

Harrison County Community Foundation

Charles Eckart Family Charitable Donor Advised Fund

The Harrison County Community Foundation's first endowed donor advised fund was established in December 2014 when Charles Eckart, his wife Violet Eckart, and three of their children – Christian Eckart, Holly Strange and Heidi Seuling – chose to create the Charles Eckart Family Charitable Donor Advised Fund. A donor advised fund provides the founding contributor the opportunity to recommend grants from the fund.

Charles and Violet grew up in Harrison County, and they raised their children there. Charles said he and Violet have been part of several organizations in the county, and they wanted to give back to promote the interests of Harrison County in some way.

Charles said he, his wife and their children wanted to start a donor advised fund because they knew many Harrison County nonprofits did not need a huge grant, but instead needed help doing small things.

"We felt this would be a way that we could direct money to organizations that basically worked at making life better for people here in Harrison County," Charles said.

Charles said he and his family hold meetings to decide which organizations they would like to support, how they would like to support them and how much money is needed to provide that support. Then, the family recommends grants to the HCCF board.

In 2015, money from the Charles Eckart Family Charitable Donor Advised Fund supported the purchase of refreshments for Harrison County CASA and a patron night sponsored by Harrison County Arts. A year later, the fund supported the Historical Society of Harrison County as it made historical publications for Harrison County, and it allowed Veterans of Harrison County to support the emergency needs of veterans in the county.

Charles said his family plans to continue to have the fund support nonprofit organizations it has already supported, as well as other nonprofits, in the future. He said the fund has enabled his family to feel good about helping organizations they had also wanted to help in the past.

Charles said some of his family members have donated to the fund, and he encourages others to donate as well. He also offered advice for anyone who may wish to start a donor advised fund.

"You need to focus on giving back and how best to do that," Charles said. "And then, I think you need to start searching for organizations that could use a little boost."

Charles said he would encourage others to start donor advised funds at HCCF.

"I think this is a marvelous tool that should encourage many others to take advantage of this opportunity to provide a permanent legacy," Charles said. "I absolutely encourage anyone to use this vehicle to make a difference in the county."

