

# HAVE YOU MET PHIL?

Philanthropy Phil is a passionate young philanthropist who travels throughout Kankakee and Iroquois Counties supporting causes that matter to him and showcases the impactful work of various organizations in our service area. With a heart dedicated to making a difference, he champions initiatives such as early childhood education, workforce development, health and human services, and much more. Through his commitment and financial support, Phil amplifies the voices of those who support each cause and strives to inspire others to join him to enhance the quality of life in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties today and for future generations.

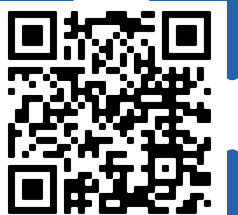
## WE CAN ALL BE LIKE PHIL!

At the heart of every thriving community are individuals who care deeply and give generously. At the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, we believe that everyone has the potential to be a philanthropist. Philanthropy isn't about the size of the gift; it's about the impact. Whether it's a one-time donation, monthly giving, or including the Foundation in your estate plan, every contribution makes a difference. With us as your giving partner, you can support a specific fund or cause that speaks to your passions, create a fund or scholarship to leave a lasting legacy and plan your giving in a way that aligns with your values and goals. Our foundation serves as a trusted vehicle to help you give in the way that is most meaningful and impactful to you. Together, we can uplift causes that matter, build opportunities for future generations, and strengthen our community in countless ways. Join us in making a difference—because we all can make an impact in our communities, we can all be like Phil!

At the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, we share Phil's vision. This year, thanks to donors like you, we've been able to serve our community in transformative ways.

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# POWER IN PARTNERSHIPS

Fiscal sponsorships provide a powerful way to foster new opportunities for organizations and initiatives that may not have the resources or infrastructure to operate independently. By partnering with established organizations, like the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, these groups gain access to vital financial management, fundraising support, and operational guidance. This allows them to focus on their mission while ensuring transparency and accountability. Fiscal sponsorships empower new projects to grow, build community impact, and create lasting change, all while providing a streamlined path to success.



## RENVILLE CARES AND CFKRV TEAM UP TO BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS

Renville Cares, an initiative started by the Renville family, is all about giving back to the local community. Through their beloved Annual Fall Fest and Turkeys for Tots fundraisers, they bring joy and hope to over 400 children each year, making it possible to experience the magic of the holiday season. This year, Renville Cares is excited to partner with the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley as their fiscal sponsor. With CFKRV's support, Renville Cares can focus even more on what they do best—lifting up families and spreading kindness. Together, they're making a year-round difference, ensuring that every family feels supported and cared for.

## WATSEKA COMMUNITY RENEWAL: RESTORING HISTORY & REVITALIZING

Watseka Community Renewal was founded with a heartfelt mission to preserve history and breathe new life into the Watseka community. Their current focus is the restoration of the historic Stephens Bros Opera House in Watseka, Illinois—a cherished landmark rich with stories of the past. Beyond this iconic project, Watseka Community Renewal is dedicated to taking on additional initiatives aimed at preserving the city's heritage and fostering revitalization. With each project, they strive to honor Watseka's history while building a vibrant future for generations to come.



## NONPROFIT CEO'S CONNECT & COLLABORATE

Collaboration is vital to impacting change in our communities. That is why the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, in partnership with the Kankakee Chamber of Commerce, hosts quarterly Nonprofit CEO Coffee Talks. These gatherings provide a welcoming space for nonprofit leaders to connect, share insights, and support one another in their mission to serve the community. As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited to expand these Coffee Talks into Iroquois County, fostering collaboration and strengthening bonds across even more organizations. Together, we're building a stronger, more connected future for all.

# EDUCATE & EMPOWER

The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley is committed to empowering future leaders through scholarship partnerships, support for the Kankakee County CEO Program, and other educational initiatives. Through grant funding, administrative support, and access to educational seminars, CFKRV helps students and young professionals develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed. Together, we're investing in the next generation of changemakers and strengthening our community for years to come.



## KANKAKEE COUNTY CEO

Kankakee County CEO launched in the fall of 2023 with the backing of local business partners and area schools, the Kankakee County CEO Program has already proven to be a transformative experience for students. This innovative program is more than a business course—it provides hands-on, experiential learning that equips participants with essential workforce skills, including problem-solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility,

communication, and professionalism. Now in its second year, the program is thriving with five students from Kankakee High School under the guidance of facilitator Katie Bretzloff. Supported by 48 active investors, these students have completed their first two microbusiness ventures and are gearing up for their next entrepreneurial challenge. Over the first two months of class, they have visited 14 local businesses and heard from 26 guest speakers, providing invaluable insights into the business world. Last Spring, the inaugural class set the bar high, with one student earning top honors at the CEO National Pitch Competition. Building on that success, the current class is embracing opportunities to develop critical thinking, time management, and real-world connections.

The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley played a vital role in bringing CEO to Kankakee County, serving as the program's fiscal sponsor and championing its launch. By connecting students with local business leaders and fostering entrepreneurial growth, the CEO program is empowering the next generation of innovators and leaders. Students and business leaders alike praise the program for its ability to bridge education with real-world experience. The future is bright with these young entrepreneurs at the helm, ready to shape their community and beyond.

## FUNDING OUR FUTURE LEADERS

Partnering with local school districts for scholarship programs allows CFKRV to streamline the process for donors, applicants, and schools through our online scholarship platform and universal application. With six active foundation scholarships, the Herscher High School Scholarship Program, and the addition of Manteno High School scholarships this year, we're making it easier than ever to connect students with funding opportunities. **Last year, we awarded over \$66,000 in scholarships**, and with these new partnerships, we are looking forward to the increased opportunities available for students to reach their post graduation goals.



# INSPIRING FUTURE CHANGE MAKERS

Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley is proud to partner with United Way to inspire and educate the next generation of board members through our Board Boot Camp. This program equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to serve on nonprofit boards in our communities. Over the past year, we hosted two successful cohorts in Kankakee County, empowering participants to step confidently into leadership roles. **In January 2025, we're excited to bring this initiative to Iroquois County,** continuing our mission to prepare and inspire future changemakers.



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We strive to empower our community through education. This belief drives us to host educational seminars that enable individuals to make informed decisions for themselves and their families. Most recently, we hosted an Estate Planning Seminar, guiding participants on how to secure their family's future while leaving a meaningful legacy. Attendees learned the importance of wills, trusts, and charitable giving, as well as how planning today can ensure their values live on for generations. We're honored to serve as a resource for our community, helping individuals prepare for tomorrow while supporting the causes they care about most. Stay tuned for more seminars and opportunities to build a better future together!

## AMPLIFYING IMPACT

In 2024, **we proudly introduced five new funds**, each designed to address vital needs and create lasting change in our community. These funds reflect the passion and commitment of those who believe in building a brighter future for our region. Thanks to your commitment to positive change in our communities, **we have awarded over \$250,000 to area nonprofits in the past year.** Together, we continue to turn generosity into impact!



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