

PHILANTHROPY SPEAKS

The Newsletter of the Southern Illinois Community Foundation

2nd Quarter 2020

SICF Administers Grants from the 2020 Census, the Illinois State Trust, Marion United, and Southern Illinois Strong

Though we have been practicing social distancing, it's been a very busy season in the SICF office. We started the spring off preparing to administer grant funds promoting the 2020 Census. Soon thereafter, the COVID-19 pandemic began to sweep across the country and shelter-in-place practices were announced by our governor. Many events planned to promote the census then went online or were otherwise recalibrated. Priorities shifted radically to help support individuals, families, and businesses struggling to stay afloat after businesses and schools were closed.



Byram Fager gives a COVID-19 grant check to John Steve of the Herrin House of Hope, which seeks to help the poor in the Herrin, IL area find hope for the future. They provide takeaway meals between 11-1 pm, Monday -Friday.

To meet these new priorities, there were two rounds of state funding for a program called the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund specifically for agencies providing food and shelter to needy individuals and families. The second round direct service providers in healthcare and child safety. CEO Byram Fager and Program Associate Cynthia Roth worked with Toni Hayden of the United Way of Southern Illinois in granting these funds. We also received assistance from Toni Kay Wright of the University of Illinois Extension and Angie Bailey of SIH. 53 organizations throughout Southern Illinois received grants to meet the growing needs in our region during this pandemic.

While that was happening, two businessmen in Marion, IL, Josh Benitone and Jared Gravatt, organized a livestream event to benefit local small businesses in Marion. The event called Marion United raised nearly \$200,000! 111 Marion businesses applied for grants from Marion United and received funds. This was truly an amazing happening for a small town and a great example of people helping one another get through a difficult time.

Then came Southern Illinois Strong, was a grant program and T-shirt campaign presented and organized by State Representatives Terri Bryant, Nathan Reitz, Dave Severin, Patrick Windhorst, and State Senators Dale Fowler and Paul Schimpf in conjunction with the Southern Illinois Community Foundation to support brick and mortar businesses in Southern Illinois. Eighteen businesses received grants by drawing in this campaign.

Scholarships Awarded

Six college scholarship awards were given out in virtual ceremonies to college-bound Southern Illinois high school students in May.

Richard Bartolotti Scholarship was awarded to **Gillian Lemons** of Sesser, IL. Gillian attended Sesser-Valier High School and is heading to the St. Louis School of Pharmacy in the fall.

Merwin and Villa Spenser Scholarship winner is **Grace Barlage** of Murphysboro, IL. Grace attended Murphysboro High School and is heading to Southeast Missouri State University to study animal science.

Tim Herring Scholarship was presented to **Aren Abell**. Aren attended Murphysboro High School and will be studying physiology at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in the fall with the goal of becoming a physician.

George and Goldie Mae Hall Scholarship is **Dillon Banach** of Waltonville High School. Dillon will be attending Rend Lake College in the fall.

Tom Mygatt Scholarship was awarded to **Adyson Erwin** of Sesser-Valier High School, who will attend Southern Illinois University Carbondale this fall and major in Dental Hygiene.

Cliff Stein Scholarship recipient is Murphysboro High School student **Jamarr McZeke**, a basketball standout who is attending college with the goal of becoming an eye doctor.

Wellman and Adeline Kerr Scholarships were won by Jessie Lewis and Kaylee Fraser.

Massac County Academic Award Scholarships were won by **Gracie Stewart, Owen Westbrooks, Dawson Troutman, Madalynn Coakley, Jessie Lewis, Kaylee Fraser, Kalissa Cox, and Anna Thompson**.

Give to the Southern Illinois Covid-19 Community Fund

Food pantries, shelters, and many more organizations across Southern Illinois continue to serve the community during this trying time.

This is an amazing way to make a huge impact in helping families in need right here in Southern Illinois. If you have the means, please consider pledging some or all of your check to the Southern Illinois Covid-19 Community Fund. All donations will stay right here in Southern Illinois, and this fund will swiftly deploy additional financial resources to local nonprofits to support residents in need of:

- Emergency food and basic supplies
- Rent and utility assistance
- Support for children and other vulnerable populations.

Learn More about how you can help and how this fund will be used at:
<https://www.sicf.org/covid-19-community-fund>



SICF Executive Director Byram Fager presenting a COVID-19 grant check to Megan Austin of the Murphysboro Food Pantry, which has been in operation since 1987 and is the fastest growing and largest food pantry in Jackson County, IL.



Social distancing! Tina Carpenter of the Boys & Girls Club of Southern Illinois receives a grant check from Byram Fager. The Boys & Girls Club has been ensuring that youth in our community receive nourishment during this difficult time out of school.



Father Bob Flannery from Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church made the pledge to donate his stimulus check to the [Southern Illinois COVID-19 Community Fund](https://www.sicf.org/covid-19-community-fund).

Nathan Cherry from Victory Dream Center Food Pantry in Carbondale, IL receives a grant check from Byram Fager of SICF. The Victory Dream Center provided 732,606 pounds of food in 2018 to youth, families and individuals suffering from hunger and in a time of transition and need. The center strives to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the Southern Illinois community. Their goal is to Restore Dreams, Renew Hope and Rebuild Lives.

Marion United Grants Over \$190,000 to 111 Local Businesses



Tyler Young of *The Print Shop* and *Pieces of Learning* receives his Marion United grant from SICF Program Associate Cynthia Roth.



Marion United Donor Shad Zimbro of Black Diamond Harley Davidson presents a grant check to Estrella Godinez of *Don Sol*.



Lavish Bath Box also received a Marion United grant and they were one of the merchants featured on the local news.

On April 3, 2020 there was a live stream event held from 6-10 pm at the Marion Civic Center. The event was the creation of two local businessmen: Josh Benitone and Jared Gravatt, who devised this event and made it happen while they were busy starting their own new business in Marion, Crown Brew Coffee Co. But they put that important work aside in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when they realized the established businesses in their city were suffering and struggling. In their own words: “There is an amazing opportunity for the citizens, churches, businesses, and organizations to UNITE and help them through this. MARION UNITED is a collaborative effort to generate grants for local businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Bennies Italian Foods, open for 35 years, catered the livestream event and made sure the inspirational speakers and musical performers did not go hungry. Bennies is open for curbside and delivery only during this shut down.



Jared Gravatt and Josh Benitone created Marion United. They are also entrepreneurs who are building a new business: Crown Brew Coffee Co. in Marion, IL

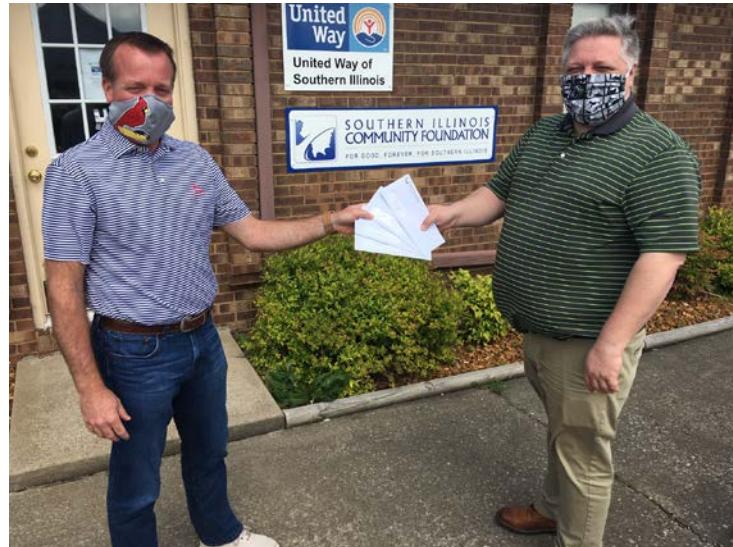


Southern Illinois Strong Granted \$1,500 to 18 Southern Illinois Small Businesses



As the COVID-19 crisis has caused economic hardship to businesses in Southern Illinois and throughout the country, the Southern Illinois state legislative delegation got together in a bipartisan effort to endorse the **Southern Illinois Strong** T-shirt fundraising drive. State Senator Dale Fowler (R-Harrisburg) and State Senator Paul Schimpf (R-Waterloo) joined with State Rep. Terri Bryant, State Rep. Dave Severin, State Rep. Patrick Windhorst, and State Rep. Nathan Reitz to promote and support this campaign.

This bipartisan delegation of legislators supported **Southern Illinois Strong** by sharing information on their respective Facebook pages to raise awareness. Funds raised from T-shirt sales were deposited into an account managed by the Southern Illinois Community Foundation (SICF). Grants were awarded in May to small businesses impacted by the coronavirus outbreak and were awarded by SICF via lottery. Eligible businesses had 25 or fewer employees. The **Southern Illinois Strong** fundraiser ran from Thursday, April 16 through Wednesday, May 6.



Illinois State Representative Nathan Reitz receives grant checks for small businesses in his district from Byram Fager in front of the SICF offices.



Illinois State Representative Terri Bryant receives grant checks for small businesses in her district from SICF Executive Director Byram Fager.



Illinois State Representative Patrick Windhorst receives grant checks for small businesses in his district from Byram Fager.



Byram Fager presents Southern Illinois Strong grant checks to Illinois State Representative Dave Severin for small businesses in his legislative district.



Children at the St. John Praise & Worship Center in Pulaski, IL promoting the 2020 Census. St. John and other organizations across the Southern Illinois counties received grants administered by SICF to promote the 2020 Census in their communities.



Board of Directors:

Margaret Flanagan
President

Kay Weatherford
Vice President

Dan Huffman
Secretary

John Daly
Treasurer

Larry Busch
Raymond Lenzi
Martin Rowe

Staff:

Byram Fager
Executive Director
blfager@sicf.org

Cynthia Roth
Program Associate
cynthiaroth@sicf.org

SICF serves the 17 southernmost counties in Illinois including: Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, Williamson and White.



"Cheerful givers do not count the cost of what they give. Their hearts are set on pleasing and cheering the person to whom the gift is given."

~ Julian of Norwich

If you or someone you know is interested in serving on a SICF committee or the Board of Directors, please contact Byram Fager at blfager@sicf.org or call 618-997-3700.



Southern Illinois Community Foundation
PO Box 1772
Marion, IL 62959
www.sicf.org
618.997.3700

SICF is accredited in compliance with the Council on Foundations National Standards Board for Community Foundations (cof.org), a national professional organization serving the interests of family, corporate, and community foundations worldwide.