



# 2024

# Voter's Pamphlet

Women Investing in Shepherd (WISH) is a women's giving circle sponsored by the Shepherd University Foundation.

WISH inspires, educates, and develops the amazing potential of women's philanthropy. Our high-impact grants to Shepherd University and our tristate community affect positive changes, bring new funding resources, and make philanthropy accessible.

**Please use this pamphlet to inform how you vote for the 2024 WISH grantees. Your vote is due no later than August 7.**

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July 24, 2024

Dear WISH Member,

We are thrilled to present the finalists for the 2024 Women Investing in Shepherd grants. Our voting results will determine the six projects that receive grants this year. Your vote will be included in the final results if it is received by **Wednesday, August 7, 2024**.

## **IMPORTANCE OF VOTING**

The ballot represents an opportunity for each of us to leverage our individual contribution into a combined grant pool of \$160,500, creating a significant impact for Shepherd University and our tristate community. Please take time to reflect on the projects under consideration and exercise the privilege of voting. The finalists represent the myriad of needs within our regional community and at the university, and were selected by the 2024 Grant Committee to propose the best solutions to those needs. Receiving a completed ballot from each of you ensures that our grant recipients reflect the preferences of our entire membership for where our funds will have the greatest impact.

## **HOW THE FINALISTS WERE SELECTED**

The Grant Committee, co-chaired by Carol Kable and Harriet Pearson, deserves our thanks for the intelligence, commitment, and rigor they have brought to this process. Eighteen voting members have collaborated to select the finalists presented here. Their efforts include: reviewing 68 letters of inquiry and analyzing each in depth to narrow down to 28 full proposals, inviting 15 of these (5 Shepherd and 10 nonprofits) to receive on-site visits; and further narrowing this group to four Shepherd projects and five nonprofit projects to appear on the ballot. The full grant committee met three times, and sub-teams conducted site visits to complete this important work on behalf of WISH.

Projects that demonstrated one or more of the following WISH criteria were considered:

- ◆ Responses to urgent and critical needs;
- ◆ Bold new ventures; and/or,
- ◆ New approaches to ongoing problems.

In addition, the Grant Committee members used the following questions to guide their research:

- ◆ What impact will a grant of \$26,750 have?
- ◆ What makes this proposal compelling?



## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

This Voter's Pamphlet provides summary information on nine proposals— five from community nonprofits and four from Shepherd University. As described before, members of the Grant Committee met with leaders and champions for each project. It was determined through the site visits that these are the nine best proposals for your consideration.

**Please remember that three university projects and three nonprofit projects will receive a grant. You are encouraged to vote for the full number in each category.** For more information on any of these projects, including the opportunity to review the submitted proposals, please contact Meg Patterson at [mpeterso@shepherd.edu](mailto:mpeterso@shepherd.edu) or 304-876-5021.

Please review each summary carefully, keeping WISH criteria and the guiding questions in mind. Ask yourself, "*Where will a grant of \$26,750 make the most impact?*" The three projects that receive the most votes in each category will be this year's recipients. Please see the ballot for additional information on submitting your vote by **Wednesday, August 7.**

## CELEBRATE!

We will announce the WISH grant recipients at a special celebration at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 15, 2024 at Erma Ora Byrd Hall on Shepherd's campus in Shepherdstown, WV. Please plan to join us. It promises to be a very exciting occasion! Invitations will be mailed in August. We look forward to seeing each and every one of you there!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Fleenor".

Carolyn Fleenor  
Advisory Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bev Hughes".

Bev Hughes  
Advisory Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Oates".

Liz Oates  
Advisory Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary 'Peachy' Staley".

Peachy Staley  
Advisory Committee

# Community Nonprofits

## BOLIVAR/HARPERS FERRY PUBLIC LIBRARY

### *Covered Porch and Outdoor Program Area*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.bolivarharpersferrylibrary.com/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Bolivar Harpers Ferry Public Library (BHFPL) endeavors to extend opportunities for connection and educational experiences through the addition of a multipurpose outdoor space to the front of the library. The proposed addition will consist of a covered porch accessed from the current entryway that will wrap around to the east side of the building to an extended patio and enlarged area. WISH grant funding would be used in entirety toward the construction and materials cost of the project, with additional expenses being funded through capital and operating monies already held by the library. *A drawing of the covered porch expansion is available to be viewed in the full proposal.*

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

Currently, the BHFPL provides approximately 700 square feet for over 200 programs conducted annually at the building. These programs include re-enactments, performances, storytelling, book groups, children's reading hours, and craft projects. Adequate space for these activities is both extremely important and limited. The addition of a covered porch would remedy that problem.

Adding a covered porch will allow the library to utilize one of its greatest and underutilized assets, which is the outdoor environment. The plans also include the transformation of a window into French doors, allowing access to the patio for all and extending the current children's space.

#### **IMPACT**

Circulation data revealed that 22,105 patrons walked through the doors of the library in 2023. The library provides to many population sectors, including local students, home-school groups, tourists, and community members. The additional porch space, which would be available a large part of the year, will alleviate scheduling issues and provide a more comfortable space for patrons. This is an economical and creative solution for the library to address a need occurring organically in the midst of Jefferson County's remarkable population surge.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

Given the proximity of the library to Harpers Ferry Middle School, the space will also offer a safe and welcoming spot for students to wait after school for parental pick-up, even if they choose not to enter the library itself. The grant committee recognizes that this project meets WISH's goal to have high-impact on our community, as the space serves as a meeting place and resource for the Bolivar and Harpers Ferry population. The addition will allow for an increase in program attendees, which numbered over 5000 people in 2023.

# Community Nonprofits

## BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF EASTERN PANHANDLE

### *Safety First Initiative*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.bgcepwv.net/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle (BGCEP) is committed to providing the safest environment possible in all three of its clubs. A recent safety audit conducted identified issues in the Martinsburg– Berkeley County Club and the Jefferson County Club. To address the identified issues, BGCEP seeks WISH funding for the installation of: five automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for all three clubs and provide training; an outside door currently without an exit at the Jefferson County facility, 11 fire-rated doors with windows and blinds for the Martinsburg-Berkeley County club; and a resurfaced outside play area at the Jefferson County club. This will be the second WISH grant for BGCEP, who was awarded a nonprofit grant in 2017 to provide funding for mentor stipends.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

As a youth development organization, the BGCEP must ensure that when children are in their facilities, their families and caregivers know that they are safe as possible. Currently, there are no professionally rated AEDs in any of the panhandle clubs, which are needed to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. There is also no emergency exit in the STEM room at the Jefferson County club, nor are there enough inside doors with windows in Martinsburg to provide sightlines needed in case of an intruder. Finally, the outside play area at Jefferson County has broken and cracked asphalt, which is harmful to children using the facility. Addressing the issues raised by the most recent safety audit would require funding not currently available in the operating budget.

#### **IMPACT**

The BGCEP serves over 500 youth in Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan counties. These numbers are expected to grow, and every single one of those youth are affected by their Club providing a safe environment. Knowing they are safe ensures they can focus on learning, building their social-emotional skills, and having fun.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

This WISH grant would effectively solve safety audit issues for one of our community's premier youth development organizations. In addition to the regular club programming, BGCEP also runs Camp Mariposa, a year-round addiction prevention and mentoring program for youth affected by the substance use disorder of a family member. These upgrades would be reflective of WISH's high-impact philosophy.

# Community Nonprofits

## CASA OF EASTERN PANHANDLE

### *Family Bridge Program*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://mycasaep.org/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

After years in the child welfare system with potentially multiple foster care placements, a child can ultimately have a judge consider his/her best interests and make a final decision on permanent placement. Sadly, over 30% of those closed cases will re-open and a child will re-enter the system. CASA of the Eastern Panhandle (CASA-EP) seeks WISH grant funding to pilot a new program that will provide 6 months of post-permanency advocacy and support to the parents, family members, or adoptive parents who make this important commitment. This will be the second WISH grant for CASA-EP, which was awarded a nonprofit grant in 2018 to assure advocacy and follow-up for every child in the system.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

Currently, when a child is assigned to a caregiver from foster care, there is no program to provide support during the transition period. As a result, children often do not transition well and return to the foster care system. The goal of the program is to provide support for the first six months to ensure a better outcome for those children in their new environment. The WISH funding would add to additional grants, donations, and sponsorships to fund "The Family Bridge Program", which would include contracted fees for a parenting coach and training, materials and fees for software to maintain and collect data for program evaluation, and a Family Support Emergency Fund.

#### **IMPACT**

The anticipated impact of this project will address critical needs within the child welfare system and will have long-term positive outcomes for children and families. By providing comprehensive, post-advocacy and support services, CASA-EP will raise awareness of the challenges faced by this vulnerable population and mobilize collective action to address systemic issues. The primary goal is to reduce the number of children and teens reentering the system by creating a supportive environment that fosters healing, stability, and resilience. The program will also empower families to overcome adversity and thrive.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

CASA-EP provides volunteer advocates for children who find themselves in the court system because of abuse and neglect. Many times, these volunteers become the sole advocate for the child during their time in the court system. CASA-EP also boasts a proven track record of success and organizational capacity to implement the Family Bridge program. In the past three years alone, CASA-EP has achieved remarkable growth: increasing the number of children served through court-appointed advocacy by over 36%.

# Community Nonprofits

## GOOD SAMARITAN FREE CLINIC

### *IT Infrastructure and Security Modernization*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.goodsamaritanfreeclinic.org/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Good Samaritan Free Clinic proposes to build a comprehensive information infrastructure and network that supports data and communications. This will be accomplished through the implementation of cybersecurity components and the monitoring and surveillance of all workstations to deliver privacy and security of health information in a patient care setting for compliance. The WISH Grant funding will allow for the initial purchase and installation of these components, as well as the maintenance of subscription fees and updates in subsequent years. This will be the second WISH grant for the Good Samaritan Free Clinic, who was awarded a nonprofit grant in 2018 to implement a free dental clinic for the Eastern Panhandle.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

The Good Samaritan Free Clinic provides free medical care to those in the tri-county area who have no resources or access to medical services. The program is located in a small building on Raleigh Street in Martinsburg. Providing medical care not only requires the need for medical professionals and clinicians, it also requires accurate and secure record keeping, which is currently lacking. Funding from WISH will allow for the Clinic to meet the needs of their clients in a safe and secure manner.

#### **IMPACT**

Once the new security measures are in place, Good Samaritan Free Clinic will be able to increase its capacity for patient visits, increased volunteers, and student intern experiences. Most importantly, it will create a secure environment in a health care setting. It will allow the Clinic to have access to other health systems electronic records, such as EPIC with Valley Health and WVU to access our patients labs and diagnostics, creating more efficiency.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

The Good Samaritan Free Clinic reaches a population of the tri-county area that rarely has access to medical services. Additionally, the staff provides medical services to the Martinsburg Union Rescue Mission on a weekly basis. The grant will allow this much needed service to maintain the same secure records that we expect at our healthcare facilities.

# Community Nonprofits

## LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF THE EASTERN PANHANDLE

### *Restoration of LVEP Instructional Materials and Equipment*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.lvep-wv.org/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

In July of 2023, a devastating lightning strike and fire destroyed the Literacy Volunteers of the Eastern Panhandle (LVEP) office housed within the Jefferson County Adult Learning Center in Ranson, WV. WISH grant funding would allow for the replacement of materials for the Citizenship, English Language Learners, High School Equivalency, Workforce, and Low Literacy students and volunteer tutors. It will also create a resource library with workbooks, tutor guides, several laptops, a printer/scanner and designated tutoring/learning spaces. LVEP will also be able to create “mobile offices” to use in the community, allowing for expansion of outreach to adult learners challenged by transportation and other restraints.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

When the July 2023 lightning strike destroyed all of LVEP’s resources, the volunteers and staff quickly realized that the current operating budget was insufficient to replace necessary materials and equipment. For the past year, volunteers have been producing and copying their own materials at home in an effort to keep the programs functioning. However, funding to replace these materials is in response to an urgent and critical program need.

#### **IMPACT**

LVEP is a 43-year old nonprofit program composed of trained tutors and community volunteers who depend on the resources and teaching materials provided each year to support their work with adults seeking literacy and learning assistance. The organization plays a crucial role in empowering adults in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties of WV to reach their full potential as individuals, parents, employees, and citizens. Despite lack of resources, 673 students have been served since the fire.

Not only will the WISH Grant funding allow the organization to replace and enhance those lost materials, but it will also allow for the creation of mobile offices to expand outreach.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

This project received almost 100% votes from the grant committee to be selected as a finalist for the membership ballot. The committee was impressed by the tenacity of the volunteers who were resourceful in continuing services after the devastating fire. The volunteers created or purchased their own materials so that students could meet personal goals of passing the GED, learning English, obtaining citizenship, or improving their reading skills. A WISH grant would recognize that hard work and desire to maintain access to learning for so many in the tri-county communities who desperately need their services.



# Shepherd University Projects

## ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

### *Continuation of Accommodate Software Services*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.shepherd.edu/accessibility>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Shepherd University Accessibility Services office upgraded to the Accommodate software after a 2021 audit identified shortcomings in existing processes, as well as potential noncompliance with federal Office of Civil Rights regulations. The Accommodate software helps all users (students, faculty, staff) manage disability accommodations more effectively, efficiently, and confidentially. A \$36,000 federal grant covered the initial hardware investment and software rental through December 2024, but there are no more funds budgeted to continue the software beyond that time.

WISH funds are requested to secure another 3-year software subscription to not only cover budget constraints but to continue this vital service for current and potential new students.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

The need for WISH grant funding to continue the Accommodate Software usage at Shepherd is fourfold:

- 21% of undergraduates report having a disability (National Center for Education Statistics);
- Shepherd University serves upwards of 350 students annually who request accommodations;
- Without advanced technology, the University risks being out of compliance with national civil rights requirements and the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- If the subscription is not renewed, Accessibility Services staff will have to revert to manually handling tasks that are currently run through the system, resulting in loss of student support time. The initial cost and heavy lift to implement the system will also be lost.

#### **IMPACT**

The Accommodate Software is vital in helping Shepherd students succeed in college and improve their academic performance. It provides a confidential means of self-advocacy on topics that can be difficult to discuss as well as provide students and staff with a user-friendly interface that links to the scheduling system. It also eliminates multiple, duplicate forms and an archaic Excel tracking process.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

Accessibility software like Accommodate is widely available at many neighboring higher education institutes, which would give them a competitive edge for enrollment recruitment. In addition, this software represents the most effective way possible to serve the disabled community while allowing for staff to have more time for one-on-one follow up during the academic year.

# Shepherd University Projects

## CHEMISTRY PROGRAM

### *Forensic Science Lab Start-Up*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://www.shepherd.edu/chemistry>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The chemistry program is seeking funding to equip a new Forensics Science laboratory that will be used for students enrolled in a two-semester lab course. This course was originally developed for students majoring in Criminal Justice, but the course also serves to fulfill the core curriculum science credit for any non-science majors at Shepherd University.

The funding will purchase four forensic comparison microscopes specifically for the lab, two additional hand-held microscopes, and items necessary to assemble individual forensic investigation kits. The kits would include a series of tools and measuring instruments that students would use to analyze “evidence” such as (fake) blood samples, bullets, hair, and pharmaceuticals.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

With the retirement of the University’s anthropology professor, lab space has become available to host the two-semester Forensics Lab course. For the past two years, students have had to borrow equipment for the from the Environmental Studies lab. With the consolidation of various departments, the chemistry program no longer has a separate budget line to fully fund new lab courses like this one. The WISH Grant funding would not only outfit the lab with its own microscopes and kits, but it would provide additional funding to replace items as they become worn out or used up.

#### **IMPACT**

The grant will greatly enhance the ability of the chemistry program to effectively teach these courses. There are no similar two-semester forensics lab courses currently being offered at other higher education institutions, so this would be a wonderful recruiting tool to entice students to enroll at Shepherd. There are plans to write up the labs for publication in education journals or the Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science for dissemination.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

The WISH grant funding will have a direct effect on many students at Shepherd. Criminal Justice is one of the fastest growing programs at the University, with 149 students enrolled in the major in 2022. These courses will better prepare the students to be competitive in the job market and in pursuit of post-graduate education in forensics. In addition, the labs being developed could be incorporated into the Seeding Your Future Initiative and other community outreach events.

# Shepherd University Projects

## STUBBLEFIELD INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

### *Community Leadership and Civil Advocacy Certificate*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

<https://stubblefieldinstitute.org/>

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Launched on the Shepherd campus in the fall of 2023 by the Stubblefield Institute for Civil Political Communications, the Community Leadership and Civil Advocacy (CLCA) Certificate Program addresses three challenges faced by West Virginia: low levels of civic and community engagement of young people; young people moving out of state vastly affecting the work force; and the economic outlook at ability to attract new industry.

The Stubblefield Institute seeks a WISH grant award to help fund the salaries of three employees, cover speaker fees, and purchase supplies and materials for the CLCA Certificate Program which will help students develop leadership and advocacy skills and explore civic engagement.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

Studies have shown that civic engagement is positively correlated to greater life satisfaction for young adults and provides a feeling of connection to the community. The CLCA program will teach students how to advocate for themselves and others, with the hopes that this empowerment will propel them to take action in improving the communities with which they reside. The hope is that the program will also keep young people in West Virginia and create a more attractive workforce for industries looking to move in-state.

This standalone program is being positioned to fulfill credit or graduation requirements in the future. The student cohort will meet monthly to complete educational objectives in leadership and advocacy, creating a culture of respect, and community engagement. Upon completion, students will receive a certificate that can be listed on their resume.

#### **IMPACT**

This project will impact the community in three ways: retain graduates in West Virginia; have young citizens capable of effectively advocating for themselves and others to improve life outcomes and connect them to causes of which they are passionate; and provide a new generation of community leaders who can make effective decisions while reducing divisiveness.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

In the first year, 8 students participated in the CLCA program. For the 2024-25 academic year, the goal is to have 12-30 students from 6 partner schools (participating virtually) and 25-30 Shepherd students enrolled in the certificate program. Investment in these Shepherd students and other local college enrollees will provide a path for young people to learn to engage in political discussion and get involved in local causes to help tie them to their communities and keep them in-state.

# Shepherd University Projects

## STUDENT AFFAIRS

### *Little House Revitalization*

**REQUESTED WISH FUNDING:** \$26,750

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Little House is a beloved landmark in Shepherdstown, owned by the University and shared with the community. Built for use by students and faculty in 1928, led by educator Florence Shaw, the house was intended to be an experiential learning laboratory by Shepherd education majors. It has also been available to the public and has delighted generations of children and adults.

During COVID, it was discovered that the original lead paint on the house had begun to deteriorate and flake, which made it a health hazard. WISH funding would allow for the proper removal of the lead paint so that the house can once again be used for its intended purpose. A small portion of the grant funding will support an educational event celebrating the history of the Little House in partnership with the Department of Education, the Shepherd University Alumni Association, and the community advisory board.

#### **NEED/SOLUTION**

In order to re-open the historical landmark, the original lead paint that began to deteriorate and flake off during COVID must be safely removed. Cost for proper removal is high and requires trained, licensed officials to do the work. The WISH grant will provide the funding necessary to completely and safely remove all lead paint in the structure and in the surrounding soil, as well as to repaint all remediated areas and assure that future generations of children, students, alumni, and community members can safely visit the house.

#### **IMPACT**

The University has never had a budget for remediation and renovation of the Little House. Only basic maintenance is done by University facilities. In the current budget crisis facing the University, internal funding to tackle this project is not available.

Once the Little House is renovated and reopened, the cottage will be opened for special community and campus events like Homecoming, Christmas in Shepherdstown, and other campus and town programming. It will also allow for the education department to utilize it for its original purpose as a learning lab for Shepherd students.

#### **WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT COMPELLING?**

Funding this project will benefit both Shepherd and the Shepherdstown community. It addresses a serious health risk and is a one-time grant that will have a high-impact to restore the building to its intended purpose. Once a vendor is vetted and selected by the University, full restoration should be completed by spring 2025. Student Affairs is also working on an advisory board that will plan and execute a celebration of the Little House's centennial in 2028.

# Acknowledgements

## 2024 Committees

### Grant Committee

Carol Kable, *Co-Chair*

Harriet Pearson, *Co-Chair*

Helen "Hap" Becker

Donna Bertazzoni

Pamela Curtis

Susan Davis '77

Dana DeJarnett

Barbara Gibson

Karen Hensell

Kim Himes

Heidi Johnston

Gillian McPhee

Mary Jane Rinard '76

Sylvia Shurbutt, Ph.D.

Carolyn Thomas

Rebecca Trezise

Annette Van Hilst

Sheila Vertino

Beverly Hughes '71

Meg Patterson, *Advisor*

### Member Journey Committee

Mary "Peachy" Staley '70, *Co-Chair*

Liz Oates, *Co-Chair*

Carolyn Fleenor '78, *Subcommittee Chair*

Beverly Hughes '71, *Subcommittee Chair*

Cecelia Mason, *Subcommittee Chair*

Sherri Janelle, *Subcommittee Co-Chair*

Teresa McCabe '79, *Subcommittee Co-Chair*

Madeline Barney

Kathy Jo Blue '80

Donna Burns

Sandy A. Dubay '95

Allison Freswick

Kristie Hadley

Carol Kamensky '68

Linda Kelso

Amy Moore-Luettke

Susan Sheehan

Anne Small '67

Susan Snowden '82

Meg Patterson, *Advisor*