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Lake Anna Cover Photo courtesy of Frank Smrdel. Other cover photos provided by the Barberton Historical Society.
It is fitting that in this 15th anniversary of the Foundation, the Barberton Community Foundation’s (BCF) board of directors launched its first strategic planning process. Our aim was to produce a ten-year living and breathing plan that had the support of the board, was clear, well-focused, and would lay out a vision to continuously guide our course and our role in the community.

The plan needed to be focused, the results measurable, and the impact over time compelling. Input for the plan came from over 50 constituents who participated in interviews and surveys, and some even served on plan focus group committees. How we listened was critical to plan development. Our broad vision is “to improve now and forever the quality of life for Barberton residents.” How to best accomplish that when the needs of our community are so diverse and the resources are limited will always be our challenge. We see the plan as a guide to manage the Foundation, enhance our grant-making, our investing, our donor services, our leadership, our role as a unique resource in the community, our mission to inspire giving to do good, as well as a mandate to steward our resources for perpetuity.

We began the extensive strategic planning process by working with current and former board members, volunteers who serve as Friends of the Foundation, community representatives, stakeholders and leaders. The process began in June 2010, when the executive director began interviewing board members, staff, the mayor, council representatives, city and school leadership, citizens, and representatives of many of the non-profits we have worked with. The goals – obtain many viewpoints about the work of the Foundation during the past fifteen years, assess our greatest needs, and discover our greatest strengths as a place of beginning.
A Strategic Planning Committee was formed in 2010, chaired by Kim Karson; The Committee selected Deb Palmer George of Palmer Solutions as our facilitator. Palmer Solutions conducted approximately 45 interviews and surveys over a two-month period prior to the planning retreat. The interviews included the following questions:

1. What about the BCF mission most motivated or inspired your commitment to serve on the board?

2. What has been a highpoint, a time when you have been most proud or gratified by the impact of the foundation? What positive attributes, characteristics or factors do believe most contributed to this result?

3. As the BCF begins the strategic planning process, what pertinent factors and trends – internal and external – do you believe will have the greatest impact on the organization’s work going forward?

4. What are your top three concrete wishes for the future of the BCF?

With the information gleaned from the interviews, the Foundation Board of Directors came together on Saturday, February 26, 2011, to begin the planning process.
A New Beginning

The board of directors envisions the launch of this strategic plan as a new beginning, built on the shared vision, mission, values and goals expressed by the many participants who have contributed to the plan. The Board feels that where and how we manage and spend our time and our resources are more crucial than ever before if we truly want to continue to make noticeable improvement in the quality of life of Barberton residents.

The board recognizes that more than fifteen years of Barberton Community Foundation history preceded this strategic planning process. We honor the good intentions, vision, efforts and accomplishments of the founders of the Foundation, as well as the accomplishments and contributions that have been made by many other dedicated people over the lifetime of the organization. All of that work created the foundation upon which this strategic plan is built.

The Barberton Community Foundation board of directors, executive director and staff, pledge to support the implementation of this plan, which is fully aligned with the Foundation’s mission and underlying values.

With this strategic plan, The Barberton Community Foundation is poised to move to the next level of excellence to fulfill our mission – to strengthen our community for current and future generations by providing leadership, fostering collaboration, and creating a legacy of giving to do good.
Strategic Plan 2011 - 2020

Vision

To improve, now and forever, the quality of life for Barberton residents.

Mission

To strengthen our community for current and future generations by providing leadership, fostering collaboration, and creating a legacy of giving to do good.

Mission Fulfillment

The Barberton Community Foundation fulfills its mission by:

Supporting the City of Barberton, Barberton School District and Public Health.

Encouraging private giving for public good.

Building and maintaining endowments to respond to changing community needs.

Serving as a catalyst and resource to effectively respond to community needs.

Strengthening nonprofits to achieve their missions.

Fostering strong relationships with corporations, nonprofits, and individuals.
Values

Our values guide BCF grant-making, programs, resource development, outreach, and oversight.

Stewardship
We use our vision and values to guide our decisions as we operate to the highest standards in donor relations, institutional governance and community service.

Fiscal Responsibility
Through continuous evaluation, we manage the resources of the foundation to the highest standards.

Integrity
We deal with honesty, openness, and respect.

Leadership
We value our role as partners in developing community solutions.

Sustainability
We direct BCF resources with sustainability in mind and we promote sustainability in decision-making for individuals, programs, organizations, and the environment.

Charity
We encourage charitable giving that upholds individual dignity and improves quality of life.

Preservation
We believe in preserving Barberton’s rich cultural and historical heritage.

Innovation
We encourage innovation in government, business, and community institutions.

Diversity and Inclusion
We value persons of all walks of life and commit to inclusive community programs and practices.
Strategic Direction

To deliver our mission and realize our vision, we have committed to four areas of focus which, together with our values, will be used as filters for developing, dedicating, and measuring the impact of BCF resources. Those focus areas are:

- Economic Development
- Social Services
- To improve, now and forever the quality of life for Barberton residents.
- Educational Excellence
- Community Image

To make sustained progress and achieve measurable results in these areas requires on-going collaboration among community institutions, government, business leaders, and the BCF. For each impact area, a case statement with goals, strategies, and action plans has been developed by a collaborative team of BCF board, staff, and stakeholders from around the community.
Goals

To ensure the BCF’s long-term effectiveness in contributing to positive community change and results in these areas, we have established the following goals for our organization:

**Focus**

on grant-making, Program Related Investments (PRI),
and budgeting in the four focus areas.

**Measure**

and evaluate results of grants, PRI,
and budgeted BCF initiatives.

**Communicate**

results to our community to achieve maximum impact.

*Primary objective: To achieve our goals, we will use best practices to sustain operational excellence.*
Focus
on grant-making, Program Related Investments (PRI), and budgeting in the four focus areas.

Objectives:

Compile and prioritize focus area team recommendations for Executive Committee review.

Review and update as needed, grant committee guidelines and process in line with strategic plan.

Develop budget modeled on achieving strategic plan goals.

Create plan-based filters for leadership activities, grant-making and PRI Investments.

Build educational relationships, level of communications and Foundation involvement in the School District.

Educate stakeholders on the BCF’s plan and processes so they know how to make best use of the foundation as a resource.

Proactively use our resources for transformational change.
Measure and evaluate results of grants, PRI, and budgeted BCF initiatives.

Objectives:

Create 2010 data for measureable progress indicators

Document the impact with improved tracking and feedback of our grants, scholarships, leadership initiatives and PRI.

Report on Performance Indicators progress at Annual Meeting
Communicate
results to our community to achieve maximum impact.

Objectives:

Make full use of technology to communicate with our constituency and each other

Inform community about our strategic plan

Report annually to the community

Collect stories and testimonies and sell the impact

Improve our outreach to donors and the community

*Primary objective: To achieve our goals, we will use best practices to sustain operational excellence.*

Complete successful audits

Ensure grantee, donor, and board satisfaction with our performance

Properly educate and strengthen the board

Adopt and implement nominating committee guide

Professionally develop the staff

Dedicate staff to meaningful, high impact work

Adopt and implement donor development and major gift plan

Achieve credentialed management performance standards
Our Case for the Four Focus Areas

Stating Our Case: The Foundation intends to strategically invest its resources, collaborate and provide leadership when needed in order for our students to have an opportunity to achieve educational excellence, our economic base is strengthened, our image and brand is shining, and those most in need can receive assistance. We have developed a case statement for each focus area the board has identified.

Measuring Our Progress: The Foundation is interested in measuring our progress in improving the quality of life of Barberton residents as we drive transformational change. If we are investing our resources, and our time, in these focus areas, the Foundation and the community need to know whether we are progressing. Meaningful indicators to measure performance will be adopted after each case statement. Baseline data for 2010 will be our starting point. We used four guidelines for assessing the measures:

1. the measure should be specific and result oriented;
2. the measure should be meaningful and understandable;
3. data should be adequate to support the measure;
4. the measure should be valid, reliable, and responsive.

Focus Area Plans: A more detailed chart of BCF action strategies to implement the plan is under joint development by staff, board, and focus area committee volunteers. The following pages include the case statement and performance indicators for each focus area.
Economic Development

Barberton must build its economic base into a resilient economy to create wealth for our community. A strong economic base will create the financial sustainability necessary to provide quality schools, parks, infrastructure, public services, neighborhoods and jobs.

The global landscape brings increasing opportunities but also increases competitiveness in industries that are changing dramatically, strengthening some sectors, while weakening others. We have several acres of brown fields and an increasing reliance on our core business stakeholders. Many of our key entrance corridors are neither inviting nor attractive and need to be improved. Many of our traditional industries have transformed, consolidated, gone offshore, or disappeared entirely, taking jobs and investment with them. We must make our community attractive, identify and remove barriers to innovation, redevelop our old industrial sites, create quality green field sites for development, prepare our workforce, create effective incentives to nurture higher technology businesses, improve our marketing, and nurture our existing businesses.

We have an obligation to take a comprehensive view of that which will attract and retain economic development opportunities and new residents.

We will work with the City of Barberton and Barberton Community Development Corporation (BCDC) to create a road map for economic development. We need to provide leadership and collaborate with stakeholders for relevant initiatives that will advance our economic base.

**Economic Development Performance Indicators**

- Increased percentage of population earning above poverty-level household incomes
- Improved relative valuation trend of Barberton real estate to Summit County and Akron
- Relative unemployment rate trend to Akron and Summit County
- Relative income tax collections rate trend to City of Akron
- Improved median household income relative to Akron and Summit County
- Improved average wage rate and salary levels relative to Akron and Summit County
A quality education and a concentration of highly skilled people are key drivers towards achieving Barberton’s economic success. After all, communities prosper by virtue of their people. For generations, many Barberton residents worked in middle-class jobs that did not require high levels of skill or technical knowledge.

Today, with higher technologies in the work place and the increasing forces of global competition, many residents are unemployable for higher paying jobs that demand higher education. Quality jobs for the uneducated are rapidly disappearing. It is not that some low-skill jobs do not exist; it is that our citizens who hold them are not likely to enter or to remain in the middle class. They are not likely to have access to quality health care, to save for retirement or to assure their children access to higher education. The driving force to improve our residents’ quality of life will be the achievement of a quality and relevant education experience.

Completing some form of higher education attainment or skilled training credentials is now critical for reaching the middle class. The knowledge economy requires our residents and our students, not just those in K-12 but also our adult students, to achieve higher education and skills-based training credentials. They need to be equipped to achieve a higher education that is personally enriching, leads to career and entrepreneurial paths that create wealth, and is delivered with excellence.

**Educational Excellence Performance Measurement Indicators**

- Educational expectations of students and parents
- Graduation rates of Barberton High School students
- Educational test Scores
- Educational attainment of Barberton residents
- College graduation rate of Barberton high school students
- Parental involvement
- Number of school district partnerships and internships with the business community
Community Image

Our image or brand can be defined as what people say about us when we’re not around. There was tremendous consensus during the retreat and a great cause for concern that Barberton suffers from a negative image within the region, which is largely undeserved – considering our strengths. We must identify the issues and work aggressively towards tangible, measurable results so that our image and brand increasingly become positive.

Our image is an impression that is a combination of emotional and intellectual reactions to all the different experiences, marketing communications and behaviors people have encountered about the place we call home: Barberton. Our self-image – as well as what people think or are saying about us – should matter, because it affects our ability to be a healthy, strong community. Our community’s image helps consumers (residents, businesses and tourists) distinguish Barberton from other cities in the marketplace.

In order to successfully attract, retain and expand capital investment in our community, we must change people’s perception of it. We must make every effort to build upon our strengths, remedy our negatives, and sell ourselves within the region. We need to impact beliefs by providing new information and perspectives, creating a new brand, and to take tactical steps to change our quality of place. We can do this if we take a leadership role, collaborate with the city, the schools, and our key stakeholders; take the action steps to make a difference; and support relevant initiatives through our grants and investments.

**Community Image Performance Measurement Indicators**

- Objective professional annual community and regional opinion survey
- Attendance evaluation at major community events
- Home purchases by those returning to or coming from outside of Barberton
- Number of positive stories in the media about Barberton, the school district, and the Foundation
Some of our residents are in need of social services. A number of them are elderly, disabled, living on fixed incomes, unemployed, or their life circumstances are extremely challenging. Their quality of life is under duress and, for some, the barriers to achieving sustainable life styles can be overwhelming. We must be responsive to those in the community who may need social services and, when possible, provide resources for social programs that promote sustainable life paths. We need to work with agency providers to strengthen their ability to deliver services, and we must leverage our funding resources to assist them.

**Social Service Performance Measurement Indicators**

- Reduction in the percentage of children living in poverty
- Reduction in Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) caseload
- Reduction in the first-time demand for public assistance among young adults by decreasing rates of teen pregnancy, teen drug use, and juvenile crime (*indicators need to be refined*)
- Increased percentage of two-year-olds with complete immunizations
- Reduction in the number of reported child abuse and neglect
- Reduction in number of domestic violence police calls
- Increase in the percentage of mothers receiving adequate pre-natal care

"Help people so they can help themselves and eventually give back to the community."
Priorities

Focus-area grant, PRI, and budget priorities for the coming years:

• Create opportunities for technology-based economic development

• Raise the bar for educational achievement expectations of students and parents

• Increase educational obtainment

• Facilitate creation of high-quality jobs

• Build the income and real estate tax base

• Engage business and institutional community with the students

• Build and enhance brand and image of Barberton, schools and the Foundation

• Attract and retain highly skilled and young professionals

• Enhance attractiveness and connectivity of Lake Anna, our downtown, our entrance corridors, and our neighborhoods

“Given the state of the economy, we need to be smarter and more strategic in how we use our resources.”

• Support nonprofit social services that empower people and help those in greatest need

• Market community events to the region

• Build place-making connections
Living the Plan

It is important to recognize that we have accomplished a tremendous amount of good in Barberton. Thousands of lives are touched every day by the impact of our $70 million of giving these first 15 years — be it a student experiencing our new schools; a graduating senior who, though a scholarship, is working toward a professional career; a senior citizen enjoying activities at the Active Adult Center; a businessman working out at the YMCA before starting his workday; a young adult starting a new job at a business in Foundation Industrial Park; families attending sporting events at Foundation Ball Fields; or a single mother receiving medical assistance at the Barberton Community Health Clinic. These are just to name a few.

This strategic plan for 2010-2020 marks the beginning of a new era in how we direct our resources. While we will certainly continue managing our funds for perpetual use, our spending will be linked to a more focused, more performance-based, capacity-building and sustainable community strategy. The purpose is to do the most good possible with what we have, through the most effective and sustainable pathways available, to strengthen our community now and forever. “Living the plan” includes filtering our decision-making through the plan, regularly accessing our effectiveness in its implementation, and communicating our impact and progress back to the community.

Our next steps will involve working with our committees to identify key action items; developing our filters for grant making, investments and leadership areas; creating a more plan-oriented budget, and deciding how we allocate our spending. If we manage wisely, properly set the stage, measure and monitor our results, and invest more in sustainable projects, the next generation of Foundation work will present transformational opportunities beyond measure for our community.

Onward to the future.
Participants

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Tom Gough, Vice Chair
Lois Matney, Immediate Past Chair
Ryan Pendleton, Treasurer
Thomas L. Harnden, Secretary
C. Thomas Anders
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