.”

The Foundation’s support of TNP and YNDC mirrors a commitment to community revitalization and civic sector leadership that Blackwell points to as philanthropy’s historically powerful role in building community capacity across the United States.

YNDC and TNP have been focused on improving housing and property conditions, decaying public infrastructures, general blight and housing vacancies and a lack of healthy foods for low-income residents in Warren and Youngstown. YNDC and TNP have made progress in numerous key areas:

- The productive re-use of vacant properties, creating opportunity for residents to become homeowners and transforming the aesthetic and economic well-being of neighborhoods.
- Training for low- to-moderate income Youngstown and Warren residents in property renovation, deconstruction, post demolition, lot greening and vacant property maintenance.
- Community organizing efforts that build neighborhood resident capacity and grassroots power.

The December Wean board meeting concluded with the appointment of three new board members, who will begin their terms in January 2020.

Sybil West, a lifelong resident and active Youngstown leader, has a proven record of community building as president of the
Bennington Block Watch on the city’s eastside and a Resident Council Member for the Foundation’s Neighborhood SUCCESS Grantmaking Program. A retired Ohio Lamp employee of 38 years, West holds an associate degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology from Youngstown State University.

Warren-based lawyer, Stanley A. Elkins, served as the Assistant Law Director in Warren for 13 years and now works with the Trumbull County Prosecutor’s Office, as the Chief Prosecutor of the Juvenile Division. Elkins is actively involved in the community, coaching and supporting youth sports programs and is an inductee of the Trumbull County African American Achievers Hall of Fame.

Warren resident, William Mullane, supervisor of school improvement for the Ashtabula County Educational Service Center and Jefferson Area Local Schools, served as the principal and educator at Warren G. Harding High School for twenty-eight years. In addition to his work as an educator, Bill has been involved in the region’s arts and philanthropic community for more than forty years.

Such additions to the Wean Foundation leadership will continue the Foundation’s history of partnering with the community to create a thriving and vibrant Mahoning Valley for all residents.

New Strategic Direction Will
Guide Work for Wean Foundation until 2023

(October 4, 2019, Warren, Ohio) – After 18 months of planning, listening and learning, staff members of The Raymond John Wean Foundation have launched a new strategic plan to guide their work through 2023.

The new plan, developed with input from nearly 200 community stakeholders, calls for the Foundation to consider race equity and inclusion in all of its work. The Foundation’s grantmaking, capacity building work, in general, will also focus on supporting solutions that address the root causes of various community challenges.

“We are truly grateful for the many Valley leaders who partnered with us to develop this new strategic direction and we are thrilled to begin implementation,” said Jennifer Roller, president of the Wean Foundation. “With its sharp focus on outcomes that strengthen community connections, equity and inclusion, learning and capacity building, we believe this plan will be a powerful guidepost for the Foundation for the next four years.”

As part of the Strategic Direction plan implementation, Wean developed a community survey to gather input from community stakeholders and resident groups about pressing challenges and ideas for how to positively impact Warren and Youngstown.

The feedback, still being gathered, will continue to inform grantmaking, capacity building, and convening and partnerships within Wean’s priorities of community revitalization, economic opportunity, educational opportunity and public sector leadership.

Emerging Leaders InterMISSION program launches to support alumni
The Wean Foundation is launching Emerging Leaders InterMISSION, a year-long program to support alumni of its Emerging Leaders Program with personal and professional development and reflection. The Emerging Leaders Program started in 2013 and, to date, has cultivated 21st century leadership skills and fostered the radical imaginations of 75 aspiring community leaders. A new cohort of leaders will begin in the fall of 2020.

Emerging Leaders InterMISSION will provide a space for alumni of the Leaders Program to activate their talent, wisdom and passion to produce authentic, lasting change in the Valley. The alumni program is a strategic effort to uphold the Foundation’s commitment to the long-term investment of strong community leadership development.

‘The Raymond John Wean Foundation Park’ hosts concerts, special events for Mahoning Valley residents downtown

In the heart of downtown Youngstown, the once industrialized area that now surrounds the Huntington Bank Community Alley and the Youngstown Foundation Amphitheatre, has been repurposed and named ‘The Raymond John Wean Foundation Park.’

As part of a 15-year agreement, the Wean Foundation will contribute almost $2 million in annual contributions of $125,000, to support the 20-acre park alongside the Mahoning River. The investment aligns with the Wean Foundation’s long-followed practice of supporting initiatives that strengthen community through engaging residents.

Concerts, festivals and special events, like movie screenings, are expected offerings slated for 2020. The Wean Park is a bright spot within the community that continues to support the Foundation’s revitalization efforts for all Valley residents. To learn more: https://weanpark.com.
(June 21, 2019, Warren, Ohio) – At its June Board of Directors meeting, The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded The Ohio Transformation Fund (OTF) a multi-year grant in support of its work to address the impact of mass criminalization and incarceration in Ohio’s communities. OTF efforts include community organizing, policy advocacy and civic engagement programs designed to change the state’s justice system from one of mass jailing, particularly of young people and people of color, to one based on stable families, economic security and access to health care and education.

OTF, its partners and grantees tackle tough issues like bail reform, law enforcement accountability and the school to prison pipeline. Through grants, capacity building and technical assistance, OTF supports the development and empowerment of grassroots organizations representing traditionally impacted individuals and families.

“Our theory of change is that, whereas each of these areas is important and necessary, none on its own can create sustainable, statewide change,” says OTF executive director Judy Wright.

Multiple Ohio-based and national funders, along with the Wean Foundation, understand that maximizing connections and aligning funder dollars is a model stronger than each responding individually to the opportunities and challenges of political and social activism around criminal justice, equity
Supporting the development of local civic engagement, the Wean Foundation awarded additional funding for OTF’s Leadership NOW: Ohio, an eight-month cross-sector fellowship program for emerging social change leaders developed through a partnership with Rockwood Leadership Institute. Of the 24 state-wide participants that make up the 2019 cohort, a robust representation from the Mahoning Valley includes four Wean Foundation Emerging Leaders Program alumni: Dionne Dowdy, United Returning Citizens (’18), Keland Logan, The Colony Youngstown (’17), Miles Johnson, Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (’16) and Chris Tennant, Thrive Mahoning Valley (’17).

These changemakers will seek to develop leadership practices that build the long-term civic capacity and fostering the cross-sector relationships necessary to achieve systemic, transformational change in Ohio.

“I look forward to participating in the cohort to expand on what I learned from the Emerging Leaders Program, specifically growing my ability to inspire and align individuals and groups. Participating will challenge me to better manage my relationships and increase personal and organizational effectiveness,” shared Tennant.

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**Wean Foundation Announces New Staff Member**

*(May 10, 2019, Warren, Ohio) –* The Raymond John Wean Foundation is pleased to announce Korey Gall as its new capacity building officer. In this role, Gall will implement
the Foundation’s Capacity Building Program strategies which include its Capacity Building Fund; Race Equity and Inclusion Initiatives; and Capacity Building Events.

Prior to joining the Wean Foundation, Korey served as housing associate for Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership where he supported residents in new homeowner acquisition and renovations work in coordination with the Trumbull County Land Bank. Additionally, he served as a representative for both organizations in governmental affairs and inter-organizational collaborative projects. As the 2018 recipient of the Ohio Community Development Corporation Association’s Ned D. Neuhausel Award, Korey was recognized for his innovative and inclusive work, promoting and creating affordable housing for Trumbull County residents.

Outside of his professional life, Korey is a member of the 2018 Emerging Leaders Cohort, a program of The Raymond John Wean Foundation designed to leverage the assets of upcoming leaders and create pathways to decision-making tables. Past community service roles included secretary, The Trumbull County Historical Society and advisory committee member, City Club of the Mahoning Valley.

A life-long resident of Warren, Ohio, Gall is an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology.

Wean Foundation Announces Community Investment Grants

(Warren, March 20, 2019) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation Board of Directors held
their first quarterly meeting of the year on Tuesday, March 6. Community Investment grants totaling $226,383 were awarded to four organizations for integrated, equitable solutions aligned with the Foundation’s four strategic priorities of community revitalization, economic opportunity, educational opportunity and public sector leadership.
Grantees include:

**Trumbull County Historical Society**, Voices Oral History Project – Designed to add a depth of understanding to Warren’s historical record, this project will engage residents from the Southeast Side, Southwest Side, Quinby Park and the North End in unearthing facts and sharing memories experienced in their neighborhoods. The resulting collection and archival of artifacts and the creation of an electronic oral history map will be used to educate diverse regional communities about the people and events that have shaped Warren’s rich history. For more information, contact Meghan Reed, Executive Director at 330.394.4653.

**Fund for Our Economic Future**, Choose Extraordinary: Advancing Growth & Opportunity in Northeast Ohio – The Fund, an alliance of funders, works to provide economic growth and equitable opportunity to job creation, job preparation and job access for Northeast Ohio residents. Their three-year goals include defining and maintaining a regional growth and opportunity agenda; empowering a leadership network; and pooling resources to drive innovations. The Fund’s 2018 report, The Two Tomorrows, outlines an approach to advance the
economy and brings attention to the racial disparities that exist, calling for a new definition of success that includes the elimination of those disparities. To read the full report visit http://www.thefundneo.org/our-research/two-tomorrows.

National Inventors Hall of Fame (NIHF), Invention Project – Programming designed to engage 50 Warren and Youngstown City School District middle school students in real-world challenges in which they leverage their understanding of economics and gain an entrepreneurial introduction to the business of innovation, from prototype to product launch. Through high-energy, hands-on activities, the program empowers participants to turn ideas into inventions and find out how to bring those inventions to market. The NIHF approach recognizes inventors and invention, infuses their stories, insights and passion into STEM education programs and provides authentic, impactful experiences that help tomorrow’s innovators realize their potential. Learn more at https://www.invent.org/.

Rockwood Leadership, Leadership Now: Ohio – This cross-sector fellowship program convenes “key influencers and those poised to be key influencers” from across Ohio to build sustainability, bolster personal ecology and create cross-sector alliances. The deliberate inclusion of leaders from the Mahoning Valley will provide opportunities for collective thinking about building strong movements at home and across the state, ultimately translating to an increased capacity for Ohio to create change at the local, state and national level. Recognizing that diversity is a strength and strategy for powerful and creative leadership,
Rockwood is the nation’s largest provider of social impact leadership training committed to serving and connecting leaders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, sectors and issue areas.

Other grants awarded include:

- Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley, Healthy Community Partnership – Mahoning Valley Program
- Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership, Health and Wellness of the Residents Project
- Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, Health and Wellness of the Residents Project

2019 Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants Announced for Warren and Youngstown Grassroots Groups

(Feb. 15, 2019, Warren, Ohio) – Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants, a program of The Raymond John Wean Foundation, awarded 23 resident-led organizations a total of $94,416 in support of projects improving the quality of life in Warren and Youngstown neighborhoods.

Central to the Foundation’s work is the belief that resident engagement is essential for authentic lasting change to occur in our communities. Through the Neighborhood SUCCESS Grant
program annual grants of $500 to $5,000 are awarded to community groups, block watches and neighborhood associations for projects addressing the Foundation’s strategic priorities of community revitalization, economic opportunity, educational opportunity and public service leadership.

“Strong, thriving neighborhoods are made up of passionate and resourced residents. Here in the Mahoning Valley, our neighborhoods are the backbone of our Valley’s health, vibrancy and future,” said Corrie Adams, program officer for the Foundation. “Our neighborhood leaders are improving public spaces and bringing residents together in innovative ways, so it’s an honor to partner with them in the work they do.”

Through orientation, technical assistance workshops and the review of an online application, the program’s Resident Council, Warren and Youngstown community members, learned about many meaningful community development projects and the dedicated people who lead them. The Council’s consideration for funding were for those projects most closely aligned with the program’s goals of resident engagement, collaboration and building on the valuable resources that exist in neighborhoods.

Among the 2019 grantees are Hunger Helpers, a group of Warren students seeking to promote healthy lifestyles with neighborhood residents by sharing fresh produce and offering nutrition and cooking classes. In Youngstown, Handel’s Neighborhood Association will be conducting a neighborhood branding and storytelling campaign as well as providing aesthetic improvements to their community spaces. Other projects funded range from gardening and park beautification to art installations, historic neighborhood tours, and self-empowerment workshops for women.

Since 2008 Neighborhood SUCCESS has awarded nearly $1.7 million to more than 508 projects in the Mahoning Valley.
## 2019 Neighborhood SUCCESS Grant Awards

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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
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<td>Handels Neighborhood Association</td>
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<td>Martin Luther Lutheran Church</td>
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<td>Mount Hope Veterans Memorial Park</td>
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<td>Northeast Homeowners and Concerned Citizens Association</td>
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<td>Oakhill Neighborhood Association</td>
<td>Oakhill Neighborhood Walking Trail and Beautification Project</td>
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<td>Quilts from the Heart</td>
<td>Quilts From the Heart</td>
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<td>Rocky Ridge Neighborhood Association</td>
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<td>SID Neighborhood Association</td>
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<td>Stop One Place Help is Available, Inc.</td>
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<td>SWAG Sisters</td>
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<td>T.N.R. of Warren, Inc.</td>
<td>The Humane Solution Trap, Neuter and Release</td>
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<td>The Loop Group</td>
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<td>The Upton Association</td>
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<td>Urban Farm Cooperative</td>
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<td>YSUscape</td>
<td>Made By Youngstown For Youngstown: A Year of Public Art</td>
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**Wean Foundation Fourth Quarter Activities Announced**

(Warren, December 10, 2018) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation Board of Directors held their final quarterly meeting of the year on Tuesday, December 4. Grants totaling $79,838 were awarded to two Valley organizations strengthening leadership development and increasing civic engagement.
December Grantees are:

**Youngstown State University, Center for Nonprofit Leadership** – In support of its Nonprofit Leadership Summer Honors Internship Program which connects regional nonprofit and public sector organizations with talented YSU students to increase their nonprofit skills and marketability. The 10 interns, undergraduate and graduate, represent various disciplines and majors. This year, perspectives from the University’s multicultural student affairs department and various other organizations, which have demonstrated an interest in and commitment to diversity, will be integrated. Contact Professor Laura Dewberry, Center Director, at LJDeCBerry@ysu.edu for more information.

**City Club of the Mahoning Valley** – In support of its second year of programming dedicated to citizen-centric forums designed to “inform, connect and motivate citizens to take action on issues relevant to our region and beyond.” The annual calendar of events utilizes venues, panelists and moderators that resonate with and represent the diversity of Warren and Youngstown residents. Much of the project director’s work in 2019 will be working with a local advisory committee and City Club of Cleveland to build a stronger, more impactful program for the Valley. To learn more, contact Lynn Bilal, CCMV Project Director, at 330.507.3769.

Along with grantmaking, strategic planning has been a primary focus of the Foundation. Informed by 18 months of reflection and learning, including input from nearly 200 residents, grantees and community stakeholders, the Board of Directors
approved its Strategic Direction: 2019 – 2023, a plan designed to provide a framework for the Foundation’s work over the next five years.

Set to launch this January, the plan maps out strategies and key activities to honor the Foundation’s commitment to high-quality grantmaking; strengthening nonprofit organizational capacity; and ensuring the meaningful involvement of residents and organizations in community-building. The Foundation will execute these strategies, appropriate for achieving its vision and mission, through a lens of race, equity and inclusion.

Funding Opportunity through Foundation’s Grassroots Grant Program: Orientations Begin October 22

(September 25, 2018, Warren, Ohio) – Neighborhood SUCCESS, a program of The Raymond John Wean Foundation that supports grassroots groups, is celebrating 10 years of investing just north of $1.6 million in 485 resident-led projects improving the quality of life in neighborhoods across Warren and Youngstown.

Over the past decade, significant accomplishments have been made by the Neighborhood SUCCESS grantee organizations — and the opportunity to do more awaits. Up to 30 of the most
promising projects that align with the Foundation’s values and strategic priorities will be awarded grants of $500 to $5,000 in January of 2019. Projects must focus on developing resident leadership, promoting collaboration and building upon existing resources in the community.

To be eligible to apply, grantseekers must attend one of the seven orientations held in various locations in Warren and Youngstown. The sessions, held October through December, provide grantseekers with application guidelines, financial requirements and opportunities to network with peers.

A unique aspect of the grant program is its Resident Council; members review applications, meet with grantseekers and make the final funding decisions for the projects they want to see in their neighborhoods. To learn more about the program, eligibility and orientation registration visit www.rjweanfdn.org.

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Wean Foundation Announces Third Quarter Rich With Action

(Warren, September 14, 2018) — In a third quarter marked by a flurry of activity, The Raymond John Wean Foundation is sharing several exciting updates that include Community Investment awards, ongoing resident engagement in the Mahoning Valley and an expanded staff.

At its September Board of Directors meeting, Economic Action Group (EAG) was awarded funding in support of its commercial property revitalization work. EAG’s mission is to provide
equitable access to economic support services for public, private and nonprofit stakeholders to continue revitalization and investment in downtown Youngstown.

This Fall marks the 10-year anniversary of the Foundation’s successful, resident-driven Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants Program. Developed to improve the quality of life in Warren and Youngstown neighborhoods, grants of $500 to $5000 have been made to 485 resident-led projects representing a decade of investment totaling more than $1.6 million.

“Becoming a viable and credible resource to the community goes beyond grant disbursements. It’s evident that the credit goes to our neighborhood leadership,” said Wean Foundation President Jennifer Roller. “The program’s grantees represent 236 organizations developing resident leadership, promoting collaboration and building upon existing community resources.”

Additionally, the Foundation’s Emerging Leaders Program will launch its 2018 sessions with an opening retreat this weekend. This class of emerging community leaders will participate in a three-month program designed to cultivate leadership and foster radical imagination, building their capacity for realized change. Participants represent a broad range of Mahoning Valley organizations, including The Links, Inc., Trumbull County Land Bank, United Returning Citizens, Youngstown Areas Goodwill Industries and Inspiring Minds Warren.

Since 2013, the Emerging Leaders Program has developed the unique potential of 61 resident leaders. Past participants continue to collaborate through an alumni association; additional training; civic engagement and volunteerism; public leadership appointments; and entrepreneurial endeavors.

The Wean Foundation is also pleased to announce a new staff addition, Tiara Williams. Serving as Program Associate beginning mid-September, Williams joins the Foundation after
working most recently with Inspiring Minds Youngstown. Her focus will be supporting the health and vitality of the Foundation’s capacity building initiatives, its various grant programs and administration. Williams is a graduate of Youngstown State University where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 2018.