

The Stocker Foundation to Narrow Funding Focus In 2009

Lorain, OH (October 1, 2008) With the help of her three daughters, Beth K. Stocker established The Stocker Foundation in 1979 as a way to formalize the philanthropy she and her husband, Paul, practiced during their life together. Through careful financial management and annual contributions from Mrs. Stocker, the Foundation currently has assets of \$48 million, and serves eight (8) communities in five (5) states. In fiscal year 2007, The Stocker Foundation awarded nearly \$3 million to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations in the areas of Arts & Culture; Community Needs; Education; Health; Social Services; and Women's Issues.

Stocker Foundation Executive Director, Patricia O'Brien notes, "The Foundation's competitive grantmaking strategy was based upon the broad and varied interests of Mrs. Stocker. She often described The Stocker Foundation as a 'business with a heart' and felt strongly that our mission should be flexible, allowing the Board to respond quickly to pressing community needs." During the first 29 years of grantmaking, The Stocker Foundation Board approved 4,142 grants totaling \$35 million, with more than 50% (\$18.3 million) benefiting Lorain County.

Following Beth Stocker's death in 2005 at age 97, the Foundation's Board and staff embarked on a multi-year strategic planning process. The goal was to prioritize strategies to drive competitive grantmaking for the next several years and beyond. The Board feels strongly that awarding larger impact grants in a specific focus area is the direction The Stocker Foundation should take in order to provide the maximum benefit to communities served.

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O'Brien reports, "Beginning in 2009, The Stocker Foundation will narrow its competitive grantmaking to focus on programs/services that positively impact children, youth, and families. Within that focus, the Board has identified public education (Kindergarten through 5th grade) as its primary interest. For the next 3-5 years, priority will be given to the following types of programs/services: Literacy; Afterschool & Summer Programs; Supplemental Enrichment; and Wraparound Services." Grant awards will begin during calendar year 2010. ** Nonprofit organizations with an education-based mission are encouraged to watch the website (www.stockerfoundation.org) for specific information.

For nonprofit organizations that do not have an education-based mission (as described above), The Stocker Foundation will offer a "transition" grant cycle. The submission deadline for these one-time grants is January 15, 2009. Board Chair, Anne Woodling concludes, "The Board recognizes that any change in funding is difficult and might cause short-term budgetary challenges for some nonprofit organizations who have received grant awards from The Stocker Foundation in the past. We understand that all nonprofit organizations rely on a variety of monetary sources to meet programming and operating expenses each year. To that end, The Stocker Foundation Board will offer organizations that no longer align with the new funding focus areas one last opportunity to apply for a grant."

**All available competitive grant dollars in 2009 will be utilized toward Transition Grants; new K-5th grade public education-based funding will commence in 2010.

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