

PATHWAYS

Newsletter

Reflecting the Impact Our Partnerships Are Making

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March 2026



2025 In Review ...

Smyth County Charitable Fund Grants

Linda Card

In 2025 Smyth County Charitable Fund (FUND) awarded 17 grants, ranging from \$3000 to almost \$240,000. We provided a total of \$739,141 in funding to non-profit groups supporting health, wellness, and education throughout Smyth County. Here's a look at the projects we supported.

Our 2025 Grant Recipients

In February, we awarded funds to **Saltville Golf Club** to repair the putting greens, to **Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center** for local children to attend overnight camp, and matching funds to the **Town of Marion** for the Steele Park project. We supported the **Mel Leaman Free Clinic** with funds for behavioral health, dental services, and staff training. **Project Crossroads** received grants for home accessibility rehab and restoration from Hurricane Helene damage. **Mt. Rogers Community Services (MRCS)** was awarded funding to support a local Tobacco Cessation Program.

Our August grantees included the **Settlers Museum Foundation** for scholarships for students to attend their Appalachian Craft workshops, and the **Blue Ridge Discovery Center** for Smyth County student field trips. **Atkins Elementary School** received funds for their new community playground, and we supported the **Santa's Elves program** through the Smyth County Dept of Social Services. **Rye Valley Water** was granted funds to improve the operation of their water filtration plant, and the **Lifetime Wellness Center** received funds to develop Recreation Therapy programs for adults of all abilities. ♦

Save the Date
LUAAU
at the Lake
August 15, 2026
Hungry Mother State Park Beach

A fundraising event sponsored by
SMYTH COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Supporting our scholarship and grant programs.
Come and make a difference in our community.

Offering Hope for a Second Chance

Linda Card

Smyth County Charitable Fund (FUND) priorities are firmly rooted in health, wellness, and education across Smyth County. When the board established our current three-to-five year strategic goals, our number one focus was substance abuse prevention and recovery. The Appalachian Center for Hope (ACHoPE) in Marion, which we funded, is a solid, bricks-and-mortar example of that goal, and a testament to the power of giving. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on January 9, 2026, that was host to a packed house of supporters.



In early 2022, the FUND pledged three million dollars as seed money to ACHoPE for renovation of their building on the campus of Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute. "The building, constructed in 1939, was the tuberculosis unit and sits apart from the main hospital. Parts of the building had not been used for over twenty years, and it was listed for demolition," John Graham, chairman of the ACHoPE Board of Directors, explains. The board went to work right away to secure the building to house the future ACHoPE. With 2.3 million dollars provided through the Opioid Abatement Authority as well as state and local funding, the center has been completely renewed and is ready to open.

A Kind Of Miracle

ACHoPE is a residential treatment center for individuals suffering with substance use disorder. Officials in the area have long been aware of the need for this facility, which will serve Smyth County and surrounding Southwest Virginia. John credited his fellow board members and many community leaders for supporting the project from the beginning. Chip Shuler, Smyth County Sheriff, is a board member and was present at the ribbon cutting. When discussing the devastating opioid crisis in Smyth County and its impact on local families, John remembers Sheriff Shuler saying, "We're not going to arrest our way out of this problem." The funding from the Charitable Fund and others addresses this problem, with tangible results. The journey from a derelict structure to a beautiful recovery facility is now complete.

The ACHoPE Board of Directors has signed a contract with Fairview Housing to operate and manage the center. They are well-established in this area, with treatment facilities in Bristol and Abingdon. Bob Garrett, president of Fairview Housing, was present at the ceremony. "This is kind of a miracle," he shared. "In my 50 years of experience in property development, this is the most complicated project I've ever worked on." The center has 58 beds for residential treatment and will also offer out-patient and peer-to-peer treatment in a comfortable, therapeutic setting.

A Community Celebration

The ribbon-cutting was a joyous event, with federal, state, and local officials present to share the celebration. John Graham, as master-of-ceremonies, was beaming as he introduced the other members of the board, our representatives and other dignitaries, funding partners, and the construction team that completed the massive undertaking.

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Lynda Helton presents the check to the ACHoPE Board.

Lynda Helton, Executive Director of the FUND, stated, "The center is an expression of belief, compassion, and commitment, while fulfilling the Charitable Fund's mission to create opportunities and give hope for a brighter future. We are proud and gratified to be a part of this significant benefit to the people of Smyth County."

The facility will be known as **Marion Lifestyle Recovery at the Appalachian Center for Hope**. Members of our community who are suffering, who may have given up, now have a second chance. There is help and hope for a better life. John Graham summed up the event, saying, "It truly is a great day to see all these efforts come to fruition with the opening of the Appalachian Center for Hope." ♦



Join the Legacy Circle

Most everyone wants to leave a legacy behind. The question is—what will yours be, and how will you achieve it?

The Smyth County Community Foundation (SCCF) is here to help answer those questions and guide you through the process with ease. We want you to understand just how simple it can be to create a lasting legacy of giving. Through thoughtful estate planning, your scholarship or grant-making fund can benefit Smyth County residents for generations to come.

As Lynda Helton, Executive Director of SCCF, shares, "Our purpose is to build endowments that forever impact Smyth County students and nonprofits. We provide a way for individuals to support the causes they care about most. By creating a scholarship or grant-making fund as part of your estate planning, you can help build a brighter community—both now and in the future."

Take the first step toward creating something that will outlive you. Join the Legacy Circle today and turn your passion for giving into a lasting impact for generations to come.



A Note From Our Board Chair

Our foundation exists because of a shared belief—that by working together, we can create meaningful opportunities and a stronger future for Smyth County. This past year has been a powerful example of that belief in action. Through the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our partners, we have expanded support for students, strengthened local nonprofits, and invested in initiatives that improve quality of life across our community.

As a Board, we are especially proud of the progress being made to increase access to education and workforce training through Smyth Promise Scholarship. These efforts are not only changing individual lives but also helping to build a more resilient and thriving community for years to come. We are equally inspired by the growing number of families and organizations who are choosing to establish endowments and leave a lasting legacy through the Foundation. Their commitment ensures that the impact of today's generosity will continue well into the future.

The success of the Smyth County Community Foundation is a direct reflection of the people who believe in its mission. On behalf of the Board, thank you for your trust, your support, and your vision for what our community can achieve together. We look forward to the year ahead and to continuing this important work—together.



*Mike Robinson
Board Chair*

Supporting Our Students – 2025 Scholarship Awards

by Linda Card

At this time last year, the Smyth County Community Foundation offered three educational scholarships. Now, we are very pleased to offer seven different scholarships!

Our original funds are still open, and these are: the **Judy Taminger Scholarship Fund** helping those studying education; **Changing Lives Through Healthcare Scholarship Fund** helping students in the medical field; and **Smyth Promise Scholarship** providing “last dollar” scholarships to students attending Virginia Highlands

Community College or Wytheville Community College. In addition, the **Louise Blevins-Leslie Girls Golf Scholarship** is still available to high school golfers.

In 2025, **Marki Palmer** received the Taminger Scholarship. The Changing Lives scholarship was awarded to: **Reagan Burchett, Madison Dalton, Karlee Frye, Zachary Hahn, Emily Hash, Jocie Hash, Brooklyn Langston, Olivia Parnell, Kolbe Thomas, Nathaniel Thomas, and Kennedy Williams.**

Jocie Hash is using her scholarship funds to attend nursing school at Wytheville Community College. She will graduate in May 2026 with an associate degree in nursing and plans to work as an ER nurse. “This scholarship has helped me a lot,” Jocie says. “It allowed me to buy my books, scrubs, stethoscope, and everything I need to get through school.” A graduate of Marion Senior High School, Jocie, received Smyth Promise funding and spoke to fellow high school students last year about the program. “I’m doing well and excited about school. I feel like I’m seeing the bright side, and near the end of my studies,” Jocie shares. “I am very thankful for the Changing Lives scholarship and really appreciate it.”



John Taminger presents the 2025 Judy Taminger Scholarship to Marki Palmer.

Madison Dalton shares her inspiring story toward her goal of working as a nurse in ICU. Madison lives with her family on their farm in Sugar Grove and graduated from Rural Retreat High School with an associate degree. “I felt a calling to study healthcare,” Madison says. “God was leading me to care for his people. I entered the nursing program at King University in Bristol and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in nursing in December.” She is very thankful for the scholarship from the Changing Lives fund. “School is difficult enough. Worrying about paying for school makes it more stressful. The scholarship takes the monetary stress away, so I can focus on my studies,” Madison adds. She is ready to take her RN exam to become a licensed registered nurse and pursue her goal to work in Intensive Care.

Expanding Opportunities

Our newly established funds present exciting opportunities for students in Smyth County. **Lexie’s Legacy Scholarship** is named for Alexis “Lexie” Woodward of Saltville. She was a nursing student at Smyth Career and Technical Center when a tragic car accident took her life. As a



Gary Peacock, with Smyth County Hospital Health Trust, presents a 2025 Changing Lives Through Healthcare Scholarship to Madison Dalton.

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student, Lexie became aware that two of her classmates were at risk of dropping out due to financial issues. She appealed to her family, and they assisted these two students in need. According to her family, "This scholarship was created in her spirit of kindness and service, to continue her legacy by helping others. It is intended for individuals facing financial challenges who are returning to school to pursue a career in nursing."

Three of our funds have been in place for many years and are now in the care of SCCF. Students may apply for these using our online application. These three funds will award scholarships to students in 2026 through SCCF.

- The **Emanuel Nathan Memorial Scholarship** Fund supports healthcare students. Per the SCCF website, "The scholarship awards one individual each year, selected from the senior class of Marion Senior High School, who will attend a certified school of nursing or related field such as Pharmacy, Medical Research, etc."
- Students of Rural Retreat High School are eligible for a music scholarship. The **Angie Heldreth and Nancy Heldreth Warren Fund** was established by their family to honor the contributions of these two sisters to our musical heritage. Each year the scholarship will be awarded to a Rural Retreat student to study music.
- The **Susie O. Johnston Religious Education Fund** is available to seminary students or other religious trainees. This scholarship is available to students graduating from high school, those continuing their education, and those going back to school to change careers.

A Partnership For Education

SCCF works in partnership with the Smyth County Education Foundation (SCEF), which also offers several scholarships. Students only have to file one online application to be considered for the SCCF and SCEF scholarships, automatically. Here are the SCEF scholarships and awardees for 2025.

- The **Freeman Scholarship** is intended for students "pursuing a degree in choral music, music education, or an education major." The fund honors the memory of sisters Carla Freeman Sweet, a special Education teacher, and Cynthia Freeman, a music teacher. In 2025, these students were awarded Freeman scholarships: **Sophie Adams, Owen Armbrister, Olivia Gentry, Isabelle Magallanes, and Courtney Wagoner.**
- The family of **Danny "Chico" Cress** funded a scholarship in his memory following his death in a traffic accident. Danny was an avid fan of all Marion Senior High School athletics, and his scholarship is awarded to a Marion varsity athlete to attend college or technical school. **Gracelin Widener** received this award in 2025.

- General SCEF scholarships were awarded to: **Alex Armbrister, Madeline Austin, Dominico Bruzzo-Morello, Lucas Hubble, Landon McFarlane, Grayson Sheets, Brody Whitt, and Kennedy Williams.**

Through our scholarship program, we help support students as they build their skills to be successful, caring citizens in our county.

We congratulate these great young people and wish them all the best of luck!



Marvin Leslie presenting the 2025 Louise Blevins-Leslie Girls Golf Scholarship. Pictured left to right: Paige Thompson, Laura Cox, Olivia Edwards, Mr. Leslie, Morgan Tilson and Macie Hanshew.

A Commitment to Community Well-being

by Linda Card

The Lifetime Wellness Center (LWC) in Marion is celebrating their 25th anniversary in January 2026. The LWC in Saltville will fulfill six years in 2026. Both are milestones worth celebrating, and we congratulate all the staff for their dedication and hard work to make both centers the best that they can be. **WELL DONE!**



Both centers are owned by the Smyth County Charitable Fund (FUND), which provides capital funding to maintain them. Recently, the Town Council of Saltville voted to transfer the title of the LWC building to the LWC. This transition is a benefit to the center, allowing the staff to address building improvements and consider future expansion into unused sections of the building. It also represents the commitment and partnership between the FUND and the Town of Saltville to support health and wellness in that community of Smyth County.

“Commitment, stability and community involvement are the keystones of the success of both centers,” according to Lynda Helton, FUND Executive Director. “These priorities guide us in fulfilling the FUND’s mission of promoting health, wellness and education to the residents of Smyth County.”

New Programs, New Roles

Bryan Tarvin has completed his first year as the Executive Director of both centers. At the year-end gathering of LWC staff and patrons in December 2025, Bryan addressed the group. He reflected on his first year, looking for a theme. “I chose the word Resilience to express how we have overcome obstacles and adapted,” Bryan shares. “We had multiple staffing and management changes. We’ve added new programs and community events. I’m pleased that we’ve accomplished our goals for 2025.”



LWC Marion
1 Health Way
(276) 782-1199

At Saltville, Marcus Carter is now the Fitness Director, and very dedicated to his staff and patrons. “Once I started working out, I knew I wanted to be a personal trainer and took the courses I needed for certification. I worked my way up, and now I’m thankful to be adjusting to my new role here,” Marcus says.

Both centers have popular programs for the children of Smyth County, including **after school programs** and **summer camp**. Crystal Dixon is the Children’s Programs Director in Marion, and Jennifer McCann is the Children’s Services Director in Saltville. A bonus at Marion is the Romp program, which offers families a safe, fun place for their children when schools are closed due to weather or holidays.

With activities such as Bingo, Parents’ Night out, adult basketball, and pop-up yard sales, Saltville LWC offers **year-round family events** that bring the community together. At Marion, the **Aquatics program** offers free swimming lessons for all fourth graders, as well as fun water games and challenges for all ages. These are examples of the importance of the Lifetime Wellness Centers as hubs of their communities.

One of Bryan’s goals for 2026 is to develop an **Inclusive Recreation program**. His prior work with the Norfolk Parks and Recreation Dept. included working with Recreation Therapists, and he wants to focus on underserved populations through an Inclusive Recreation Therapy program. Smyth County Charitable Fund (FUND) is supporting this effort by providing a three-year grant to LWC. “This funding will expand our

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outreach to individuals with special needs or developmental disabilities, to bring the benefits of health, fitness, and well-being to them and their families,” Bryan shares. “We are sensitive to the concerns of those with special needs, and enthusiastic about helping them. We will partner with other organizations who work with special needs populations, such as Special Olympics. Local groups will help us identify those who might benefit from the program.”

Both Bryan and Marcus plan to focus on staff development this year. One priority for 2026 is to “build intrinsic value in our team,” according to Bryan. “Our goal is to invest in training, benefits and opportunities for both full-time and part-time staff to enhance performance and quality.” Bryan is looking to the future and prefers to promote employees from within and enable employees to readily step into a new role.

Marcus adds, “We have several new staff members and we want to help them feel that they can pursue their interests. For example, one of my employees is pursuing certification to be a Nutrition Specialist. We really need a nutritionist for our Live Well program, so we welcome and support her effort.”

A Community Hub

Most importantly, the goal for LWC and the FUND is to **engage the community**. “We have to have a vision, to know where we want to go,” says Bryan. “There is value in our centers beyond fitness or exercise. If you need a hot shower, come here. If you need some quiet time alone, come here. Join us for an exercise class. These are social activities as well as physical efforts.”

Marcus agrees, saying, “During disasters such as Hurricane Helene, winter storms, and power outages, we encourage folks to come to the center. We’ve had lots of folks come in to warm up, charge their devices, and even use our oven to cook a meal.”

As we look forward to another 25 years, we celebrate our Wellness Centers as pillars of our communities, and as gathering places for county residents. The Charitable Fund is committed to this vision. ♦



LWC Saltville
345 Palmer Avenue
(276) 496-9705

Welcoming Christy Hutton

Christy Hutton joined the Smyth County Community Foundation and Charitable Fund Team in June 2025. She jumped in with planning for our Luau at the Lake fundraiser, managing scholarships and taking care of Fund Advisor reporting.

Christy’s roots run deep in Smyth County. She is a Marion Sr. High School graduate and has raised her family in Marion. Christy has a B.S. in Information Systems from Liberty University and is using that background to create new and improve existing websites for SCCF, Holston Hills Golf Course and the Lifetime Wellness Centers. She has updated social media pages and keeps content fresh across our platform.

You may recognize her from the years she has served her community at Smyth County Community Hospital, the Smyth County Treasurer’s Office or Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute. Stop by and welcome Christy to our Foundation team!



Christy Hutton
Admin Assistant &
Social Media Specialist



Sharing a Passion for Helping Others

One of our major grant awards was to Communities in Schools of Appalachian Highlands. The Communities in Schools (CIS) program operates nationwide and was initiated in 1977. Based in Bristol, Va., the Appalachian Highlands affiliate organization (CIS-AH) serves 17 school districts in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, including Smyth County. I met with Kayla Phillips, the Director of Development and Institutional Giving, along with Jonathan Arnold and Abbie Krackow, Regional Directors of Programming and Community Schools for Smyth and Grayson Counties.

They shared their enthusiasm and passion for CIS-AH, helping the children and families of our communities. They also expressed appreciation for the funding provided by the FUND. According to Kayla, "The grants we received from the Charitable Fund are very significant. These funds support our presence in the middle and high schools of Smyth County and recently enabled us to expand to the elementary schools. We now have Student Support Coordinators (Coordinators) in every school in Smyth County, with funding provided for three years. We are very grateful."

CIS-AH focuses on three major areas: attendance, behavior, and performance. Using various in-school competitions, activities and events, the Coordinators encourage school attendance to reduce truancy. And it works- in 2025, 84% of schools showed improved whole-school attendance. The Coordinators identify students who need support due to behavior problems, and provide Social, Emotional Learning (SEL) to teach them the skills they need to build relationships, develop trust and make good decisions, resulting in 86% of students showing progress. They also help with homework, mentoring, college applications and involve the family to improve grades and test scores, with 99% of K-11 grade students promoted to the next grade in 2025.



"Most of our Student Support Coordinators live where they work and went to the schools, so they really know the people and the community," Abbie explains. "They are familiar with the problems affecting the children in their community, they build trust and make it easier for the parents to be involved." The Coordinators engage with school staff to identify specific issues affecting their students, and act as the "point person" to find solutions to these issues, both in school and at home. Jonathan shared some examples. "One of our Coordinators found a washer and dryer for a family that needed one, and arranged funding to pay for it. When a family couldn't pay their electric bill and had no heat, the Coordinator intervened to get their power back on," he says. Abbie adds, "All of our Coordinators keep a current file of resources available to help with basic needs such as food, clothing, utilities or transportation. Many times, families are unaware of these resources and turn to our Coordinators, who regularly go above and beyond for their kids."

The CIS program embodies the mission of the Charitable Fund, "to build pathways for a stronger community by creating opportunities and giving hope for a brighter future." The CIS-AH organization is dedicated to improving the education, health, and well-being of our neighbors with their presence in our schools. Kayla shares, "Having our CIS-AH staff present in every school in Smyth County, K-12, is an enormous advantage. We provide a continuum of support, and the longer we are present in a school district, the greater impact we have on the students and their families. We couldn't do this without the generous support of the Charitable Fund, and we are very grateful." ♦

Recovery and Assistance Across Smyth County



Tropical Storm Helene hit our area on the last Friday of September 2024, and clean-up started immediately that weekend with neighbors helping neighbors. By early in the following week, people were ready to give financially to help with the massive clean-up, repair, and, in some cases, rebuild efforts across our county.

Smyth County Community Foundation (SCCF) created a special fund, Smyth County Disaster Relief Fund, to focus dollars on disaster relief efforts. Once the fund was set up and posted to the

public, donations started rolling in. SCCF offered a matching challenge to double any community donations. Many across Smyth County gave donations to help their neighbors. We also had donations from as far away as California, Colorado, Florida and New York (and many other states in between). Countless donors from across Virginia and neighboring states reached out to provide their support.

Many names we recognized as people originally being from this area. Area businesses did their own matching challenges to employees or set up fundraisers in their place of business to raise funds of support. A group playing at the Lincoln Theatre in Marion donated a portion of their proceeds to our Disaster Relief Fund. The Bank of Marion did a 5X match on the donations from their employees to contribute to the fund and then we matched that as well! Talk about impactful giving!! Area churches donated as well as local non-profits. Everyone was anxious to provide their financial support. We also received large donations of support from Wellspring Foundation, United Way of Southwest Virginia and Smyth County Charitable Fund/Smyth County Community Foundation.

This financial support, along with volunteers, has allowed the Smyth County Long-Term Disaster Recovery Team to make impactful repairs to over 25 homes across Smyth County and help 5 families rebuild their homes. For some families, we have helped them repair access across waterways to access their homes and for others we have helped with home damage. Smyth County was also affected by the Flooding Event of February 2025, and our Smyth County Long-Term Disaster Recovery Team was ready to help.

Applications for assistance continue to come in for families still working to fix their homes and property from damages experienced by Helene and the February 2025 Flooding Event. If you, or someone you know, has damages from one of these natural disasters that FEMA or insurance has not covered, the application for assistance can be found at smythchamber.org/disaster-relief-assistance/.



We are now focusing on building our fund to support new applicants and to prepare for the next disaster. If you are interested in giving, go to www.smythccf.org/donate for options to give online or via mail.

Smyth County Long-Term Disaster Recovery Team would like to thank all donors for your financial support this past year. Your funding has allowed us to clean up, repair and build back for families impacted by Tropical Storm Helene and other natural disasters across Smyth County. *We could not have done it without you!* ❤️

The Latest From The Links

by Linda Card

The new year is bringing change to Holston Hills Golf Course and Event Center (HHGC). The management team that operated the course for the last five years has had a positive impact on the course and our community. They are ready to move on to new endeavors. Smyth County Charitable Fund (FUND), owners of the golf course, undertook the search for new management. "We are pleased to introduce Mike Jick as the new General Manager of the golf course, and to renew our commitment to improving the course and serving our community," states Lynda Helton, Executive Director of the Charitable Fund.



Hole #9 at Holston Hills

New Leadership

Mike arrived from Palm Springs, California on December 1st, and had a full month to explore his new home and make new connections before officially taking over the golf course on January 1st. He brings over forty years of experience with the world of golf, as a General Manager, Teaching Pro, and PGA Player. Most of his time has been spent in California, but he also worked in Pinehurst, North Carolina and Detroit. He played with the Australasian PGA tour from 1993 to 2000. He is most proud of his involvement with golf instruction, saying, "I was nominated by Golf Magazine as one of the top 100 golf teachers in the U. S. while I was an instructor at Detroit Golf Club from 1996 to 2000."



Mike Jick, General Manager

His arrival marks several other changes taking place at HHGC. A new POS (Point of Sale) system will streamline functions in the Pro Shop and improve communications. According to Mike, "The new system will enable us to be more proactive in sharing information with our players. We can send up-to-date text messages, notifications, and any changes taking place. Most of our bookings for tee times will be made online so players won't have to call us." Patrons of the course will see changes in the Pro Shop in the coming months. Mike attended the PGA Merchandise Show in Florida in January to bring back new products and ideas, with more options available for golfers. Another change is the lease for the golf carts. The current lease expires soon and Mike has identified a new provider who will replace the carts and maintain them.

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Stop by the Pro Shop for information about memberships and fees.

Holston Hills Golf Course continued

Emphasis On Community Engagement

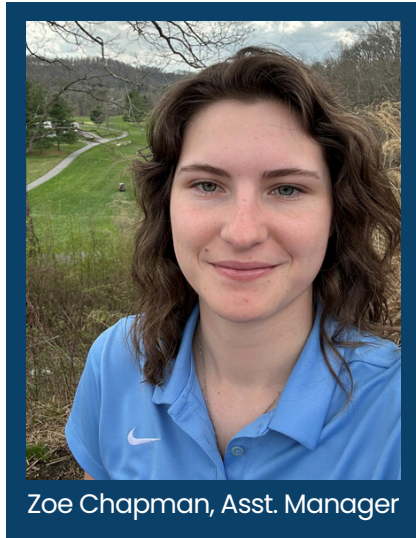
Mike was pleased with the turnout and participation at the members meeting held in December. He appreciates the energy and feedback from that gathering. "I have no plans to come in and make a lot of changes," he shares. "My goal is to listen to our patrons and respond to their concerns."



Holston Hills Golf Course
& Event Center

The Food and Beverage venue at HHGC has a new provider also. Penny's Kitchen, located at Seven Mile Ford, is owned and operated by twin brothers **Steven and Jonathan McCarty**. They will be serving snacks, meals and drinks, as well as managing events in the Ballroom at the clubhouse. According to Jonathan, "We're very excited about this opportunity. We have a food truck and long-time experience with food catering. We'll be attending a food product show in Hickory, NC soon and have lots of ideas for a new menu." The new venture, named **Penny's Hole-in-One**, will be open to the public, bringing good food and a positive atmosphere to the casual setting.

Most of the golfers know HHGC employee **Zoe Chapman**, who has worked at the course for nine years, and is now the Assistant Manager. "I started here washing golf carts, then moved to the maintenance department," Zoe says. A former Chilhowie High School golfer, Zoe enjoys being on the course. She is



Zoe Chapman, Asst. Manager

working closely with Mike Jick, helping in the Pro Shop and all other areas. "There's something different every day on the course," Zoe states, "and I love it here." **Jayson Tibbs**, the HHGC Golf Course Superintendent, is another key player in keeping things running at the course.

With his background in teaching golf, Mike plans to expand youth outreach efforts at the course. He's looking to add golf instruction events to encourage new golfers and increase participation in his favorite sport. "We're updating our website and our social media marketing, so it's easier for our patrons to know what's happening," Mike explains. "With the support of the Charitable Fund, we're looking forward to a great year here at Holston Hills, and hope you'll join us." ♦

Our Board

The following are members of both the Smyth County Community Foundation Board and the Smyth County Charitable Fund Board.

- Mike Robinson, PhD – Chair
- Paul Holcombe, Esq. – V. Chair
- Sandra Catalan – Secretary
- Brian Cregger – Treasurer
- Emily Bralley, DO
- Dennis Carter, EdD
- David Fields
- Sarah Gillespie
- John Graham, Esq.
- Chelsea Hamman, MD
- Dickie Kegley
- David Kiser, MD
- Christina Lawson, PharmD
- Brian Thompson, DMD

Director's Corner

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the generosity, resilience, and shared vision that continue to shape the Smyth County Community Foundation. Together, we are building more than programs—we are building pathways to opportunity, hope, and long-term impact for our community.

This year, we saw meaningful growth in both participation and support. From expanding scholarship opportunities for students pursuing higher education and workforce training, to strengthening partnerships with local nonprofits, to helping our neighbors build back after disaster, your investment is making a difference in real and lasting ways. Each scholarship awarded, each grant distributed, and each partnership formed represents a step forward for Smyth County.

We remain especially focused on removing barriers to education and supporting the essential services that help our community thrive. Through initiatives like the Smyth Promise Scholarship and our continued investment in health, wellness, and workforce development, we are helping individuals and families build stronger futures.

One of the most exciting areas of growth this year has been in legacy giving. Through our Legacy Circle, more individuals and families are choosing to create endowments that will support students and nonprofits for generations to come. These commitments ensure that the impact of today's generosity will be felt far into the future.

None of this work would be possible without you—our donors, partners, volunteers, and community leaders. Your belief in our mission fuels everything we do.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding opportunities, deepening partnerships, and building a stronger, more vibrant Smyth County. Together, we are not only meeting today's needs—we are shaping tomorrow's possibilities. Please stop by my office and let's talk about how you can be part of the vision.

With sincere appreciation,
Lynda



Lynda Helton
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