Wean Foundation Announces $345,000 in Grants to Support Warren and Youngstown Communities

(Sept. 7, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation, at its September Board of Directors meeting, awarded Community Investment grants totaling $345,000 to four grantees whose work is representative of the Foundation’s strategic priorities.

Grants from the Foundation’s responsive portfolio were made to:

Fresh Coast Communities for its Youngstown Green Infrastructure Community Education Program. Fresh Coast Communities is a nonprofit invested in redeveloping vacant and underutilized urban land to support neighborhood revitalization. Partnering with Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation and The Colony, the program will create a community education task force comprised of neighborhood leaders, trained in Green Infrastructure principles. The task force will, through public meetings, inform and educate residents, empowering them to exercise their voice in future infrastructure plans.

Mahoning Valley Manufacturers’ Foundation for Manufacturing Readiness 2.0, a two-year program that uses targeted recruitment and screening, job readiness training, technical training, supportive services, job placement and post-employment coaching for adults interested in entering the manufacturing industry. Manufacturing Readiness 2.0, with an emphasis on place-based hiring, expands the work of the initial Manufacturing Readiness program that has been in place
since 2013.

**REVITALIZE Home Mortgage** in support of its REVITALIZE Home Mortgage Loan Fund. This investment will leverage other community resources in a regional effort to provide a two-county lending model for first-time homebuyers who are unable to access conventional banking products. Loans will be focused on homes identified and rehabilitated by Warren’s Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership and Youngstown’s YNDC in support of neighborhood revitalization efforts across the Mahoning Valley.

**The City Club of Cleveland** to support the growth and sustainability of the City Club of the Mahoning Valley. The City Club of the Mahoning Valley’s mission is to “inform, connect, and motivate citizens to take action on issues relevant to our region and beyond.” Building on three 2016 pilot events in the Valley, all highly regarded and well-attended, operational support will develop 2017 programming and marketing strategies as well as establish a membership base.

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**Mahoning Valley Residents Named as Wean Foundation’s 2017 Emerging Leaders Cohort**

*(Warren, August 31, 2017) –* After a competitive application process, the Emerging Leaders Selection Committee has chosen 15 engaged residents from Warren and Youngstown for the 2017 Emerging Leaders program at The Raymond John Wean Foundation.
This group of grassroots leaders will take part in a nine-week series of comprehensive workshops designed to cultivate fundamental leadership skills, as well as connect individuals to key community peers and stakeholders.

“The Emerging Leaders program exemplifies the Foundation’s belief that meaningful resident engagement is essential for authentic, lasting change to occur,” said Corrie Adams, Program Officer. “Emerging Leaders, by activating their gifts and passions create a community of learning, inquiry and practice and push the needle toward a more equitable, vibrant and healthy Mahoning Valley.”

This year’s cohort includes individuals representing a wide range of organizations, including Taft Promise Neighborhood, Congressman Tim Ryan’s office, The Colony, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, and YouthBuild Trumbull County to name a few. Coming together from across the Mahoning Valley, these passionate individuals share a common goal of building their capacity for realized change.

When asked what motivated his participation in Emerging Leaders, Christopher Tennant of Youngstown shared, “My goal is to give back to the community that made me who I am. That requires me to develop and enhance my leadership potential and I’m excited to do so through this program.”

Tia Toles, one of this year’s participants and a current student at Kent State University, recognizes the value of learning new approaches to her leadership. “I believe this
program will provide me with valuable knowledge to be an effective leader in my community,” Toles said. “Being exposed to people who have been successful in their own efforts and gleaning from their experience will help me to be successful as well.”

After a two-day retreat focused on self-awareness and team building, participants engage in immersion sessions and workshops facilitated by expert practitioners covering topics such as communication and negotiation, influence, collaborative leadership, Asset-Based Community Development, resource planning and resilience.

Since 2013, the Emerging Leaders program has developed the unique potential of nearly 50 resident leaders effecting change and influencing leadership in their communities. Past participants continue to gain and share their experience through an alumni association; additional training; civic engagement and volunteerism; public leadership appointments; job promotions; and entrepreneurial endeavors.

The Raymond John Wean Foundation is proud to announce the 2017 Emerging Leaders:

Daniel Bancroft, Youngstown
Cassandra Clevenger, Warren
Michelle Comanescu, Warren
Ira Cross, Youngstown
Mitchell Franko, Youngstown
Wean Foundation Approves Nearly $200,000 in Grants at Summer Meeting

(June 8, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded grants totaling $193,000 at its June Board of Directors meeting. Each project represented in this quarter’s funding demonstrates the Foundation’s mission of leveraging a powerful combination of support, alignment and partnerships with other organizations to advance community-building in the Mahoning Valley.

Grants from the Foundation’s responsive portfolio are:

In support of We Are Warren, an initiative that seeks to
bolster existing programming and better utilize community resources to ensure that Warren’s youth live safe, healthy, productive lives, Inspiring Minds and the Eastern Ohio Education Partnership were awarded funding. Inspiring Minds for Warren City School student’s participation in its six-week summer enrichment program in addition to the 2017-18 academic year component and Eastern Ohio Education Partnership for continued professional development for youth services program providers and educators.

The Ohio Transformation Fund (OTF) for its work to address the impact of mass criminalization and incarceration in Ohio’s communities. Matching funding from the Ford Foundation, the Wean Foundation, along with its Ohio partners, support on-the-ground work in community organizing, policy advocacy and civic engagement programs. The partners of the collaboration understand that maximizing connections and aligning funder dollars is a model stronger than funders responding individually.

“Funding from OTF has allowed our advocacy power to grow exponentially. In partnership with other OTF grantees, we’ve engaged in powerful intra-state connections, leveraged lobbying efforts and gained increased recognition and voice in the statehouse,” said Stephen JohnsonGrove, senior attorney, Ohio Justice and Policy Center. “This high-level access is vital to directly impacting communities through street-level, power-building organizations and people. This is an electrifying experience for OJPC and all our partners.”

In further partnership with the OTF, the Joyce Foundation and other Ohio funders, the Rockwood Leadership Institute, will roll out an Ohio-based fellowship. The Leadership Now: Ohio project will focus on building the capacity of social change leaders. Twenty-four Ohioans from multiple sectors, including several from the Valley, will convene and collaborate at three multi-day retreats infused with Ohio-specific workshops, network mapping and individual leadership coaching sessions to
equip these leaders for Ohio’s critical role in local and national issues.

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The Raymond John Wean Foundation Selected for Dynamic Equity-Building Training

(March 17, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation, one of 12 organizations selected from across the county, will participate in The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Investing for Results, a leadership development program dedicated to closing racial disparities by giving funders the framework needed to guide their grantmaking, grantees and partners toward results-oriented and highly collaborative strategies.

Jennifer Roller, president; Corrie Adams, program officer; and Lori Wiebe, administrative and capacity building officer will attend three two-day sessions, focusing on key competencies including data-driven decision making; advancing racial equity and opportunity; developing adaptive leadership skills; and working in collaborative partnerships.

“The racial equity component of this program will complement our 2017 partnership with Cleveland Neighborhood Progress to provide community stakeholders with Race, Equity and Inclusion
(REI) training opportunities designed to increase a shared understanding of inequality through a fact-based introduction to historical, institutional and systemic racism,” shared Wiebe. “These sessions and the learning from the Annie E. Casey program, are important steps towards creating a more equitable society in northeastern Ohio.” For those interested in upcoming REI trainings in our area, visit www.rjweanfdn.org.

Over the past 20 years, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has helped hundreds of leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors accelerate results for children and families through its signature results-based leadership development approach. This work develops the strongest, most diverse talent and equips leaders to achieve better results so kids, families and communities thrive.

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About The Raymond John Wean Foundation

www.rjweanfdn.org

Raymond John Wean, after having achieved success in the flat-rolled steel processing industry, in 1949 created the Foundation that bears his name in Warren. Since then, more than $100 million in grants have been awarded to a broad variety of nonprofit organizations in support of its vision to empower residents to create a healthy, vibrant, equitable and economically stable Mahoning Valley. To achieve greater impact, the Foundation leverages a powerful combination of support, alignment and partnerships among programs, organizations and efforts in the strategic priorities of
Wean Foundation Announces Community Investment Grants; Over $100,000 Awarded

(March 3, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded grants totaling $103,000 at its March Board of Directors meeting. In addition to aligning with the Foundation’s strategic priorities of economic opportunity and educational opportunity, those funded this quarter demonstrated a keen ability to leverage local, regional and state dollars.

“The Foundation’s support of these organizations will equip some of the most vulnerable, within our population, with the skills, tools and resources necessary to make positive, lasting change,” said Jennifer Roller, president of The Raymond John Wean Foundation.

Grants were made to the following organizations:

Empowering and Strengthening Ohio’s People (ESOP) for its Senior Financial Empowerment Initiative, which provides services and evidence-based programming to increase the financial stability of Ohio’s aging population. The initiative provides assessments, financial education and counseling to
strengthen senior citizens’ ability to age in place with financial security.

The National Inventors Hall of Fame for its Invention Project Middle School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Program for Mahoning County Youth. Through this program, Chaney VPA and STEM Campus students will attend a week of intensive programming that blends STEM education with business and entrepreneurial skills. Created with the next generation of innovators in mind, students will be challenged to create inventions while considering the business, economic and marketing aspects of product development.

The Youngstown Business Incubator for Women in Entrepreneurship (WE), which creates economic opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged women through education, training, mentoring and networking opportunities. WE equips women seeking guidance and support in starting, developing or growing women-owned businesses in the Mahoning Valley.

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Wean Foundation Awards Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants to 30 Warren and Youngstown Grassroots Groups

(Feb. 23, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded $98,988 to 30 resident-led organizations seeking to transform their neighborhoods and communities, the Foundation announced Thursday.

The funds were awarded as part of Neighborhood SUCCESS, a program of the Foundation which supports grassroots organizations seeking to develop resident participation and leadership, promote communication and collaboration among residents and build on existing resources in the community.
Neighborhood SUCCESS provides annual grants of $500 to $5,000 to projects aligned with the Foundation’s strategic priorities of community revitalization, economic opportunity, educational opportunity and public service leadership.

“Neighborhood SUCCESS grantees are driving positive change in Warren and Youngstown. The projects engage residents in creating and implementing real solutions for their neighborhoods and develop leadership skills and expand capacity within their groups.” said Corrie Adams, program officer for the Foundation.

Organizations seeking grants participate in a process that includes an orientation, technical assistance workshops, and interviews. Funding decisions are made by a council composed of residents from Warren and Youngstown. Those seeking grants must match the amount they are seeking with volunteer labor, cash and in-kind donations.

Among the 2017 grantees is the Urban Farm Cooperative in Warren. The project will create viable agricultural co-ops for farmers to explore crops and services that increase economic opportunity for those with disabilities. These opportunities will serve a dual purpose for participants by increasing independence and providing a more intensely developed skill set.

In Youngstown, YSUScape seeks to engage local artists and students in creating murals at designated public art sites across the city. The project will include five to ten art installations in downtown Youngstown in an effort to promote a
more vibrant, artistic community in highly trafficked areas.

Since 2008 Neighborhood SUCCESS has granted just north of $1.5 million to more than 450 projects in the Mahoning Valley.

The Raymond John Wean Foundation

2017 Neighborhood SUCCESS Grant Awards

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The Raymond John Wean Foundation is Excited to Announce Corrie Adams as its New Program Officer

(January 30, 2017, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation is excited to announce Corrie Adams as its new program officer.

“Across our community, residents, neighborhood groups and nonprofits are engaged in meaningful, impactful work that inspires and motivates me,” said Adams. “My role is to listen to and learn from those who are doing the work, and to serve as a resource, connector, catalyst and adviser as they lead initiatives that align with the Foundation’s strategic priorities.”

Adams will direct the strategy and implementation of the Foundation’s Community Investment and Neighborhood SUCCESS Grant programs. With a strong background in organizational leadership, she will also manage its Emerging Leaders program. She will focus on strengthening and coordinating communication between those utilizing the programs to continue cultivating strong, sustainable leadership in the Mahoning Valley.

Adams has served in several roles with the Foundation, most recently as emerging leader liaison. Her responsibilities included providing leadership development for alumni of the Emerging Leaders program and working with individuals to
attain their leadership goals. Adams, who begins her new role Feb. 1, also worked for the Foundation as program associate, and was responsible for grassroots grant administration and technical assistance to residents and community partners. Prior to that, she worked for several years with various nonprofit organizations in the Mahoning Valley. Her focus was on youth leadership, work force development, civic engagement and fund development.

Adams holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Hiram College and a master’s degree in organizational leadership from Geneva College.

Other staff changes, effective March 1:

Jessica King, former administrative and capacity building assistant will be promoted to administrative and facilities manager. As the first point of contact, she is responsible for coordinating daily operations including facilities, website, social media and vendor services.

King holds a bachelor’s degree in communication studies from Youngstown State University.

In an expanded role, Nan Wilkoff, former business and grants assistant, will now serve as program associate. In addition to communicating with grantseekers and grantees regarding Foundation programs, Nan will monitor the progress of existing grantee partners and provide opportunities for engagement and learning.

Wilkoff holds a bachelor’s degree in tourism and hospitality from Rajamangala University of Technology.

“We are committed to empowering residents to create a healthy, vibrant and equitable Mahoning Valley,” says Jennifer Roller, president. “As staff, our goal is to execute this mission with excellence. I am confident that these folks, along with our existing team, will do just that.”
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Wean Foundation Announces Fourth Quarter Grants; Over $900,000 Awarded to Mahoning
Valley Organizations

(December 9, 2016 Warren, Ohio) – At its December board meeting, The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded grants totaling $900,152 making this the Foundation’s largest grantmaking quarter of the year. The work represented by the five grantees represents community revitalization, access to educational opportunities and the creation of economic opportunity in the Mahoning Valley.

Grants from the Foundation’s responsive portfolio were made to:

Strategic partners, Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) and Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (TNP), for their continued work to collectively catalyze change, leverage opportunities and encourage, support and nurture resident engagement.

“Our strategic partners are playing an increasingly and equally important role in community revitalization; their work being recognized with national grants and honors in 2016. They have provided voice to residents and leaders throughout the Valley,” said Jennifer Roller, president of The Raymond John Wean Foundation. “We are excited for the coming year and the various collaborations and community-building initiatives that our partners will launch.”

Mahoning Valley College Access Program (MVCAP) for collaborative programming that increases college access through admission and financial aid advising and college persistence, with an emphasis on Warren and Youngstown City Schools.

Youngstown State University, Center for Nonprofit Leadership for the 2017 Nonprofit Leadership Summer Honors Internship Program, an effort that continues the tradition of connecting regional nonprofit and public sector organizations with
valuable and talented students, allowing opportunities to increase nonprofit skills and marketability.

**Economic Action Group** (EAG) to fill resource and skill gaps necessary to build on the City of Youngstown’s current momentum toward sustainable community and economic development.

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**Interested in Grassroots Grant Opportunities? Attend a Neighborhood SUCCESS Grantseeker Orientation**

*(October 14, 2016, Warren, Ohio)* – Neighborhood SUCCESS, a program of The Raymond John Wean Foundation, supports grassroots groups in the development and implementation of community development projects that enhance the quality of life in Warren and Youngstown, Ohio.

The goals of Neighborhood SUCCESS are to:

- Expand meaningful resident engagement and leadership
- Encourage communication and collaboration among residents and organizations
- Build on the financial, human and material resources that exist in the community
- Enhance neighborhoods – physically, socially or economically

Grants of $500 to $5,000 are awarded to develop and implement
resident-driven projects that align with the Foundation’s strategic priorities of: community revitalization, economic opportunity, educational opportunity, including early childhood (0-5) and public service leadership. A maximum of 30 projects will be funded each year. Since 2008, the program has awarded nearly 1.3 million dollars to over 400 projects.

Grantseekers must attend one of seven orientations to be eligible to apply for funding. Scheduled from October to December, and held in various Warren and Youngstown locations, these sessions support potential grantees in the application process and provide the opportunity to connect with Foundation staff and community peer groups.

Visit the Calendar of Events page at www.rjweanfdn.org to register.

Collaboration the Theme of Grants Awarded at September Meeting

(September 8, 2016, Warren, Ohio) – The Raymond John Wean Foundation approved grants totaling $110,000 at its September meeting to Mahoning Valley organizations committed to its strategic priorities of economic opportunity and educational opportunity, including early childhood (0 – 5).
The Turning Foundation was awarded $60,000 over two years to expand its Innovative Teacher Mini Grant program. Offered for the past six years, the program focuses on supporting classroom teachers in four counties (Ashtabula, Columbiana, Trumbull and Mahoning) and targets innovative and creative classroom practices that support 21st Century classrooms bringing real world learning directly to students.

“We get to witness dreams and visionary ideas come to life by giving teachers the opportunity to explore and share ‘outside the box’ classroom designs,” stated John Wilson, director of the Turning Foundation.

“Combining the Innovative Teacher Mini Grants and Neighborhood SUCCESS School Grants is about combining better practices – fostering leadership development and promoting innovation and collaboration – all elements essential to achieving maximum student impact and success,” said Jennifer Roller, president of The Raymond John Wean Foundation.

The Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition received an award of $50,000. “We are grateful for support from The Raymond John Wean Foundation for the ongoing implementation of WorkAdvance in the Mahoning Valley,” said Rebecca Kusner, director of strategic planning and policy, New Growth Group. “This support will assure individuals receive a comprehensive set of services enabling their placement and advancement in an in-demand career and that businesses access talent they need through a collaboration with the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition and Compass Family & Community Services.”

The Raymond John Wean Foundation is accepting Letters of Inquiry (LOI) for its next round of Community Investment Grants to empower residents creating a healthy, vibrant, equitable and economically stable Mahoning Valley. LOI Submission deadline is December 1, 2016.

September 2016 Grant Awards