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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ANNOUNCES NEW STAFF, BOARD AND EMERITUS MEMBERS, AND POSITIONS**

Sandusky, Ohio, January 26, 2025 — Erie County Community Foundation is pleased to announce the hiring of its new Program Officer, the placement of three new Board of Directors and two new Emeritus members, and updated positions of key Foundation staff.



Erie County Community Foundation's new Program Officer, Heidi Schlesselman comes to the Community Foundation after most recently serving as the Market Manager for BCSN Erie, where she led strategic initiatives to enhance local media presence and community engagement

In Schlesselman's new role at the Community Foundation, she will be responsible for managing and evaluating the Foundation's discretionary grants, Donor Advised Fund grants, and Youth Advisory Council grant programs. She will also oversee the Foundation's scholarships programs, maintaining records on scholarship funds and student recipients in compliance with state, federal and IRS requirements. Schlesselman will serve as liaison to the Erie County Community Foundation Scholarship Committee, high school and college counselors, donors, and students to increase the number of students applying each year for scholarship assistance.

Schlesselman is a graduate of Bowling Green State University with a strong background in Marketing, Media, and Event Planning. She has gained extensive experience working with various media outlets and professional sports teams.

News Release



New Board of Directors member Kate Repola is Executive Director of Main Street Vermilion, where she leads community revitalization efforts, downtown development initiatives, and programs that support local businesses and preserve Vermilion's historic character. A fifth-generation Vermilionite, Kate brings deep local roots and a strong commitment to promoting the community she calls home.

She holds a BA in Journalism from Bowling Green State University with an emphasis in Public Relations and a minor in Political Science. In addition to her work with Main Street Vermilion, Kate serves as Vice President of the Heritage Ohio Main Street Managers Advisory Committee. She also previously served on the Vermilion Parks and Recreation Board, first as a member and later as Chair.

Kate and her husband, Kurt, have two children, Max and Georgia, both attending Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. In her free time, she enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.



New Board of Directors member Matthew Stahl currently serves as the Chief Financial Officer for VacationLand Federal Credit Union headquartered in Sandusky, Ohio. Prior to returning to the region, he worked for KeyBank and Crowe Horwath, where he became a Certified Public Accountant.

Matthew also serves on the board of the Sandusky Central Catholic Schools Foundation and Family Health Services. He earned his master's degree from the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh and his bachelor's degree from the University of Mount Union.



New Board of Directors member Tracey Campbell is the Senior Director of Behavioral Health for Firelands Regional Medical Center. In this role, she oversees the inpatient psychiatric unit and six outpatient offices spanning a 5-county region. Tracey has over 30 years' experience in the Behavioral Health field, which has given her the opportunity to network with a variety of social services systems in Erie and surrounding counties. She has served on numerous committees locally and state-wide.

In 2023, she was invited by the former Director of OhioMHAS to participate in a workgroup reviewing laws pertaining to the powers and duties of mental health boards. In 2024, Tracey was contacted by Clinic-Sync, a state-wide Health Information Exchange, to collaborate on the development of protocols for releasing protected health information. She recently worked directly with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to address issues pertaining to outpatient hospital billing for Behavioral Health services. Tracey is an active member of the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family

News Release

Services Providers and has recently been re-elected to serve her third consecutive term on the Board of Trustees.

Tracey holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from BGSU and a Masters of Education in Community Counseling from the University of Toledo. She is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and holds Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Health Care Certification.

She currently resides in Huron with her husband Michael.



The Community Foundation also announced its new Board Chair, Abbey Bemis. Bemis is the first-ever Chief Operating Officer at Payne Nickles & Company. With an MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and a BA from Denison University, Abbey brings an illustrious career in economic development and strategic oversight, previously serving as the Executive Director for Erie County Economic Development Corporation and Erie County Port Authority.

With a Sandusky residency spanning a decade, Abbey has ingrained herself in the community, enhancing her role as an influential figure in her firm and her region.

“We are thrilled to welcome Heidi, Kate, Matt, Tracey, and Abbey to Erie County Community Foundation,” said Elizabeth Maiden, Community Foundation President & CEO. “They each bring invaluable expertise and passion to our shared mission of enriching the lives of the people of Erie County by addressing community needs, providing leadership, and cultivating resources for a lasting impact. Their impressive skills and dedication will add immeasurable strength to our pursuits.”



Lee Alexakos and Ron Parthemore begin Emeritus status effective immediately. Alexakos is former Chair of the Board of Erie County Community Foundation. With over 40 years of experience at Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, Lee brings extensive expertise in community relations. A lifelong resident of Sandusky, Lee's dedication extends to various boards, reflecting her commitment to the community's well-being. Parthemore is the Immediate Past Board Chair of Erie County Community Foundation. He brings extensive experience from his role as President of Strategic Planning Solutions and Business Manager for Buderer Drug Company. With degrees from

Bowling Green State University and post-graduate studies in Organizational Development, Ron is committed to community leadership.

The Community Foundation is also pleased to announce several promotions among its staff. Beth Maiden to President & CEO; Paul Freeman to Vice President of Development & Marketing, Randy Wagner to Vice President of Finance & Administration, and Pam Provo to Executive Assistant.



About Erie County Community Foundation

Erie County Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to building a thriving and vibrant Erie County, Ohio. The organization, which celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2025, addresses community needs, provides leadership, and cultivates resources for a lasting impact. The organization's primary purpose is to provide a means for people to make permanent gifts of assets to enhance the quality of life in Erie County and Sandusky, Ohio—today, tomorrow, and forever.

Erie County Community Foundation is governed by an independent Board of Directors and Officers, comprised of Erie County business, civic, and non-profit leaders. The Board of Directors employs the Foundation's President & CEO, establishes policies and priorities, and directs final grantmaking decisions. The Board's strength lies in the diverse range of knowledge and expertise of its members, and in their shared commitment to improving the quality of life in Erie County, Ohio.

Since Erie County Community Foundation's founding in 1995, the Foundation has grown from assets totaling \$1.8 million to more than \$52.9 million in 2025. During this time, the Foundation has distributed over \$27 million to area non-profits and students for local projects, programs, scholarships, services, and initiatives to improve the quality of life in Erie County, Ohio.

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