

Munster Education Foundation
2019 – 2020 School Year
Summary Report of Year's Activities

The Munster Education Foundation is comprised of volunteer board members who meet monthly to further the mission of the organization. Each board member is also responsible to serve on at least one committee of the board: Executive, Finance, Fundraising, Governance, Grants, or Marketing. For the 2019-2020 school year we also had the Teacher of Merit Award Committee and several board members also served on the Strategic Task Force for the year.

Executive Committee

Chair: Tricia Shelton

Committee Members : Paul Rotatori, Lynn Eplawy, Ken Schoon and Deb Milne

The executive committee is comprised of the elected officers as well as a board member who has served in the role of president. The executive committee began our work for the year with several summer meetings to discuss budget structure as well as issues that we saw needing attention. We had several goals that we suspected would be addressed during strategic planning and we also discussed the needed diversity that would be needed for the strategic planning committee. We also spent some time editing committee responsibilities and defined roles of each officer. As the year began, we did not maintain regular executive committee meetings but met as different agenda items required our attention between meetings.

Tricia, in her role as President, focused on day to day activities by keeping in touch with committee heads to help move set activities forward, setting monthly agendas and signing off on activities of the treasurer and secretary. She represented MEF at the monthly President's Roundtable with Dr. Hendrix and also addressed the STM Staff at the annual opening day ceremonies as well as served as a member of the Teacher of Merit Awards Committee.

Paul, as Vice President, focused on several special projects throughout the year such as chairing the Strategic Planning Committee, compiling the Teacher Appreciation video and reaching out to administration and school board members on MEFs desire to help with potential needs for virtual learning and diversity education.

Lynn, in her role as treasurer, spent hours each week with collecting our mail, making deposits, paying bills and maintaining our books. She does the same for Teacher of Merit. She chaired the finance committee which provided support as she worked with a tax firm for our 2019 taxes and also has maintained important filings for us such as insurance and our business entity report with the Indiana Secretary of State. Lynn also spent time within the database system as she took on the responsibility of adding new donors into the database.

Ken was timely in providing the executive committee with minutes following each meeting for edits prior to distribution to the rest of the board. Deb was active in executive committee meetings and email discussions as we handled things between meetings. The executive board worked well together and has committed to continue in our roles for a second year as we work to move MEF into new and exciting opportunities.

Respectfully Submitted by Tricia Shelton, June 17, 2020

Finance Committee

Chair: Lynn Eplawy

Committee Members: Nancy Hamblin, Daniel Glavin, Mike Jez, Ann Bochnowski

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the finance committee established the budget for the organization, which was passed at the September 2019 board meeting. The committee presented two budgets for approval: one for the Munster Education Foundation and one for Teacher of Merit. The MEF budget, for the first time, established a marketing budget for the organization at 15% of revenues, in line with our research for other non-profit organizations. The finance committee presented the Form 990 for 2018 in December, which was filed with the IRS and the State of Indiana after approval at the January board meeting. The committee discussed and presented to the board the desire to again retain Homer Wilson & Co to prepare the Form 990 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019.

The finance committee also began the work of the fund development goals of the new strategic plan that was embarked upon by this current board. In the last half of the fiscal year, the committee focused on developing the three goals for the strategic plan that centers around finance: 1.) Identifying giving sources and prioritizing fundraising around those sources; 2.) Building a fund development plan that supports our programs, and 3) making a plan for saved monies.

As of the date of this report, June 15, 2020, the 2019-2020 fiscal year proved to be incredibly successful per the budget. We fundraised to 94% of our budget goal of \$57,900 and limited our expenses to 93% of our budget goal of \$30,961. We gave \$25,923.15 in both new and recurring grants and were able to gift \$5000 of our fundraising dollars to a donation to the Teacher of Merit award in June 2020, as recognition of the outstanding commitment from our teachers during the pandemic's stay-at-home orders. We end our fiscal year with approximately \$300 in revenue that will be swept in our savings account at fiscal year-end.

It has been a year of growth and consistent measurement of the organization's finances in 2019-2020, and I am confident that we will continue to carry on the fiscal responsibility that has long been a hallmark of our organization.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Eplawy, June 17, 2020

Fundraising Sub-Committees: Annual Event, Mailing, Coffee and Honor an Educator.

Annual Event Committee

Co-Chairs: Deb Milne and Candice Logue

Committee Members: Holly Grunewald, Sandy Baker, Ellen Byrnes, Lyn McHie, Mike Jez, Tricia Shelton, Sue Lazar, Adam Keefner, Paul Rotatori

During the 2019-2020 school year, the Annual Event Committee decided to continue with the event theme of Jeans & Jerseys. The first action was to lower the venue costs. After working with the traditional venue and meeting with several other venues, it was decided that we would move the January 2020 event to Wicker Park in Highland. The committee was impressed with the lower costs and flexibility of the venue and also felt it was time to change things up....the decision proved favorable for MEF.

- We exceeded the budgeted income of \$35,000 with total of \$36,359 event revenue.
- We had budgeted expense to be \$12,000 which came in much lower at \$8,182.56.
- Therefore, we profited **\$28,176.44**, a record high in recent history.

We had set a goal to have fewer baskets, but with better quality of items and we achieved that...even with last minute donations 😊

We had positive feedback about the change in food options, which kept the crowd happy.

We also decided to eliminate the open bar for several reasons but it was not missed due to the plentiful amount of donated craft beer which was still offered through the VIP ticket.

Board agreed to keep the event at Wicker Park and a date has been selected for 2021!

Looking to the future, we need full board participation to improve ticket sales.

Respectfully submitted by Candice Logue, June 17, 2020

Annual Mailing

Co-Chairs: Tricia Shelton & Lynn Eplawy

Committee Members: Paul Rotatori, Sandy Baker, Ellen Byrne, Carol Moore, Kay Rogan

This year's annual mailing consisted of a letter of invitation to donate to the organization for our grants program which has a goal of \$20,000 each year. On September 20, 2019, we mailed to just over 700 households in our database. The cost of the mailing was \$461 for stamps and labels. Largas Printing provided letterhead and envelopes as an in kind donation and was recognized on our website as such. The mailing brought in \$13,683. Donors were given the option of donating via check in the preaddressed provided envelop or through the website if they preferred to make an electronic donation via credit card. The majority of the donations came through the website and thus an automatic thank you and receipt was generated by the NEON system. Those who sent in a check received a thank you generated by Tricia Shelton. Lynn Eplawy oversaw entering mailed in donations into the database. During this past year, the organization received two donations that we made in memorial. In those cases, a letter of recognition was also sent to the loved one's family.

Respectfully submitted by Tricia Shelton, June 17, 2020

Coffee Committee

Chair: Kristen Smith

Committee Members: Adam Keefner, Mike Jez and Candice Logue

Our Coffee initiative began last year with a partnership between MEF and Small-Town Coffee. We created with their support our own MEF Coffee Brand to sell as a fundraiser for the organization. A small subcommittee was created to determine how to market and sell the coffee to local businesses.

We kicked it off with the MHS Football season last year and began selling our coffee at school and community related events such as at Frank H. Hammond Anniversary Open House, Frank H. Hammond Book Fair, Breakfast with Santa, Munster Chamber of Commerce luncheon and Westminster Preschool. We overall were successful in these efforts. We also were supported thru retail sales via Strack and Van Til, Troost Coffee and Toluka Paper. On April 1, 2020, Small Town gave report that including their direct sales we have purchased 388 of the 400 in contract.

All sales and marketing efforts concluded with COVID 19. At this time, per our contractual obligation we have eight remaining bags to purchase from Small Town Coffee which we will plan on doing closer to the start of school when we are able to determine how this will occur after Governor Holcomb announces his plans for local schools.

I believe our committee feels this was a great opportunity to market not only our coffee but our brand throughout our community. However, we also concluded we are not in the business of "selling" coffee and that although this is a great product and was successful the effort including making the coffee, storing it, getting the coffee to events, etc. was overall not as efficient and useful of everyone's time and effort. The Coffee Committee agrees that our efforts would be better placed in other areas of support of MEF's new strategic plan. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Smith, June 17, 2019

Honor an Educator

Co-Chairs: Ann Bochnowski & Ellen Byrne

The Honor an Educator committee continues to market the golden apple appreciation pin to the parents in each of our elementary schools through a direct flyer. We also provide the flyer to the middle school and high school principals to print in their monthly newsletters. Paul Rotatori also helped with publicity through Facebook and emails to our database.

The fundraiser typically takes place during the holiday season as well as at the end of the year as an easy way to gift your child's teacher. For this past school year, we only ran the fundraiser in December as COVID 19 forced the physical closing of the schools and we also felt that we didn't want to fundraise with the parents as many people were losing their jobs. With just one fundraising period, Honor an Educator made \$600 for this school year.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Byrne, June 17, 2020

Governance Committee

Chair: Lyn McHie

Committee Members: Sandy Baker, Ellen Byrne, Sue Lazar, Carol Moore, Kay Rogan, Ken Schoon, and Ken Wilk

- The Governance Committee held 8 monthly meetings. The entire committee found this most useful as it clarified our committee's tasks
- The Board Member Responsibility form, the Conflict of Interest form, and Whistle-blower policy were distributed for signing and collected at the September meeting.
- The By-Laws and Articles were also distributed with the strong recommendation that each Director become familiar with their content.
- Sign-up sheets for Committees were circulated whereupon Directors indicated their preferences for serving MEF.
- The Committee structure still needs revision so to better reflect a chain of communication. More discussion is needed in order for this to be a clearer document.
- An issue involving the Code of Conduct was addressed and resolved. The committee looked at the Code of Conduct as it pertained to social media, public actions, and diplomacy. Any change in wording has been delayed based on information from the STF.
- A new form was written to use when recommending a new board member. The purpose was to provide uniformity of information. A rubric is our next endeavor to identify skill sets needed.
- A calendar was used for the Governance Committee to reflect past, current and future deadlines and discussions more easily. This has been a most helpful tool.
- The committee reviewed the current list of board members whose terms were to expire June of 2020. There were five: Sandy Baker, Lynn Eplawy, Candice Logue, Debra Milne, and Carol Moore. 2 seats were available for new members. All were contacted and agreed to serve another term. A vote in June will be needed
- 2 prospective directors for the MEF Board were submitted to and recommended by the Governance Committee: Amanda Gutierrez and Kate Nierengarten. Bios for new Board members were asked to be submitted to the Governance committee by May 1. Those nominees were presented to the board at the May meeting. A vote was taken at the June meeting and all candidates recommended by the Governance Committee were accepted.
- Officers for 2020-2021: In May the Governance Committee recommended that the current slate of officers be retained to give continuity to potential changes facing MEF. They were Tricia Shelton/President, Paul Rotatori/Vice President, Ken School/Recording Secretary, Lynn Eplawy/Treasurer, and Debbie Milne as a past president. All graciously accepted being nominated. This slate of officers was voted into office at the June meeting.
- Projects to tackle: Reviewing the By-Laws as the Mission and Vision statements have changed, update job descriptions with information from the other committees, producing a rubric to use for new board members to identify skills needed, preparation for new member orientation including packets of essential information.
- The Governance Committee respectfully will address any changes needed based on recommendations from the STF.
- This Governance Committee remained a continually active committee for 2019-2020.

Respectfully submitted by Lyn McHie June 17, 2020

Grants Committee

Chair: Deb Milne

Committee Members: Sandy Baker, Holly Jones, Candice Logue, Tricia Shelton & Kristen Smith

This past school year once again had two grant cycles: October and March. In October, the committee reviewed and then recommended one repetitive and 12 new grants for approval. These grants totaled \$15,750. Checks were presented to the grant recipients at the November School Board Meeting by Kristen Smith and Lynn Eplawy. In March, the committee reviewed and recommended 6 grants for approval. These grants totaled \$10,295. Due to school closing and thus no in person April School Board Meeting, grant checks were mailed to the recipients.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Milne, June 17, 2020

Marketing Committee

Chair: Paul Rotatori

Committee Members: Mike Jez, Adam Keefner

The marketing committee was responsible for social media, website support, donor database maintenance, and communicating externally all MEF activities. The committee participated in Munster's Night Out Against Crime to raise awareness about MEF and signed up 43 new recipients to our email database. MEF once again also purchased an advertisement in the MHS yearbook. The Committee also assisted the Teacher of Merit Award with helping to market their holiday wreath fundraiser by creating an online form to purchase wreaths.

A calendar of emails and social media posts were created for the time period of just before the Holidays in November through the end of January when MEF's annual fundraiser occurs. This calendar will be used to create a full marketing plan for next year. Please see the following email analytics for the last year:

- 14 total emails sent
- Open rate above the industry average for all emails:
 - Highest open rate email was a note to attendees of Jeans and Jerseys (71%)
 - Lowest open rate was a reminder sent out about Holiday Giving (29%)
- Rates of clicks on links within emails:
 - Highest percentages of clicks was on an email announcing MEF's donation to the Teacher of Merit award donation, which included a video from board members thanking teachers (11%)
 - Lowest click rate was a follow up note sent after our annual email fundraiser (1%)

The analytics below are from MEF's Facebook presence over the last year. MEF was also involved in cross promotions with Small Town Coffee, Strak & Van Til, Troost, and Toluca Paper whereby each organization posted about MEF's coffee:

- Total posts = 35
- Number of people that saw a post on their feed = 12,306
- Number of likes/comments/interactions with our posts = 759

Respectfully submitted by Paul Rotatori, June 17, 2020

Strategic Task Force Report

Chair: Paul Rotatori

Committee Members: Lynn Eplawy, Nancy Hamblin, Sue Lazar, Deb Milne, Carol Moore

MEF engaged a consultant that worked with the Board to achieve a strategic plan, including defining the organization's mission, vision, and values, and identifies its strategic priorities over the course of the next 3 to 5 years. This plan should result in greater alignment and more effective decision making in the future. MEF interviewed and received proposals from 3 different external partners and decided to work with the Executive Service Corp (ESC).

Strategic Planning Process:

1. Preparation and alignment with the ESC consultants and task force members
2. Analysis by ESC
 - a. Current and past MEF documents and materials
 - b. 35 in-person interviews of board members and other key stakeholders
 - c. Online survey of 141 educators
3. 1-day retreat with MEF board and ESC consultants
4. Work groups drafted more details of plan after retreat
5. Plan finalized and approved by board

Task force deliverables:

- A one-page statement of Mission, Vision, Values and strategic issues facing the organization
- Organizational assessment including summaries of interviews and surveys, financial, and market analysis.
- SWOT analysis
- Action plans and metrics as developed during the retreat providing direction for implementation for the next 3 to 5 years.

ESC presented their final report at the May meeting and the plan was voted on and approved unanimously by the Board. The plan will be part of every board meeting going forward. Working groups are now responsible for continually moving the plan along, reporting on progress/obstacles, and updating plan accordingly.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Rotatori, June 17, 2020

Teacher of Merit Award Committee

Chair: Mary Yorke

Committee Members: Nina Arzumanian, Ann Bochnowski, Julie Compton, Aimee, Cox, Kyle Dempsey, John Friend, Bob Grow, Melissa Higgason, Kerry Meyer, Lisa Morris, Paula Nellans, Kate Nierengarten, Ron Ostojic, Ingrid Schwarz Wolf, Kathy Sharpe, Tricia Shelton, Cheryl Zeck

The 2019-2020 year is the final year for TMA as it was established as a five year program to help maintain Munster's quality teachers during difficult financial times. The first checks were provided to qualifying teachers in 2015-2016 after John Friend and Mary Yorke met with Joe Mansueto, an alum of the Munster School System, who committed to a \$1,000,000 donation to be distributed over the five year program. The recipients of the award would be all teachers who ranked in the top two district evaluation categories and were returning to the district for the next year.

For this, our last year, there have been two fundraisers to contribute to Mr. Mansueto's donation and donations that came in from parents, community members, alumnae and steering committee members. In December, we had a successful wreath sale under the guidance of Nina Arzumanian. The wreaths were amazing and were sold in three sizes. In May, Kerry Meyer, Kate Nierengarten, and Kathy Sharpe had a very successful display of wooden mustangs that roamed across the town, providing total enjoyment for everyone who saw them.

The funds raised this year will be given to a total of 226 qualifying teachers in August 2020. This year there will be approximately 40 to 50 more teachers qualifying for the award as the school system is now responsible for all of the special education teachers.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Yorke, June 17, 2020