

A woman in a red shirt is standing and pointing at a computer monitor, assisting a man in a grey hoodie who is sitting at a desk. The setting appears to be a computer lab or classroom with several other desks and monitors in the background.

DEACONESS FOUNDATION

WORKING FOR THE GREATER GOOD

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A YEAR FOR GAINING MOMENTUM

This year, the beginning of a new decade, was unlike any other in our lifetimes. The level of difficulty was significantly greater. We all experienced the impact of sickness and grief, economic uncertainty and job loss, political and racial upheaval, violence, and democracy challenged, events we hope are never repeated. We also know that, in general, beginnings can be difficult. Consider a revolving door – it's far more difficult to begin pushing it around from a complete stop than it is to step in and push when the door has momentum.

As we began this decade in the midst of this most difficult year, the Deaconess Foundation witnessed work that was not just what was necessary, but many times, work that would have appeared to be impossible: incredible innovation, resilience, commitment, and creativity. We are indebted to our partners, who fulfill our mission and join us by helping people living in poverty enter into and move along a path to a family-sustaining wage and, consequently, to their own success and independence. This year, our partners were even more dedicated to the families and communities they serve. They helped to solve new problems, address new needs, and develop new solutions.

So we choose to see this past year, the beginning of a brand-new decade, as the push that gives the revolving door its momentum. While this work individually and collectively is never easy, we do have momentum – assets, learnings, programs, and alignment – to build upon in 2021.

Deaconess Foundation had a significant transition itself in 2020, with the retirement of our beloved, long-time leader Deborah Vesey. As she begins the next stage of her life, we honor her work and contributions to Greater Cleveland on page 4.

As we now focus our eyes forward, we hope you'll be inspired by the work of our Foundation and partners in 2020 and the necessary momentum involved in achieving the possible and the conquering the impossible. Please do reach out if you'd like to learn more.




A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Belk".

Cathy Belk
President and CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell Lamb".

Russell Lamb
Chair of the Board
of Trustees



The mission of the Deaconess Foundation is to help people in need build careers that sustain themselves and their families.

We will know we are on the path towards achieving our mission when we see three things:

1

Significant increase in the number of individuals, particularly Black and Latinx individuals, earning a family-sustaining wage.

2

Significant reduction in the supply of jobs unfilled due to a shortage of suitable candidates.

3

Improved collaboration and impact within the workforce development ecosystem.

Deaconess uses three roles to impact its mission: to act as a leader, to act as a collaborator, and to provide financial support through grants.

A LEADER, A LEGACY WITH GRATITUDE TO DEBORAH VESY

Deborah started with the Deaconess Foundation at its inception in 1997, and became its President and CEO in July 2002. She retired on September 30, 2020. Deborah is a lifelong resident of Northeast Ohio, having grown up in Boardman and graduated from Youngstown State. After starting her career in various roles in public accounting, Deborah consulted on the sale of the former Deaconess Health Systems in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood of Cleveland.

The proceeds from this sale were significant assets, and they would become the beginning of what we now know as the Deaconess Foundation. After the sale of the hospital, Deborah served as CFO of the Deaconess Health System and the related Deaconess Foundation before her promotion, in 2002, to Executive Director of the Deaconess Foundation (formerly known as the Deaconess Community Foundation), and President of three HUD housing facilities, with low-income elderly tenants, that the Deaconess Foundation owned and operated until December, 2015.

Evolving for Greater Impact

The first major evolution Deborah led began in 2012, when the Foundation's members were all United Church of Christ (UCC) churches within Cuyahoga County. Deb worked with Trustees and constituents to evolve Deaconess into a private Foundation, led by independent Trustees. The Deaconess Foundation continues to honor its UCC legacy by providing mission outreach grants to UCC churches in Cuyahoga County.

“One of my true north stars as a leader...authentic, courageous, always focused on the greater good, and if the true definition of a legacy is leaving things behind much better than how you found them, then well done, indeed, Deb, well done.”

Chas Withers
Chief Executive Officer
Dix & Eaton

“You changed lives for the better in our hometown of Cleveland and in all of Northeast Ohio. You leave an amazing legacy behind.”

Leah Gary
Retired President & CEO
William J. and
Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation

“I so admire your leadership, your collaboration, your insight, all of those things you’ve done to move the work forward.”

Shana Marbury
General Counsel & SVP Talent
Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP)



Deborah Vespy

Developing One of the Area’s Largest Workforce Development Funders

In another significant pivot, Deborah led Deaconess to evolve its grantmaking strategy from a broad focus on basic human needs, to a deep and focused strategy supporting workforce development. Under Deb’s leadership, the Deaconess Foundation is now one of the largest private philanthropic funders of workforce initiatives in the County. However, perhaps more valuable is the expertise with which Deborah led the Deaconess team toward establishing systems and eliminating barriers for impoverished individuals seeking to progress along a career path supporting a family-sustaining wage.

Connecting the Workforce with Career Pathways

One of Deborah’s most outstanding recent contributions has been her leadership of the Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group. As many would emphatically agree, this transformation initiative could not have been created, let alone have progressed, without Deborah’s consistent, patient, and persuasive leadership. Now, for the first time, there is public, private, and philanthropic support with the goal of transformative evolution of the workforce system to dramatically accelerate its success in filling jobs with eager job seekers.

Still a Dedicated Leader

Deborah continues to be a committed and caring community volunteer and leader. Her leadership roles, while also leading Deaconess, were extensive:

- Board of Trustees of Cleveland State University
- Executive Committee of the Fund for Our Economic Future
- Trustee at College Now
- President’s Visiting Committee of Case Western Reserve University
- Co-Chair of the Human Services Restructuring Pilot Project
- Leadership Cleveland Class of 2006.

Deborah’s community commitment and leadership has been recognized with many awards over the last two decades. In 2020, Deborah was recognized by Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish, via Proclamation, in September; she was also recognized with the Foundation Leadership Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Deborah’s personal vision statement is “To love and be loved; To respect and earn respect; To give abundantly and receive humbly; To give thanks for the gift of life.” We are incredibly proud of how she led Deaconess Foundation over the last 18 years. There’s no doubt that she fulfilled her personal vision statement, to the incredible benefit of our community, every day.

Watch the video celebrating Deb’s retirement at <https://deaconessfdn.org/videos/>

2020 STRATEGIES

Deaconess' first strategy in 2020 towards achieving its mission is to enhance the workforce development ecosystem and catalyze innovation.

In 2020:

- Deborah Vesey served her last year as Chair of the Workforce Funders Group, an aligned group of 10 funders she was instrumental in putting together, who work together to accelerate the filling of jobs with job seekers. Cathy Belk now serves as Chair.
- Deaconess collaborated with more than 20 other funders to intentionally improve race equity practices among workforce development funders.
- Deaconess provided \$885,000 in grantmaking dollars aligned with this strategy.



MAGNET and Towards Employment provide instruction to job seekers – preparing them for jobs at one of the 35 manufacturers eager to hire program graduates.

HIGHLIGHT

WORKFORCE CONNECT MANUFACTURING SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

This employer-driven initiative to create an abundance of skilled, diverse talent for manufacturing jobs is led by GCP and MAGNET. The sector partnership:

Hosted 185 high school students at Manufacturing 101 information sessions, after which they indicated a 72% increase in interest in manufacturing careers.

Facilitated employers attending racial equity training and participating in 12 roundtables focused on improving their equity practices.

Helped to attract Ohio to Work, a new state pilot program built to help displaced and at-risk workers through coaching, intensive re-skilling and collaborative employer engagement. MAGNET is serving as the local operations manager in partnership with JobsOhio.

Initiated development of an Equity & Inclusion Scholarship with a steering committee of employers and local/regional leaders.

Launched a new training program, ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers, for re-entering citizens, with 24 graduates and 17 employed as a result of the first two pilot cohorts.

2020 STRATEGIES

Deaconess' 2020 second and third strategies enable the delivery of services which prepare job seekers for good jobs with career advancement potential, and provide financial support for the organizations providing these services to build capacity.

In 2020:

- Deaconess provided \$800,000 in grantmaking dollars aligned with these strategies.



Students from Open Doors Academy are inspired by innovation and learn about careers at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

HIGHLIGHT

OUTCOMES OF OUR GRANTEES

2,900+

People connected with jobs, and more than 125 experienced wage increases at an average of \$2/hour.

700+

People completed job readiness training, preparing them to enter into career pathways.

150

Young adults completed internships, through which they learned workforce and occupational skills.

200+

People received post-secondary credentials, showing employers that they have a knowledge base that prepares them for specific roles within their industries.

HIGHLIGHT

MAP DATABASE CREATED BY COLLEGE NOW

The Mapping Advancement Programs (MAP) Database was developed in 2020, and it helped almost 800 users to find post-secondary training opportunities in high-demand sectors.



The creation of the MAP database allows job seekers access to workforce training resources available to develop a career without attending a 4-year university. Photo by Kevin Kopanski for College Now Greater Cleveland.

HIGHLIGHT

THE CREATION OF THE WORKFORCE FUNDERS GROUP AND WORKFORCE CONNECT

The Deaconess Foundation sponsored the writing of a case study, by Civic Collaboration Consultants, to help capture the insights and learnings from the creation of the Workforce Funders Group and the Workforce Connect sector partnerships. Learn more at deaconessfdn.org/videos/



Towards Employment works with individuals on preparation needed for a job.



Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) was able to provide hundreds of students with summer work and career experiences, even during the pandemic.



Towards Employment not only enabled adult job seekers to receive the technical training needed to progress in jobs in IT, healthcare, and manufacturing (among others), but also provided individuals with the additional wrap-around services which enabled them to progress in their personal lives as well.

HIGHLIGHT

STORIES OF CLIENTS

Janelle obtained her first work experience participating in a YOU-managed summer job, and was able to take her next step, after high school graduation, due to YOU. Her coach helped her be successful in obtaining her Customer Care Certification and keep a good job at Cardinal Health, after a maternity leave and transportation challenges.

Richard returned home from prison in February of 2020, and is now working as a press operator at a manufacturing firm, thanks to the support of two grantees. The Salvation Army referred Richard to Towards Employment, which provided him with job readiness preparation, hands-on experience, manufacturing-specific training, and connection to an employer (along with interview support) eager for Richard to begin work.

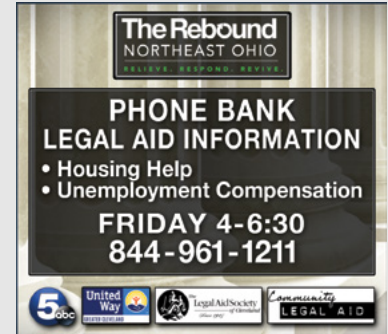
Mwesi is currently a senior at Ohio State University and Vice President of the Black Advertising and Strategic Communications Association. Mwesi has worked with Open Doors Academy (ODA) since middle school, and through that experience, was able to develop the trusting relationships needed to enable him to excel in school. His ODA 2020 Marketing summer internship provided him with the confidence and experience to apply his new skills, which position him well for roles post college graduation.

2020 STRATEGIES

The Deaconess Foundation's fourth strategy in 2020 towards achieving this mission, was to partner with other funders in order to address the barriers which impede individuals from staying on a career path. Given the difficulties of 2020, this strategy was particularly important to our community and to the Foundation.

In 2020:

- Deaconess participated with many other funders in the Cleveland Foundation's Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund Phases I and II. Phase I provided over \$8.6M in emergency funding across the region for many basic needs job seekers experienced this year, and as of this printing, Phase II plans to provide another \$3.5M.
- Deaconess also provided some direct emergency funding to existing partners needing to pivot their programs to accommodate the new virtual world, or to offer new or more intensive services given greater need in the community.
- Total grantmaking for this strategy in 2020 was \$807,000, which included a one-time additional contribution from the foundation's balance sheet to address the urgent needs brought on by COVID.



Legal Aid set up emergency activities to respond to community needs more assertively.



MAGNET was able to educate job seekers in skills needed for manufacturing jobs by installing plastic shields, requiring face masks, and having virtual instruction. Many of our local manufacturers produced the PPP the students, and all of us, used.



Boys & Girls Clubs of NEO set up 15 Virtual Learning Centers so children could attend online school in a safe environment.



Legal Aid's volunteer attorneys supported removal of significant legal barriers to employment.

Thank you to our grantees for a year of incredibly dedicated work:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of NEO
- Business Volunteers Unlimited
- The Centers for Families and Children
- The City Club of Cleveland
- The Cleveland Foundation for the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund
- College Now Greater Cleveland
- Cuyahoga Community College*
- The Fund for our Economic Future
- Greater Cleveland Partnership*
- Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
- MAGNET
- OhioGuidestone
- Open Doors Academy
- Salvation Army
- Towards Employment
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited

*Through Workforce Funders Group

We especially thank our United Church of Christ congregation grantees for providing outreach and support so needed in 2020. These grants honor the legacy of the Deaconess Foundation's deep roots and history with the United Church of Christ by supporting projects outside of the church that help the vulnerable, underserved, and disadvantaged.

- Dover Congregational United Church of Christ
- Imani United Church of Christ
- Mt. Zion Congregational Church, UCC
- Ridge Road United Church of Christ
- Saint Paul's Community Church, UCC
- West Park United Church of Christ

Thank you to members of the Investment Advisory Committee:

- Tim Becker
- Eileen Burkhart
- Jeff Pollock
- Tom Waltermire

Thank you to the Deaconess staff, whom you can reach directly:

Cathy Belk, President and CEO
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Thank you to the 2020 Trustees:

- Chair, Russell Lamb (effective April 2020)
- Chair, John Nestor (through April 2020)
- Vice Chair, Dave Reines
- Carrie Clark
- Scott Hamilton
- Dr. Maggie Jackson (through September 2020)
- Colette Jones
- Tom Littman
- Joe Nanni
- Ann O'Brien
- Laurie Pogel
- Larry Yunaska (through April 2020)

DEACONESS FOUNDATION

Learn more about the work of the Deaconess Foundation:

Website: www.deaconessfdn.org

Twitter: [@deaconessfound1](https://twitter.com/deaconessfound1)

LinkedIn: [deaconess-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/deaconess-foundation)

Sign up for our email: [deaconess.news/learnmore](https://www.deaconessfdn.org/news/learnmore)

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