

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Amy Haacker, Blue River Community Foundation
317-392-7955 ahaacker@blueriverfoundation.com



During the late part of 2015 and early 2016, ten Shelby County organizations planned and prepared their applications for the Blue River Community Foundation’s Ignite Shelby County Grant. The \$150,000 Ignite Shelby County Grant was created by the Foundation to celebrate the Indiana Bicentennial in 2016 to catalyze a large project that would serve many in Shelby County. After the BRCF Grant Committee and Board of Directors narrowed the field of applicants to three finalists, those three proposals were decided on by a vote from about 60 donors to the previous year’s campaign for the endowment for community granting. The finalists included the Girls Inc./ Boys and Girls Club campus and facility improvements; the Multi-Generational Center architectural drawings for shared space among Shelby Senior Services, the Shelby County Players and the Arts Alliance; and the Outdoor Community Plaza Project at the Shelby County Public Library.

The winner of the Ignite Shelby County Grant was the Multi-Generational Center, a vision of shared space for the organizations that would create a hub of arts, learning, and healthy activity for all ages. The grant was awarded specifically for the architectural drawings intended to kick-start a capital campaign for the project. Unfortunately, the funding opportunities available to the partner organizations, specific space needs, and timelines have forced them to move forward with their own individual projects, rather than shared space. They will continue to collaborate on programming, but the Multi-Generation Center, as presented in the Ignite Shelby County Grant proposal is no longer “on the table.”

The Shelby County Public Library Outdoor Plaza and the Girls Inc/ Boys Club campaign were the other two finalists for the Ignite Shelby County Grant. BRCF was able to fully fund the Outdoor Lab project for Girls Inc/ Boys Club with a \$150,000 grant from the W.E (Bill) Cunningham Trust, which was established for the purpose of horticulture and education. In late February, the BRCF Board of Directors voted to award the Ignite Shelby County Grant to the other runner-up, the Public Library’s Outdoor Plaza Project. The total budget of the project is close to \$200,000, so the \$150,000 grant will accelerate the project. Construction in later 2017 is expected.

Amy Haacker, Executive Director of the Blue River Community Foundation explained, “We believe that the best stewardship of our donors’ gifts includes thoughtful, informed grant-making. Although grants are never risk-free or come with a guarantee of success, this process has illustrated that the BRCF grants committee and Board of Directors had very good foresight by moving these three finalist projects forward. In the end, two of the three projects are fully funded, and BRCF will continue to be supportive of the organizations involved in the Multi-Generational Center planning. We have encouraged those groups to apply for funding as their respective projects take shape.”