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## **For Immediate Release**

# **Hancock County Community Foundation Introduces 2020 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Finalists**

**GREENFIELD, Ind. (October 7, 2019)** – HCCF has the privilege of administering the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship (LECSP) in Hancock County. Each year, HCCF applies for the opportunity to recommend two graduating students to Lilly Endowment for the full four-year tuition scholarship award. Should they accept the application, HCCF implements and supervises the process for selection.

Eligible applicants must be ranked in the academic top 15% of their graduating class and plan to pursue a baccalaureate course of study, to be completed in four years, at any accredited Indiana public or private college or university. Student applications are submitted online and reviewed blindly (without name or contact information) by third-party professional readers represented by experienced out-of-county, community foundation personnel. The third party selects eight finalists, two students from each Hancock County public high school, who best meet the scholarship criteria. Community service is the primary criterion for qualification. Financial need is not a consideration for the LECSP.

The eight finalists were interviewed in October by a volunteer committee identified by HCCF, all of whom adhere to a strict conflict of interest policy. This committee has the difficult task of selecting two students from the talented pool of eight finalists and submitting their recommendation to Lilly Endowment for approval. Pending approval, the awards will be announced in December. The eight finalists will be honored at their respective school corporation's board meetings in November.

To be eligible to apply for the LECSP in Hancock County, students must be Hancock County residents, attend one of the four Hancock County public high schools, be ranked in the academic top 15% of their graduating class, and plan to pursue a baccalaureate course of study, to be completed in four years, at any accredited Indiana public or private college or university.

Below are the stories of the eight finalists:

## **Benjamin Blachly**

*New Palestine High School*



Ben Blachly's career goals and community service activities align well. He hopes to become an engineer and is already benefiting Hope Center Indy and the Hancock County Public Library with his engineering and problem-solving skills.

In May of this year, Hope Center Indy launched the Blooming Hope Greenhouse to benefit the victims of human trafficking who reside at the facility. Blachly volunteered alongside Mr. Brian Thomas, the Manager of Hope Center Indy, to design, build and tweak hydroponics and irrigation systems necessary to grow fruits, vegetables and flowers to help sustain the Center.

"His life experience and education gave him the ability to understand and assist in designing the system we implemented in the Blooming Hope Greenhouse," Thomas shares." It has been a joy working with him this summer. Volunteers sometimes do not communicate well with us, but he has done an outstanding job of keeping me up to date on his activities within the greenhouse and has made suggestions on how to fix problems as they arise."

One of the many projects that Blachly has completed for the Hancock County Public Library was to establish a process for making and constructing nearly thirty papier mache' astronaut helmets himself for the library's Astronaut Boot Camp.

For the past three summers, Blachly has also volunteered as a student athlete instructor at the New Palestine High School Tennis Camp for youngsters learning to play tennis. This past school year, he also served as an after school tutor for a seventh grader at New Palestine Junior High School.

Other school activities include four years on the Tennis Team, currently as the #1 varsity singles player, and four years playing French Horn in the band, including First Chair French Horn in the Advanced Wind Ensemble. He also participates in Pep Band and National Honor Society.

Outside school, when Blachly is not volunteering, he enjoys playing piano, and competes at the professional level, currently working on an ISSMA Group 1 piece.

After attending either Purdue University or Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Blachly aspires work as an engineer in the aerospace, environmental or agricultural field.

## **Anthony Fleming**

*Mt. Vernon High School*



To say that Tony Fleming is an "involved" student at Mt. Vernon High School would be an understatement. His school extra-curricular activities include 1) Student Government for which he has served as Class President, Executive Secretary, and twice as Executive President; 2) Marauder Mentoring, including serving on the council his senior year; 3) Theater, where he is serving as Producer his senior year; 4) National

Honor Society; 5) One World-Foreign Exchange which he co-founded this year; 6) Marauder Mob, for which he is a council member; 7) AfriCAN all four years of high school; 8) Best Buddies all four years of high school; 9) Champions Together and 10) Service Club working with Student Government.

The MVHS Student Government sponsor, Jordan Gerbsch, says of Fleming, "It is not an exaggeration when I say that this student has never let (his) many activities and involvements affect (his) ability to serve as an impeccable leader for (his) grade and (his) school. (Tony) is the most organized and driven student I have had the pleasure of working with, and it is not an unusual occasion for (him) to begin tasks or solve problems before (he is) even asked."

Fleming's activities outside of school are impressive as well. He has participated in the Hancock County Youth Leadership program twice, once as a freshman and once as a sophomore. Through this program, he was introduced to volunteering at the Hope House. The past two years, Fleming has served on the Executive Youth Board which raises funds for and awareness of the work of the Hope House.

Cindy Miller who is Administrative Assistant at Hope House says of Fleming, "His dedication, passion and leadership skills show in his service to our community while excelling in the classroom," Cindy Miller, Hope House administrative assistant, observes. "He is a very dedicated young man that attends all the meetings and fundraisers during his time on the Board. He has made service to others a priority in his life."

After pursuing a degree in psychology from either Butler University or Marian University, Fleming hopes to enter a career in the field of psychology focused on criminology or the forensic science side of psychology.

## **Tessa Freeman**

*Mt. Vernon High School*



The common thread throughout Tessa Freeman's service projects, extra-curricular activities and future plans is mental health. She readily shares that she has dealt with the mental health issue of anxiety from a young age, and has benefited greatly from treatment which may not be available to everyone in Hancock County with mental health issues.

If Freeman had the time, talent and treasures to enact a positive change in Hancock County, she would, "open a free mental health clinic that could provide help for all ages, genders and levels of illness." She would also develop a team to travel to all schools in the county and discuss at convocations what mental health really is. At the high school level, she envisions the team holding classes to teach students how to help themselves and others who are struggling, and to recognize the signs of someone in crisis.

"I want other kids to understand that mental illness is just as normal and treatable as physical illness," Freeman states. "I want everyone, young or old, to know that mental illness does not define them, and it doesn't make them a freak."

Freeman is already pursuing this goal, as evidenced by her current activities that include the following: 1) She has started a chapter of Champions Together at MVHS which provides a way for students with disabilities to participate in sports. 2) She also spearheaded an effort to start Mental Health Week at Mt. Vernon High School through working with Student Government. 3) By volunteering at the Hancock Health emergency room three hours per week, Freeman has learned that “helping people is easier when you put yourself in the position of those you are helping.”

As a member of the Hancock County Community Foundation Y-GIVE Youth Philanthropy Board for the past two years, Freeman has had the opportunity to join with other high school students throughout the county and provide services for local nonprofits and educational opportunities for students in Hancock County.

Leadership skills are being developed through sports and student government. As a counselor at MVHS girls basketball camp for four years, Freeman has helped struggling campers learn difficult skills and strived to set a good example. She is also a varsity basketball team captain and has been honored as Basketball Academic All-County, as well as Academic All County and Academic All-State for cross country. As a member of Student Government, she has served as vice-president three years and president one year.

Freeman intends to pursue a career in the mental health field, either by becoming a clinical psychologist for teens, helping to run a mental health clinic, or becoming a neuroscientist to research mental illness. Her colleges of choice are The University of Notre Dame or Indiana University, Bloomington.

## **Ellie Griesmeyer**

*Eastern Hancock High School*



When Ellie Griesmeyer sees something that is needed, whether it is mentorships for juniors and seniors in high school or swimming instruction for those with disabilities, she jumps right in. She has volunteered for FUSE (Families United for Support and Encouragement), Feast of Plenty, Kenneth Butler Memorial Soup Kitchen, Hancock County Humane Society, Hancock Senior Services, Agape East, and Teens Read the Way at the Hancock County Public Library.

As a student in the Royal Leadership Academy class at Eastern Hancock High School, Griesmeyer created a mentoring program where students can shadow professionals in an environment such as a hospital, veterinarian’s office or other work places to prepare themselves for the future and gain experience in that field. In order to have the program approved, she had to present it to the principal and guidance director, as well as the school board.

“I decided to bring this program to my school because I wanted students my age to be able to find what their passion is without blindly committing to it in college,” Griesmeyer explains.

Working with individuals who have disabilities is a passion that stems from having a step-sister with special needs. Griesmeyer has worked with the FUSE Adaptive Swim program since 2016, helping to get her participants comfortable with the water, know how to be safe in the water, have fun and, in some cases, learn to swim.

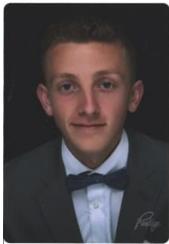
If Griesmeyer had unlimited time, talent and treasure, she would, “implement a better system for individuals with special needs who are transitioning from high school to adult life.” She believes this would, “create a greater quality of life for individuals with disabilities, it will teach skills that will benefit them throughout a lifetime, and it will fill the need for (employees) in the growing workforce.”

In addition to her many service projects, Griesmeyer has also participated in the Eastern Hancock Aquatic Club and Swim Team, 4-H, HOSA-Future Health Professionals, Butler Way Leadership Camp, Peer Pals, the school newspaper and yearbook. She currently works as a Jungle Club Associate at the Hancock Wellness Center and as a concessionist at Legacy Cinema.

Griesmeyer plans to attend either I.U.P.U.I. or Indiana University and pursue a career in nursing, hoping to specialize in pediatric oncology nursing. She says, “It is this combined passion for helping others and working with kids that has let me to believe pediatric nursing would be an ideal path for me.”

## **Nolan Hemminger-Jones**

*Greenfield-Central High School*



Although Nolan Hemminger-Jones looks at life on a world-wide scale, he also has a passion for the wellbeing of those in the Hancock County community.

Hemminger-Jones’s intended major at Indiana or Butler universities – International Studies – was sparked by his travel to six different countries with “Educational Tours” organized by his AP History teacher. He says, “I want to think like a citizen of the world.” He believes this degree will give him the ability to communicate and negotiate with world leaders to help promote peace and end poverty.

For now, Hemminger-Jones has become a significant volunteer with the Friends of the Hancock County Public Library (FOL). Since 2016, he has assumed the role of sending out membership reminders, sending out membership cards, and keeping the membership data base, which he created in the Microsoft Excel program, up to date. According to Robert Buenger, FOL President, Hemminger-Jones has also helped with quarterly book sales, organizing staffing needs for events and helping to modernize FOL materials.

As those benefited by the FOL seek to satisfy their hunger for knowledge, Hemminger-Jones also recognizes that many families in Hancock County seek to satisfy their hunger for food.

Since the spring of 2016, he has regularly volunteered at the Hancock County Food Pantry. He has worked at stocking shelves, distributing food and recruiting new volunteers.

World travels and volunteering at the library have made Hemminger-Jones aware of a unique Human Library concept created in Copenhagen. The library's purpose was to create a safe place where two very different people can sit down and have a conversation eye to eye. The purpose is to create a positive dialogue between two people who would not normally sit down and be together. If he had unlimited resources, Hemminger-Jones would, "organize a Human Library in Hancock County to encourage diversity and to end discrimination or segregation—rewire brains to make zero internal judgements about others." Possible "human" titles to be checked out for 30-minute sessions in the Hancock County Public Library would include: autistic, homosexual, senior citizen, homeless, (military) veteran, different race or nationality, mental illness, alcoholic and physically disabled. Hemminger-Jones believes, "A Human Library in this community would increase social cohesion and diminish discrimination. It will make this county a desirable place to live, work and raise kids because of the accepted diversity."

## **Emma Nobbe**

*New Palestine High School*



For the past eight years, Emma Nobbe's Girl Scout troop has played a major role in her service to her community. Her favorite project was helping with the renovation of a campground that would later be put to use as a summer camp for various organizations, including both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. She and the girls in her troop helped clean up trails and cabins, as well as participated in building a playset, which included a tire structure, balance beams and a gaga pit.

This work resulted in the troop members earning their silver awards. Nobbe also mentored two younger Girl Scout members who were working on their bronze awards. For multiple years, Nobbe also participated with her troop volunteering at the Hancock County Humane Society where they cleaned the premises, fed and watered the cats and kittens that were awaiting new families.

Nobbe's public relation skills are evidenced by the fact that she has served as a volunteer greeter at Indian Creek Christian Church (The Creek) for the past six years. She has enjoyed, "providing a warm welcome for anyone who comes into our church and helping new members or visitors find their way in such a large building and making them feel like part of our church community."

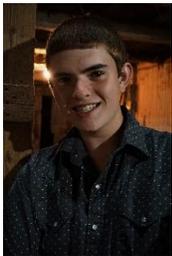
At high school, Nobbe has participated in activities as both an athlete and a scholar. She has participated on the Swim Team for three years. She is a member of the National Honors Society, as well as the Spanish Honors Society and Club A. She contributes her writing and page design skills to the school newspaper, having served as News Editor her junior year and as Editor-in-Chief this year.

Nobbe would like to continue to use graphic design in a career in publishing that would allow her to design and format books and novels. She shares that she has always loved reading and would love to give back to an industry that has given her so much joy. By pursuing a double major of graphic design and marketing, she hopes to gain more insight into the creating and selling of products and gain a unique view of the process that would allow her an advantage in such a competitive market. Indiana University would be her first choice of colleges to help her attain these dreams.

Education is extremely important to Nobbe, and if she had unlimited resources, she would put money into our public school system. She envisions free private tutoring programs and a program that would provide a free musical instrument to every student who wished to play one. Finally, she would create schools full of open spaces and abstract art and colors that would encourage creative thinking and excite students to learn.

## **Logan Overman**

*Greenfield-Central High School*



Being an advocate for Agriculture and addressing food insecurity go hand in hand for Logan Overman. Overman intends to major in Agriculture Education, Agriculture Communications or Agriculture Sales at Purdue University.

“It is important to me to serve in the agriculture industry because we are faced with an age gap as younger people are not taking the place of older agriculturists;” Overman declares.

Overman has been honing his leadership skills by taking active roles in a variety of youth organizations.

As a Boy Scout, pursuing the rank of Eagle Scout, he planned, designed, and implemented a project to restore and enhance a memorial flag display that benefits his church and community.

“I learned how to communicate with contractors and members of my team,” he says. “I also learned the importance of planning for the unexpected and that with hard work, determination and perseverance, no task is unobtainable.”

As a member of the National FFA Organization, Overman has participated in canned food drives, clothing drives and community education. As chapter chairman of Community, he has also helped make blankets for the homeless and gathered food and gifts for a needy family for the holidays. According to Overman’s FFA Advisor, Scott Jacobs, Overman has served as a chapter officer three times and has been elected to serve as an eight-county, 23-chapter District officer for 2019-20. In addition, Overman has served at the Indiana State Fair FFA Pavilion educating visitors on understanding food production methods.

Overman is also involved in 4-H, having held several offices in his local club, as well as the 4-H Junior Leader Club. He has completed a variety of projects, including several livestock projects. At school, Overman is involved in student council, having served three years, holding the office of Class Treasurer his sophomore year and Vice President of Fundraising his junior year. He is also a member of National Honor Society.

Overman has also worked for a year at Culvers and is currently working twenty-five hours per week there as a department manager.

Seeing first-hand the effect of food insecurity by volunteering regularly at the Kenneth Butler Memorial Soup Kitchen, Overman would choose to address this problem, should he have unlimited resources. His resources would go toward providing access to fresh produce and educating people on how to receive assistance in obtaining food.

## **Paige Wickard**

*Eastern Hancock High School*



The health and wellbeing of those in the Hancock County communities matter to Paige Wickard. This is evidenced by the activities that Wickard has initiated, as well as the nursing career she intends to pursue, either at Anderson University or Purdue University. Of her career choice, she states, "I want to be able to help others and work in the community where I live."

Healthy 365 is an organization connected with Hancock Health. Local physicians distribute vouchers to those families who need healthy foods, but are unable to afford them, for access to locally grown meat, eggs, vegetables and fruit, along with healthy recipes. Wickard has been active in the 4-H Beef project for nine years. Last winter she donated 290 one-pound packages of hamburger from a bull calf that she raised from one of her show heifers to Healthy 365. She also asked her church members to donate boxes of Hamburger Helper to be distributed with the beef. Wickard has another calf picked out to donate this winter.

As a member of Eastern Hancock Honor Society, Wickard serves on the Community Service Committee. Her 2018-19 service project was to provide a full Thanksgiving meal to three families in the school district identified by the counselors at the elementary, middle school and high school. This year she hopes to present this project to the entire Honor Society as a group service project. Wickard also initiated a food pantry drive by her volleyball team at one of their home games, benefiting the Eastern Hancock Food Pantry.

Even when attending church, Wickard is always mindful of ways to improve the community. After noticing that paper bulletins were often discarded after services, she organized a recycling box and personally takes the paper to a local recycling bin in Greenfield.

In addition to her service work, Wickard plays varsity softball and volleyball, is active in her 4-H Club and the Hancock County 4-H Junior Leader Club, participates on the forestry team in FFA,

has served as a class officer all four years of high school, and is currently Vice-President of the Indiana Jr. Shorthorn (cattle) Association. She also finds eight hours a week to work at Suzy's Pizza in Wilkinson.