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**Press Release: Blue River Community Foundation Announces the
2024 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Recipient for Shelby County**

[Blue River Community Foundation](#) (BRCF) is pleased to announce Ellie J. Gosser is the recipient of the 2024 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship (LECS) for Shelby County. Each LECS provides for full tuition, required fees, and a special allocation of up to \$900 per year for required books and required equipment for four years of undergraduate study on a full-time basis leading to a baccalaureate degree at any eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit college or university. Lilly Endowment Community Scholars may also participate in the Lilly Scholars Network (LSN), which connects both current scholars and alumni with resources and opportunities to be active leaders on their campuses and in their communities. Both the scholarship program and LSN are supported by grants from Lilly Endowment to Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) and Indiana Humanities.

Ellie resides in Flat Rock with her parents Amanda and Bradley Gosser. She will graduate in May from Southwestern High School (SWHS). Starting in the fall of 2024, she will major in Animal Science at Purdue University on the pathway to admissions into the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree program. Her future career goal is to work as a veterinarian specializing in bovine reproduction.

At the time of application, Ellie was ranked third in her graduating class and her GPA was 4.36 on a 4.0 scale. She is involved in numerous extracurricular activities including; Future Farmers of America (president), Student Council (class president), Peer Mentoring, Youth Council, Students Against Destructive Decisions, basketball, and band. In addition, she is a 9-year member of 4-H and has received several accolades showing livestock, specifically steers. Ellie is also actively engaged in the community. In fact, she has an extensive resume of volunteering activities in which she has participated. A few examples include: serving as her church’s youth song leader, working the Shelby County Fair beef tent and the pork tent at the Indiana State Fair, assisting with Shelby County’s annual agriculture promotion banquet, helping at the Flat Rock and Marietta fish fry events, aiding with the horse races at the Shelby County Fair, and fundraising for Salvation Army as a bell ringer.

Ellie’s dedication to pursuing a career as a veterinarian is not only demonstrated through her participation showing livestock through 4-H, but also in the way she has cared for animals from a young age by working along-side William A. Doig, DVM. In his written recommendation for Ellie, Doig stated, “She is deserving of awards and recognition for so many reasons, but above all, she is well-rounded, compassionate and upstanding in her beliefs. This young lady has been an asset to my work as she has worked for me seasonally since she was in the sixth grade. Her ability to communicate with adults, while also managing the controlled chaos that can be found during one of our pet vaccination clinics, shows

the leadership skills she possesses. Most recently we had the privilege of seeing her in action while working at the Indiana Pork Producer tent at the Indiana State Fair with her FFA chapter. She was kind, friendly, helpful and offered exemplary customer service while also being a valued member of her team. This young lady handles stress better than most teens I have ever encountered. She manages to balance athletics, academics, 4-H, FFA and involvement with her church. She is not just an active participant in her extracurricular activities, but a leader. She steps up and leads by setting a stellar example for her peers.”

The Foundation’s competitive selection process for this scholarship begins with an online application. Students must provide a written essay, two letters of recommendation, and a scholastic profile completed by their school counselor. Meaningful community involvement, extracurricular activities, academic history and commitment, character, and the student’s potential for success are also considered by the BRCF scholarship committee during the application evaluation process. According to Julie Alvis, Communications and Scholarships Director for BRCF, the committee evaluated a total of 45 fully completed, qualifying applications this year. Alvis further shared, “Our Scholarship Committee is continually impressed with Shelby County students applying for this prestigious scholarship. Not only are they excelling academically, but also in their service to others. Without question, the selection process is never easy considering the high-quality of applicants.”

After comprehensive review of each application, which the Foundation’s scholarship committee completes in the blind (applicant’s names are removed from viewing during this phase of the selection process), six finalists were selected for a personal interview. Selection criteria considered during each interview includes determination, decision making skills, knowledge of what is required to succeed in college and the ability to apply that knowledge, goal orientation and evidence of life planning, and intellectual curiosity in the student’s chosen field.

In addition to Ellie, Renee Aldridge (Shelbyville High School), Ella Connolly (Shelbyville High School), Isabella (Bella) Matney (Shelbyville High School), and Carter Snepp (Southwestern High School), were also interviewed for the scholarship. Because of their impressive lists of personal and academic accomplishments, each of these four students will receive a four-year renewable scholarship from one of the 98 scholarship funds administered by BRCF.

ICI oversees the administration of the LECS Program and provides final review and selection of the recipients. ICI is a nonprofit corporation that represents 29 regionally accredited degree granting, nonprofit, private colleges, and universities in Indiana.

Lilly Endowment Inc. created the LECS Program for the 1998-1999 school year and has supported the program every year since with tuition grants totaling in excess of \$505 million. More than 5,200 Indiana students, including 43 from Shelby County, have received the LECS since the program’s inception.

Lilly Endowment Community Scholars are known for their community involvement, academic achievement, character, and leadership. Furthermore, the primary purposes of LECS Program are:

1. to help raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana

2. to increase awareness of the beneficial roles Indiana community foundations can play in their communities
 3. to encourage and support the efforts of current and past Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to engage with each other and with Indiana business, governmental, educational, nonprofit, and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state.
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[Blue River Community Foundation](#) is celebrating their 35th year serving Shelby County in 2023. Since the first scholarship was awarded from a BRCF administered scholarship fund in 1994, over \$7.7 million dollars have been awarded to students pursuing post-secondary education credentials. In addition to providing these forms of educational resources in the community, BRCF strives to improve the quality of life for Shelby County residents through various community initiatives and grant opportunities (over \$23.7 million awarded since 1994).

[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) is an Indianapolis-based private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. Although the Endowment funds programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion, it maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

Since 1997, [Independent Colleges of Indiana](#) has administered the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program statewide with funding provided by Lilly Endowment. Founded in 1948, ICI serves as the collective voice for the state's 29 private, nonprofit colleges and universities. ICI institutions employ over 22,000 Hoosiers and generate a total local economic impact of over \$5 billion annually. Students at ICI colleges have Indiana's highest four-year, on-time graduation rates, and ICI institutions produce 30 percent of Indiana's bachelor's degrees while enrolling 20 percent of its undergraduates.