The Marion Family YMCA has been renamed the Wopat YMCA Center, in honor of the late Robert and Dorothy Wopat, and Marion Technical College has opened a new Health Technologies Center. Both of these buildings have connections to Marion Community Foundation.

The Wopats, as part of a $16 million gift to Marion Community Foundation, included a $3 million gift to the YMCA.

According to Theresa Lubke, Marion YMCA executive director, the legacy the Marion couple left literally saved the facility. The escalating principal on the money borrowed to build the Y in 2002 was becoming prohibitive.

"It was the catalyst that allowed us to refinance," Lubke said of the Wopats' generosity. "From that standpoint, it did help save us."

The dedication of the Wopat Family Center is in recognition and appreciation of their generosity that is helping to nurture the potential of youth and teens, improve the community's well-being, and provide opportunities for people to give back and support their neighbors. Robert Wopat was very involved in community work, serving on the Marion County Children Services Board and as its president for many years.

Lubke said the gift to the Y will have far reaching impact for Marion residents. On some days, more than 1,500 people use the facility and take part in programs.

"It's absolutely a well-used Y, and we're glad that, despite the debt, we have the size of facility we do have," she said.

According to the YMCA, the Marion-based nonprofit organization spent approximately $10.3 million, of which it borrowed $8 million, to build and equip its facility on Barks Road. The remainder came from donations and pledges to a capital campaign.

Distributions of $150,000 annually for the next 20 years from the Wopat Family's YMCA Fund at the Marion Community Foundation will help pay principal and interest on the remaining debt, which stands at $6.9 million.

Addressing the audience at the dedication ceremony, Dr. Henry Heinzmann, Wopat family friend and MCF past board chairman, said, "I hope you will all understand and agree when I say that it is so satisfying to know that the Wopats are being honored, albeit posthumously, in such a public and enduring way by having this building named for them."

Marion Community Foundation has been providing on-going support of the YMCA, in addition to the Wopat funds, since 2000. MCF donated in excess of $500,000 over a six year period, which was used in support of the Wellness Center when the current Y...
Two New Funds Created at MCF

Merle & Evelyn Lashey YMCA Fund

Support for the recently renamed Wopat YMCA Center (see cover article on page 1) continues to pour in via Marion Community Foundation. A new designated fund, the Merle and Evelyn Lashey YMCA Fund, has been created.

While the awards from the Lashey Fund are designated expressly for the YMCA, the funds are unrestricted in how the YMCA may use them. The Lashey Fund awards are for “the charitable, educational, and public purposes” of the Y. The fund will begin making annual grants in 2013 and in perpetuity thereafter.

Evelyn E. Walter Foundation Fund

A new non-endowed, donor advised fund, the Evelyn E. Walter Foundation Fund, has been created at Marion Community Foundation. While the Walter Foundation has been in existence since 1986, a small portion of its assets have been moved to Marion Community Foundation.

“The Walter Foundation is essentially using MCF as a temporary tool to accomplish its charitable goals,” said president Brad Bebout.

The Walter Foundation has made numerous gifts to local charities over the years. The Foundation, established by the Walters, who had no children, has always focused on supporting people and causes in Marion County. Numerous scholarships have been awarded as well.

The Walter Fund at Marion Community Foundation will focus its support on the Marion Trail grass Trail. The fund includes $12,000 of seed money and is seeking matching funds in support of this recreational facility.

Capacity Building a Great Success

Marion Technical College was founded in 1970 and currently enrolls more than 2,500 students in nearly 70 associate degree and certificate programs.

Marion Community Foundation also supports education with the numerous scholarship funds in its stewardship portfolio. The Foundation currently manages more than 50 scholarship funds, which constitutes nearly 30 percent of its total number of funds. Included in this total is the Marion Technical College Scholarship Fund created by Andy Harper, longtime vice president at MTC. The Fund directly benefits students attending the local college.

Marion Technical College’s new 30,000 square foot Health Technologies Center is home to the nursing program and most allied health programs.

The new facility adds five new labs and a stadium-seating, high tech auditorium that accommodates 150 students for the college’s nursing program. The new labs include a nurses aid lab and classroom, separate labs for first and second year nursing students, and two simulation labs with observation rooms. Two 30-station computer labs are also included. All 30 nursing faculty offices are in the new building. The Medical Assisting, Health Information Technology, and Medical Lab Technology departments are also in the new building with more space, better technology and an improved learning environment.

The building comes with a total price tag of $6.2 million, including the building, furniture, and equipment. It is one of the first new campus buildings in Ohio to use geothermal energy for heating and cooling.
MCF supports Achievers’ Club at Grant Middle School

Marion Community Foundation has awarded a grant in support of the Achievers’ Club mentoring program at Grant Middle School. The $800 award has been made from the Mary H. Hollaway Fund. Additional funding was provided by United Way of Marion County.

The Achievers’ Club is a mentoring program at the middle school conducted by adult volunteers who provide weekly sessions to communicate principles of successful living for approximately 100 students.

The curriculum for the program was created locally by the core team of mentors – John Barnes, Willie King, and John Peterson, who oversee the care of all Achievers’ Club activities. The curriculum is based upon principles gleaned from three books – *The Code: The Five Secrets of Teen Success* and *Mental Karate* by Mawi Asgedom and a modern adaptation of James Allen’s *As a Man Thinketh*. The principles are communicated through question and answer discussion in a 30-minute classroom setting.

Student participation in Achievers’ Club has grown exponentially, from four students in the 2007/2008 academic year to the present 100+ students. In addition to documented improvements in the students’ GPAs, the Club promotes positive social interaction by sponsoring events such as attending the OSU spring game and an annual skating party.

The core team, in addition to curriculum planning, conducts student assessment analysis and individual achievement recognition.

Grantmaker for a Day

Each year at the Marion Community Foundation’s Holiday Open House a raffle is held; but, it’s a different kind of raffle because the winner gives the prize away. The drawing is called the Grantmaker for a Day raffle and Marion Community Foundation provides two $100 prizes for which the raffle winners get to select recipients.

“Our holiday open house is also a Business After Hours event,” said MCF president Brad Bebout. “Lots of organizations raffle off their products or services at their events. In the case of Marion Community Foundation, we raffle off philanthropy.”

This year’s winners are Art Blair of Johnston Supply, who selected the Christmas Clearinghouse for his $100 grant, and Peggy Hall, who selected the Palace Theatre for her $100 grant. Congratulations to our 2011 Grantmakers for a Day.

To learn more about being a grantmaker, please read the P.I.T. Stop article also found on this page of Legacy.
The 2011 holiday open house held at Marion Community Foundation’s beautiful home within the historic Stengel-True Museum was a great success, according to MCF president and CEO Brad Bebout. The annual event has earned the reputation by many as the unofficial kickoff event to the holiday season in the Marion area. More than 150 people attended this year’s event, held December 1.

“The holiday open house is an opportunity for us, at Marion Community Foundation, to show our hospitality to the community who so generously supports us throughout the year,” said Bebout. The holiday event is attended by the Foundation’s board members, donors, grant and scholarship recipients, and the community at large. It is offered as a Business After Hours event in conjunction with the Marion Area Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to Bebout, the staff of the Foundation includes office manager Diana Rinesmith and administrative assistant Jackie Albert. The Foundation also utilizes the services of Diane Mault as bookkeeper and Lori Stevenson as marketing consultant.

This year’s event was catered by All Occasions Catering and the elaborate decorating throughout the home was created by Marion Flower Shop.