

THE GREATER GOOD

Fall 2024

A Quarterly Report from Delaplaine Foundation, Inc.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gazing out at the golden and burgundy hues of Autumn leaves on the tree outside my window, I'm reminded that change is the inevitable constant in our lives, our community, and our world. As the harbinger of change and transformation, this season



resets our inner clocks and prompts us to re-assess and reflect.

Delaplaine Foundation recently released its Annual Report providing an account of the \$2,712,700

distributed in December of 2023 for use through 2024 to 166 distinct nonprofit organizations. This was awarded through 180 grants. We're proud to note that 88% of that sum was poured back into Frederick County, MD, where we're based and have deep community roots.

While internally we use performance metrics to assess impact, nothing tells the story of our mission better than firsthand accounts of those supported and enriched by our grant funding. This Report combines data with photography and storytelling of the people and causes of grantees; stories of success and innovative ways of meeting challenges, human and societal needs.

In this season of change, we're reminded that change itself is a universal constant that drives progress and is an undeniable catalyst for growth as it challenges us to learn, evolve, adapt and imagine new ideas, and open doors to new opportunities. The process of each grant cycle at Delaplaine Foundation involves assessing how funding requests align with community needs and our own values and mission while creating strategies for proactively working with and through our nonprofit impact partners to help shape the future of the community. It also causes us to recognize the potential and opportunity to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of our community.

The power of change lies in the unity of purpose we share and the drive to make our community a better place for all. As we embrace these opportunities for change and transformation, we become architects and contributors to a Greater Good.

Marlene
MARLENE B. YOUNG
President



A rendering of Asbury SeniorScapes Park within Monocacy Village Park in Frederick.

Delaplaine Foundation Awards Grant for Asbury SeniorScapes Park

Delaplaine Foundation is excited to publicize the 2025 groundbreaking of SeniorScapes, a public park space designed specifically to meet the unique needs of older adults. Located in Monocacy Village Park in downtown Frederick, this innovative park will provide 33,000 square feet of customized fitness, recreation, and socialization spaces, specifically designed for senior citizens to encourage physical activity and community engagement in a safe and supportive environment.

The SeniorScapes project has received grant funding from Delaplaine Foundation, an AARP Community Grant, and a Community Development Block Grant from the City of Frederick. Seed money for the park was provided by The Asbury Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of Asbury Communities, a nonprofit specializing in retirement communities. The idea for an adult park came from Sue Paul, Senior Director of Well-being and Brain Health for Asbury. Drawing on her extensive experience as an occupational therapist and her deep commitment to healthy

aging and brain function, Paul hopes to make senior- and dementia-friendly parks commonplace. "For older adults, having access to social support and opportunities for interaction in park settings is essential for cognitive health and overall well-being," says Paul.

The importance of such spaces is underscored by recent U.S. Census Bureau data, which shows that around 15% of Frederick County's 272,000 residents are aged 65 or older. This demographic is growing three times faster than other age groups, according to the Frederick County Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan.

Following the completion of the project, the City of Frederick has agreed to cover all future maintenance and upkeep of the park. In discussing SeniorScapes, Mayor Michael C. O'Connor stated, "By creating environments that encourage physical activity, we encourage our seniors to stay active, engaged, and connected with their community."



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Delaplaine Foundation, Inc., is a private family foundation based in Frederick, Maryland, dedicated to the enrichment of communities and families within Maryland, nearby states and the District of Columbia by supporting programs to strengthen the arts and sciences, historical preservation, educational advancement, spiritual enlightenment and well-being.

Delaplaine Foundation, Inc.
c/o Great Southern Enterprises, Inc.
501(c)3 | EIN 52-2278038

244 West Patrick Street
P.O. Box 3829
Frederick, MD 21705
Telephone: 301.662.2753
Fax: 301.620.1689

info@delaplaine.foundation.org
www.delaplaine.foundation.org



Co-founder Lizzie Thompson (left), Marlene Young, Director Lisa Graham, and Co-founder Greg Thompson, standing at the entrance of En Haus Academy.

Local Nonprofit Champions Nature-Based Curriculum

When most people think about a school classroom, they picture a room inside a building, with rows of student desks all facing one direction. While this might be considered the most traditional type of educational environment, new research suggests there are benefits when the natural environment is incorporated into a child’s educational space. Nature-based education can introduce a component of nature into a curriculum to help students develop respect for our planet, and to foster a sense of being part of a greater ecosystem. Another approach is to create an immersive program, with curriculum designed around experiential learning to foster a harmonious relationship between education and the environment.

Six years ago Greg and Lizzie Thompson founded a small, nature-based pre-school named En Haus Academy. Located in New Market, En Haus Academy looks very different from your average elementary school. Classes are often held outside, even in the winter, even in the rain! Students climb trees, plant gardens and harvest food, and explore the adjacent woods to look for insects and other animals. En Haus Academy also incorporates elements of mindfulness, with yoga classes once a week. Messy hair is encouraged and dirty feet are celebrated and En Haus Academy.

In 2023, the Thompsons created a nonprofit Tree Haus Education (THE), with a mission to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards through immersive and experiential learning opportunities.

Whether helping traditional institutions incorporate components of nature based curriculum, providing resources to those who educate at home, or working to build nature-based schools, THE aims to serve and support all who value this approach to childhood education. “Our classrooms, curriculum, and events are designed to immerse children in nature, which research shows significantly enhances their mental health, social skills, and overall happiness,” stated Greg Thompson. “Our mission is to combat the epidemic of screen addiction, anxiety, and depression by cultivating a passion for learning and playing outside.”

A long term goal of THE is building a nature-based school for 200 students. The building itself would be equipped with state-of-the-art classrooms, each with large windows framing views of the surrounding forest, allowing students to absorb lessons while feeling connected to the outdoors. The 25-acre campus would include an indoor greenhouse, and outdoor classrooms would feature a forest theater, pond classroom, and art grove, an outdoor science lab, and a sensory garden.

In the prior grant cycle, Delaplaine Foundation awarded grant funding to THE to construct a green house. The “Delaplaine Green Haus” will serve as a platform to educate children and families about sustainable, healthy foods, Frederick’s agricultural heritage, and to cultivate a love and respect for the planet. Learn more at: www.treehouseducation.org





Walls in front of the north and south entrances display the full name of the memorial garden. This wall along the southern entrance abuts the Memorial for the Unborn Child and encompasses the Labyrinth Prayer Garden area.

St. Katharine Drexel Preserves and Restores Historic Cemetery

Saint Katharine Drexel Church originated in downtown Frederick in 2000, as a dependent mission of Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church. After achieving independent status in 2003, the parish began construction on a new building located on Opossumtown Pike Road. Groundbreaking for this endeavor took place in May of 2015, with the church opening its doors to congregants in November of 2016. Since that time, Saint Katharine Drexel Church has grown to include over 1000 families in Frederick, serving the spiritual and pastoral needs of the local faith community.

It was during construction of the new church building that a historic cemetery was uncovered. Previously known as the Bloomfield/Clemson Cemetery, active from 1823 through 1888, the site was found to contain 24 graves of Frederick County residents. A former property owner had allowed the cemetery to fall into disrepair, using the site as a dumping ground for old farm equipment. Once it was discovered excavation, followed by the use of ground penetrating radar, found pieces of tombstones which eventually aided in identifying the occupants. Tombstones were etched with surnames including Keyser, Wachter, and Heffner.

Members of Saint Katharine Drexel Church, including Kateri Delaplaine, formed an ad hoc committee to continue the historical research into the identities of people buried on the property. The committee consulted with Ron Pearcey and Chris Haugh, Superintendent and Community Relations & Historic Preservation Manager of Mt. Olivet Cemetery, respectively, who together made critical research recommendations. Certain books they suggested were only available in The Maryland Room at the library. Kateri was also able to access George Delaplaine's personal collection of Frederick history books, which provided valuable clues. This historical research revealed the identity of many of those buried, including two Union Civil War casualties, a Union Civil War veteran, and a Revolutionary War veteran. Five grave sites remain unidentified.

After the cemetery was uncovered, Saint Katharine Drexel Church felt it was a sacred duty to restore and protect the grave site. The decision



was made to continue the area's use as an active cemetery in order to ensure continued protection and maintenance of the area. After completing a survey of the grounds, a master plan was developed which led to the removal of diseased trees, creation of walkways, and introduction of landscaping designed to enhance the natural beauty of the area. Additionally, columbarium were designed and installed for future burials.



Statues of saints are placed throughout the garden. Charles Lwanga, a Ugandan convert to the Catholic Church, was executed by King Mwanga II after refusing to denounce his faith. Lwanga was canonized by Pope Paul VI.

During the design phase of the cemetery, a historical information plaque was created, listing names and dates of birth and death for the buried individuals. This plaque, along with eight of the original, restored tombstones, was mounted on a wall that was constructed along the north entrance to the prayer garden. Delaplaine Foundation awarded grant funding to support construction of the wall, which also displays the full name of the cemetery, St. Katharine Drexel Memorial Garden at Bloomfield-Clemson.

When asked about the cemetery, Kateri Delaplaine stated, "The entire project turned out beautifully. We are very grateful for a resting place for our parishioners in such a richly historic setting. We're also very happy that we have been able to memorialize early settlers of Frederick."

For more information on the St. Katharine Drexel Memorial Garden at Bloomfield-Clemson, please visit <https://www.saintdrexel.org/memorial-gardens/>.



Marlene Young Receives BaaM Award



Delaplaine Foundation President Marlene Young was presented the Maryland BaaM (Business as a Ministry) Award in October at the 2024 Maryland BaaM Awards. This award honors those who have integrated their faith into their professional lives and have modeled faithful stewardship across all areas of their lives. “Oikonomia” is the theme of the BaaM Awards and is a Greek term used in the Bible to refer to stewardship and administration in all things. David Weigelt, Organizing Sponsor of the event said “Marlene’s life and leadership

have shone through as an extraordinary example of this kind of stewardship over decades. In her personal life and through her leadership, Marlene has demonstrated remarkable stewardship with a tireless commitment to her faith and community as exemplified by the extraordinary grace and discernment she brings to her work. Her efforts and contributions have made significant, positive differences in the lives of many.” In response, Marlene said, “I am deeply honored to accept this award on behalf of our great team at Delaplaine Foundation and the dedicated nonprofit impact partners we support.”



DELAPLAINE FOUNDATION INC.

244 West Patrick Street • P.O. Box 3829
Frederick, MD 21705



Learn all about our work of the past year in our 2023-24 Annual Report, available on our website.

Community Collaboration Benefits Local School



This summer Delaplaine Foundation was able to connect Hannah Rouzee, the community coordinator for the Heather Ridge School (HRS), with Jasmine Sneed, the Director of Partnership Development for the Frederick Rescue Mission, and Jenifer Zimmer, Executive Director of Helping Hands and Caring Hearts, to create a coordinated plan to assist HRS students and their families by providing food, hygiene products and clothing.

Identifying and facilitating collaborative partnerships is one of the many ways Delaplaine Foundation supports our local community. In describing the successful collaboration, Delaplaine Foundation President Marlene Young said, “It’s always a joy to connect people and purpose with community members and organizations who can help.”

Read the full version of this article in our digital newsletter.

Seen left to right: Jenifer Zimmer, Executive Director, Helping Hands, Caring Hearts, Jasmine Sneed, Director of Partnership Development, Frederick Rescue Mission, Hannah Rouzee, Community Coordinator, Heather Ridge School.