The Raymond John Wean Foundation Awards Nearly $1.5 Million in Grant; Revitalization, Economic and Educational Opportunities are Focus Areas

(Warren, December 3, 2015) – The board of directors of The Raymond John Wean Foundation awarded grants totaling nearly $1.5 million for organizations that are creating economic opportunities for residents, enhancing educational resources and revitalizing the Mahoning Valley.

The awards include $20,000 to the Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI) for the development of its Women in Entrepreneurship program designed to support the unique issues women entrepreneurs throughout the Mahoning Valley face in starting and growing a business. According to the Small Business Administration, Ohio’s percentage of women-owned businesses is at 27.7 percent and minority owned businesses is at 9.2 percent.

“Building on YBI’s tradition of promoting and cultivating entrepreneurship in the Valley, we believe that this program will bolster women’s potential to achieve their business goals by providing them with personal and professional networking opportunities and accessible, affordable knowledge and skills,” said Jennifer Roller, president of The Raymond John Wean Foundation. “We look forward to hearing about women-owned breakout success stories.”

The Wean directors also awarded $150,000 to Policy Matters Ohio, an organization striving to create a fair economy,
sustainable communities and pathways out of poverty.

Policy Matters’ two-year program in the Mahoning Valley, “Pathways Out of Poverty,” seeks greater access to childcare assistance; advocates for stronger state and federal earned income tax credits and financial aid and college access for low-income students; and continues its longtime work around such issues as predatory lending, including payday loans.

“At Policy Matters, we’ve been fighting for a decade and a half for good jobs and good wages and a strong public sector that can meet the needs of everyone in Ohio,” states Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters Ohio. She went on to express enthusiasm in deepening her organization’s partnership with The Raymond John Wean Foundation and the Mahoning Valley.

Representing the Foundation’s ongoing commitment to its “Strategic Partners” is the 2016 funding of nearly $1.1 million collectively to Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership and Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative. The partnership seeks to collectively build capacity to provide voice to residents and leaders throughout the Valley.

Matt Martin, executive director of Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership, said the Wean Foundation deserves credit for developing the strategy that created the three organizations dedicated to improving life in the Mahoning Valley. “They conceived the strategy almost a decade ago and they’re sticking to it,” Martin said. “That’s commendable.”

Martin said Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership, which turned 5 years old earlier this week, has an active slate of programs that involve everything from affordable home ownership opportunities to public art projects to sentencing alternatives and the tearing down of vacant homes and community volunteerism. “We are bringing back Warren and its
neighborhoods. We could do one of these things but not all of them. We can do all of them courtesy of The Raymond John Wean Foundation.”

Other Grant Recipients:

YWCA of Warren was awarded $195,000 for a project that will enable Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio’s Trumbull County Health Center to relocate to the YWCA facility in Warren. Considering the high rate of poverty among female-headed households, lack of health insurance among residents and minimal public transportation, having local access to women’s health care can make a difference to those who need it most.

YWCA of Youngstown was awarded a grant of $32,000 to lead a three-year project to provide supportive services for Mahoning Valley early childhood professionals. YWCA will provide resources, networking and advocacy opportunities.

December 2015 Grant Awards:

Policy Matters Ohio
Pathways Out of Poverty for Mahoning Valley Residents $150,000 over 2 years

Strategic Partnership
Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative up to $350,000
Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation $400,000
Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership $300,000

Youngstown Business Incubator
Women in Entrepreneurship Program $20,000

YWCA Warren
YWCA Warren & Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio: $195,000
A Partnership for Empowering Women

YWCA – Youngstown
Mahoning Valley ECE Professionals $32,000 over 3 years