

# NEXXUS



THE COLUMBUS  
FOUNDATION

SPRING  
2017



**NEX·US** (nĕk'səs) N., **1.** A MEANS OF CONNECTION; A LINK OR TIE. **2.** A CONNECTED SERIES OR GROUP. **3.** THE CORE OR CENTER.



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benefits community



# NEXUS

Spring 2017



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Douglas F. Kridler  
President and CEO

“If you could move to the place on earth where history is most importantly being made right now, where would you go?” So asked columnist and author David Brooks recently. You may be surprised to learn that of the three cities he heard back in response to his question, Columbus was one.

become, and that those who do so are bonded in that pursuit. I can attest to that, being a small town Ohio boy who came to Columbus over thirty-two years ago to be the best I can be—and to contribute to the making of a better place in the process.

At the time, I sensed the opportunity and the potential for Columbus, and the optimism that helped

make big things seem possible. It is impressive to see how all of those positive elements remain in place, undergirding and fueling an unabashed pursuit of prosperity for all.

Our job at The Columbus Foundation is to create and enlarge the contributions all of us can make to community progress. This puts us at the intersection where resources and leadership meet the needs of neighborhoods and neighbors. We have a unique role and a huge responsibility—to you, and to our community.

We take that seriously, and that is why we work so hard for you as we find and celebrate the best ideas and those that have them in our community, why we are in relentless pursuit of improvement in our services to you no matter where you prefer to direct your philanthropy, and why we are in neighborhoods and meeting rooms every day in search of ways to sustain this successful arc of progress for all in our community.

You are where the action is. The world is watching—let’s show them the Columbus Way!

**MR. BROOKS MAKES THE POINT** that if you want to observe history, go to Washington, but if you want to participate in history, go to a place like Columbus. He finished his column with these words of advice: “But you only go around once in life, so if you can swing it, you might as well be where the action is.”

Somehow, we need to transcend our Midwestern humility and embrace this for what it is—high and well earned praise from a well-traveled, vastly intelligent and discerning observer of our country and of our times.

With differentiators such as our robust growth, our smart and open characteristics, and the commitment to collaboration across public and private sector leaders, we are indeed on a roll, with all signs pointing to this being an arc of progress for Columbus that can be sustained, at least in the mid-term. And folks around the world are noticing.

I recently heard a musician say that people come to cities in pursuit of bettering themselves and in hopes of becoming the best that they can

### GOVERNING COMMITTEE

Matthew D. Walter  
*Chairman*

Nancy Kramer  
*Vice Chairman*

David P. Blom  
Joseph A. Chlapaty  
Michael P. Glimcher  
Lisa A. Hinson  
C. Robert Kidder  
Katie Wolfe Lloyd  
Dwight E. Smith

Douglas F. Kridler  
*President and CEO*

Kelley Griesmer, J.D.  
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Scott G. Heitkamp, CPA  
*Vice President and CFO*

Angela G. Parsons, J.D.  
*Vice President*

Dan Sharpe  
*Vice President*

### EDITORIAL STAFF

Amy Vick  
Carol M. Harmon  
Lynsey Harris  
Kate Clements

### OUR MISSION

To assist donors and others in strengthening and improving our community for the benefit of all its residents.

### OUR PROMISE

To help you help others through the most effective philanthropy possible.



Want to share NEXUS with a friend? Find our digital version online at [columbusfoundation.org/spring2017nexus](http://columbusfoundation.org/spring2017nexus)

For more information, visit [columbusfoundation.org](http://columbusfoundation.org) or call 614/251-4000.



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### CONTACT US!

If you have questions, comments, or ideas about NEXUS, we would love to hear from you. Email us at [avick@columbusfoundation.org](mailto:avick@columbusfoundation.org) or call 614/251-4000.

DONOR FEATURE

# A Generous Start

## REV1 VENTURES LAUNCHES FUND TO ENGAGE STARTUPS

**LOOKING TO HARNESS THE SPIRIT** and generosity of entrepreneurs and startup companies in central Ohio for good, a local company stepped up and created a Donor Advised Fund at The Columbus Foundation that supports initiatives that are “starting up” something special in the community.

Rev1 Ventures focuses on the earliest stage of companies in the central Ohio region. In addition to capital, the company offers valuable services to companies to help them grow—from building a business plan and finding the first customer to talent acquisition.

In 2016, it provided the seed money to establish the *START Fund*, an opportunity for startups and entrepreneurs to collectively give back to the very community that supported their innovation. The fund has doubled since December with help from entrepreneurs’ donations and an ongoing match from Rev1.

“Everything we do at Rev1 is supported by the community,” said Tom Walker, President and CEO. “We wanted to provide a program that encourages entrepreneurs to give back to the community.”

The fund will support four targeted areas: connecting communities, STEM education, sustainable food solutions, and workforce development. An advisory board of entrepreneurs who have contributed to the fund oversees it, and will select at least four projects to support each year, according to Walker.

“We really want to make a mark on opportunities that hit those four criteria and are starting up,” Walker said.

The first grant, to Franklinton Gardens, was awarded in March and will help launch its new educational garden. The *START Fund* also hopes to provide opportunities for the startup ecosystem to be able to give back in ways other than financially.

Walker, who came from Oklahoma City to take the helm at Rev1 at the end of 2012, is a strong proponent of giving back, and its importance

of supporting a community as a whole.

“Philanthropy is a way to solve social problems. I believe in helping people and building things that can have a sustainable impact on a community,” Walker said.



Tom Walker at Rev1 Ventures

He describes Columbus as a very collaborative city.

“Everyone is very aspiring. They believe the best days of Columbus are ahead and they really aspire to greatness. That’s something that has always stuck with me and one thing that attracted me to Columbus.”

The *START Fund* advisory board members are Phil George, CEO & Founder MentorcliQ; Mike Morgan, CEO Updox; Anthony Reynolds, Co-Founder & CMO Refill; Steve White, CEO & Founder Clarivoy; Shaun Young, CEO & Founder Ardina/Millenefits; and Kristy Campbell, CMO & COO Rev1 Ventures.

**TAKE ACTION:** To learn more about the *START Fund* and how it is helping local nonprofits, visit [cbusstart.org](http://cbusstart.org).

### CRITICAL NEED ALERT

## Critical Need Alert Addresses Growing Opiate Crisis

**\$475,000 GOAL EXCEEDED IN RECORD TIME!**

**IN DECEMBER**, on the heels of news that Ohio leads the nation in opiate overdose deaths, The Columbus Foundation launched a **Critical Need Alert (CNA), Addressing the Opiate Epidemic**, an effort to bring donors and the community together to increase prevention, awareness, and provide help to those struggling with opiate addiction, as well as support for their families.

In three short weeks, the goal of \$475,000 was exceeded, with a total of \$512,579 leveraged for the effort thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Foundation donors. Funds raised will support the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County (ADAMH)’s work with local partners to invest in programs, services, and an innovative technology that will provide help to addicts and their families.

Thanks to the *William C. and Naoma W. Denison, James W. Overstreet, and Martha G. Staub* funds of The Columbus Foundation, 50 cents was added to every dollar donated to the CNA, until the goal was met.

CNAs were created for donors and community members who want to participate in a shared investment opportunity and partner with the Foundation to address our community’s greatest needs.

To date, CNAs have leveraged more than \$7 million for a wide range of initiatives including childcare, food for families, fresh food, and the arts.



**If you or someone you know is experiencing addiction or is in immediate need, please call Netcare at 614/276-CARE. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

## The Columbus Foundation 2017 Governing Committee

### Katie Wolfe Lloyd appointed to the Governing Committee; Matthew D. Walter named Chairman

**THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION** announced the appointment of officers and members to serve on its Governing Committee in 2017.

The Foundation is led by a nine-member Governing Committee of volunteers who provide stewardship for the Foundation and its charitable activities.

Appointed to serve a seven-year term is Katie



Katie Wolfe Lloyd

Wolfe Lloyd. Since 1997, Wolfe Lloyd has served as Vice President of The Dispatch Printing Company. Her civic and philanthropic affiliations include The Center for Family Safety and Healing, Experience Columbus, and CHOICES Advisory Board. She attended the Columbus School for Girls and received a bachelor’s degree from Miami University.

Matthew D. Walter was named Chairman of the Governing Committee, following C. Robert

Kidder who served in this role for the past two years. Walter has been a Committee member since 2011 and served as Vice Chairman from 2015–2016. Nancy Kramer, who has served on the Committee since 2014, was elected Vice Chairman.

In addition to the appointment of the officers, the following Governing Committee members are continuing to serve in 2017: David P. Blom, Joseph A. Chlapaty, Michael P. Glimcher, Lisa A. Hinson, C. Robert Kidder, and Dwight E. Smith.

Finishing her term on the Committee is Barbara J. Siemer, who completed seven years of service at the end of 2016.



## 5 NONPROFITS TO WATCH

On March 20, donors and friends gathered at The Columbus Foundation to recognize the 5 Nonprofits to Watch in 2017, honoring innovative central Ohio organizations poised for an exceptional year of growth and progress. Each awardee received a \$5,000 grant.

The organizations selected for 2017 are: **Alvis, Catholic Social Services, Homeport, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, and Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland.**

5 Nonprofits to Watch debuted in 2014. It honors a group of remarkable nonprofit organizations working hard to make Columbus a better place for all.

### MORE ABOUT THE 5 NONPROFITS TO WATCH IN 2017:

#### Alvis

Alvis' mission is twofold—serving individuals and families who have become involved in the criminal justice system, and providing services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

#### Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services (CSS) helps poor and vulnerable seniors and families reach their potential. CSS serves people of all faiths and



Leaders of the 5 Nonprofits to Watch at the new Our Lady of Guadalupe Center (a program of Catholic Social Services) on Columbus' West Side. Pictured (l-r) Seleshi Asfaw, Executive Director, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services; Rachel Lustig, President and CEO, Catholic Social Services; Bruce Luecke, President and CEO, Homeport; Denise Robinson, President and CEO, Alvis; and Tammy Wharton, CEO, Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland.

backgrounds throughout central and southern Ohio ensuring that seniors can live independently and families thrive. In May 2017, CSS opened a new and expanded Our Lady of Guadalupe Center to serve central Ohio's growing Hispanic community.

#### Homeport

For 30 years, Homeport has generated home-ownership and rental housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents of central Ohio. Its 5,700 residents—families and seniors—in 33 communities have access to an array of services, from afterschool and summertime programming to emergency assistance for rent and utilities. Homeport partnerships also create links to food, furniture, and employment assistance, as well as physical and mental health.

#### Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services

Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS) is a Columbus-based nonprofit that helps new arrivals from all countries establish roots and gain

self-sufficiency in Columbus. With programs and services that encourage community integration, sustained employment, education, health, and strong families, ETSS has served clients from more than 40 countries, with the majority from Bhutan, Burma, the Middle East, and East Africa.

#### Girl Scouts Of Ohio's Heartland

Founded in 1912, the Girl Scouts' membership has grown from 18 members in Savannah, Georgia, to 2.7 million members around the world. Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland, open to girls ages 5–17, is proud to be a girl-centric and girl-driven environment, where a girl finds courage to explore new worlds and adventures, confidence to believe in herself and her abilities, character to stand by her values, and connections to girls from every background.

**TAKE ACTION: Learn more and support these exceptional nonprofit organizations at [columbusfoundation.org/takeaction](http://columbusfoundation.org/takeaction).**



## CELEBRATING OUR NATIONAL NUMBER ONES

The Columbus Foundation celebrates the outstanding work of those who were named the best in the United States in the past year. The skills and dedication of these National Number Ones bring great distinction to our community.



- Downtown Columbus Riverfront**  
Guy Worley, Columbus Downtown Development Corporation  
**2016 National Planning Excellence Award for Implementation by American Planning Association**
- Mayor Andrew Ginther / Columbus**  
Winner of the Smart City Challenge, Department of Transportation
- Steve Allen, M.D., CEO**  
Nationwide Children's Hospital  
**America's Largest Pediatric Hospital**
- Columbus, Nation's Top City to Watch for Real Estate Growth**  
Emerging Trends in Real Estate Report by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Urban Land Institute
- Elaine Roberts**  
Columbus Regional Airport Authority  
**Top in the nation for Total Value Textiles and Footwear imported into the U.S.**
- Simone Biles**  
Columbus born, Olympic Gymnast,  
**4 Gold Medals**
- Tom Walker, Rev1Ventures**  
**#1 City for Scaling Startups in U.S.**  
Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurship
- Phil Heit**  
**The New Albany Walking Classic**  
**#1 Largest Walking-only Race in North America**
- Twenty One Pilots**  
Grammy Award for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for "Stressed Out"
- Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, Dean, Ohio State College of Nursing**  
RN to BSN Program  
**Nation's Best for 2016**  
by TopRNtoBSN.com
- New Albany Classic,**  
4th consecutive year  
In support of  
**The Center for Family Safety and Healing,**  
**Karen Days, President**  
**#1 Specialty Equestrian Event**  
North American Riders Group
- Julia Bray, Ashton Cofer, and Luke Clay,**  
Gahanna students  
**Scientific American Innovator Award**  
2016 Google Science Fair
- Beth A. Gibson, Buddy Up Tennis, Inc.**  
**2016 USTA National Adaptive Tennis Community Service Award**
- Brian Ross, Experience Columbus**  
JD Power Award for  
**Number One Destination in the Midwest Region**
- EcoCAR, The Ohio State University**  
Year Two of North American  
EcoCAR 3 Competition
- Venturi Buckeye Bullet 3 Team,**  
The Ohio State University  
**All-electric Landspeed Record**
- Kyle Snyder**  
**The Ohio State University Wrestling**  
**Youngest Wrestling World Champion in U.S. History**
- Gene Smith, The Ohio State University,**  
**Athletic Director**  
**Athletic Director of the Year**  
Sports Business Journal
- Francesca Di Lorenzo**  
**The Ohio State University Tennis**  
**Repeat Singles Champion in the USTA/ITA National Indoor Intercollegiate Championships**
- Maximilien Chastanet**  
**The Ohio State University Fencing Team**  
**National Title in Men's Foil**
- The Ohio State University Football**  
**Number 1 All-time Football Program over 80 years**  
Associated Press
- The Ohio State University**  
**Men's Volleyball**  
**2016 NCAA National Champions.**  
tournament MVP Miles Johnson, National Player of the Year Nicolas Szerszen, and National Coach of the Year Pete Hanson

Pictured (first row): Nancy Kramer, Vice Chairman of The Columbus Foundation Governing Committee and Mayor Andy Ginther. Second row (l-r): Maximilien Chastanet, Elaine Roberts, Angela Mingo, Wendy Bowles, Karen Days, Beth A. Gibson. Third Row (l-r): Phil Heit, Brian Ross, Tom Walker, Guy Worley, Peter Bruce, Andrew Huster.

Photo by: Eclipse Studios



## Jeffrey Fund Brings New Life to Franklin Park

**FOR MORE THAN 160 YEARS**, Franklin Park, located on Columbus' Near East Side, has been a recreational destination for visitors of all ages. Today, it's home to Franklin Park Conservatory, the Scotts Miracle-Gro Community Garden, and the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's Therapeutic Recreation Program. However, a couple of years ago the 88-acre park's 20-year-old playground was starting to show its age, and was in need of replacement.

In 2015, a \$15,000 grant from the *Joseph A. Jeffrey Endowment Fund* supported the construction of a new, universally accessible playground at Franklin Park. With features like accessible surfaces and play features located adjacent to more challenging play features, the new playground encourages side-by-side play and interaction between playground users.

"Columbus Recreation and Parks is able to provide the facilities and services to our residents because of support like this from The Columbus Foundation and the Jeffrey

Endowment Fund," said Tony Collins, Director of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. "We appreciate the support, which helped us provide a universal playground for Franklin Park and the thousands of residents who utilize it."

A Columbus banker, Jeffrey turned an inventor's idea for undercutting coal into a booming success during the late 1870s. His company, the Jeffrey Manufacturing Company, became the world's largest manufacturer of mining machinery. In 1980, The Columbus Foundation was selected by the City of Columbus to manage the Joseph A. Jeffrey Endowment Fund. The fund, originally established in 1919 with a gift of \$100,000, is used to support nonprofit organizations in Columbus and throughout Franklin County.

Over the years, more than \$2 million in grants has been awarded from the fund to support projects that beautify and improve Columbus.

Photo courtesy of Columbus Recreation and Parks

## This Summer—Bringing You a Better Giving Experience!

**Inspired by Columbus Foundation donor feedback, and designed with an eye on improving the giving experience for everyone, the Foundation is excited to announce the upcoming launch of The Giving Store.**

**This updated online tool will help animate opportunities for you to engage in philanthropy and positively impact our community.**

**Stay tuned for more information!**



**The Giving Store** at columbusfoundation.org will be your one-stop shop for easy philanthropy. Explore targeted areas of interest, manage your giving through a personalized new dashboard, and easily support the nonprofits and programs you care about. Our new Directory Listings, snapshots of nonprofit organizations that provide key information, can help you connect with more nonprofits than ever.



**Better Together** projects, featured in The Giving Store, will lift up time-sensitive needs of local nonprofits, and give you an opportunity to join with others to make an immediate difference in our community. Follow along in real time as projects are funded via an online progress bar, and easily share with friends through your social media platforms.

## STAFF NEWS

### Kelley Griesmer Named Senior Vice President



On March 29, Kelley Griesmer, J.D., CAP®, was promoted to Senior Vice President of The Columbus Foundation. She will continue to serve as Manager, Walter Family Philanthropy.

"From her time as a partner at the Jones Day law firm, to her experience as the second employee, a key builder, and COO of Pelotonia, to her great work at The Columbus Foundation over the past year on projects from The Big Table to Columbus Kindness Month, Kelley has proven herself as richly deserving of this leadership role at the Foundation," said Douglas F. Kridler, President and CEO of The Columbus Foundation.

Griesmer joined the Foundation in 2016 as Director of Special Projects to oversee capacity building support for key partnerships, including The Big Table, the *Gifts of Kindness Fund*, and other philanthropic initiatives. She will continue to lead these efforts and more in her leadership role as Senior Vice President.

From 2011 through 2015, Griesmer served as COO of Pelotonia, a grassroots social movement that raises money to fund transformational cancer research, which she joined in 2008. Griesmer worked at Jones Day for 13 years, becoming a partner in 2002.

### Dan Sharpe Named Vice President of Community Research and Grants Management



On March 20, the Governing Committee of The Columbus Foundation named Dan Sharpe Vice President for Community Research and Grants Management. As Vice President, Sharpe will

oversee the development and implementation of grant policies, program priorities, and areas of strategic grantmaking for the Foundation.

"Dan's strong qualifications, experience, and knowledge of the nonprofit sector make him an excellent choice to lead the Foundation's strategic grantmaking efforts," said Kridler. "He has proven skills, integrity, and success—and is unquestionably dedicated to Columbus."

Since joining the Foundation in 2006, Sharpe has served in multiple capacities of increasing responsibility as an associate, officer, and most recently as Director of Community Leadership and Nonprofit Effectiveness in Community Research and Grants Management. In addition, he has supported the nonprofit community through capacity building and innovation grantmaking, and led the Foundation's Nonprofit Forum and Summer Fellowship programs.

Previously, Sharpe managed digital media for the Foundation and served as Project Manager for easyColumbus, an engagement and retention effort for regional college students.



## GENEROSITY ABOUNDS DURING COLUMBUS KINDNESS MONTH

In total, Columbus Kindness Month produced more than 10,000 acts of kindness and generated more than \$100,000 toward the kindness movement.

**THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION** kicked off 2017 with a focus on cultivating kindness. Teaming up with Besa, the Foundation launched **Columbus Kindness Month** in February, an effort to rally the community to generate acts of kindness while uplifting the city people are proud to call home. Several businesses and organizations partnered in the mission to connect, inspire, and advance people throughout central Ohio.



### Highlights from Columbus Kindness Month included:

**\$45,000 Makeover** of the Dress for Success Columbus fitting rooms, thanks to a bevy of community partners and donors

**5,000+ Articles of clothing** donated to Volunteers of America to replenish their fire-ravaged warehouse

**3,000 Inspirational notes** written and shared across the community

**2,000 Kindness coffee cups** with inspiring notes given to unsuspecting customers

**1,000+ Products sold** to benefit kindness, including *Homage* tees, *Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams*, *Candle Lab* candles, and *Mikey's/Hot Chicken Takeover* pizza slices

**50 Cakes** given by *Tremont Goodie Shop* to unsuspecting people out in the community

**1 Harmony Project video** launched, building a message of unity viewed more than 85,000 times

**Hundreds** of community-driven, school-driven, and individual-driven acts performed citywide

### 2 MINUTES WITH...

## Matt Walter



There's no question that Governing Committee Chairman Matt Walter, Founder and Managing Partner of *Talisman Capital Partners*, has a keen business insight—but he also shares a true passion for helping others. He and his family support many organizations in central Ohio and beyond through the *Seanna C. and Matthew D. Walter Fund*. Matt took some time to share his thoughts about the Columbus business community, philanthropy, and his work with *The Columbus Foundation* since he joined the Committee in 2011.

**Through your businesses, you've had opportunities to visit cities all over the world. What do you think makes Columbus a good place to start and build a business?**

We have all the resources in Columbus that are required to create leading businesses without many of the headaches and daily hassles of the larger areas. We have some structural advantages like geographic location and lower cost of living. But more importantly, we have a really good local talent base.

My repeated experience when recruiting people has been that while Columbus may not be the location on the top of their list when pursuing a new opportunity, when you get people to visit and engage, they are always impressed by the whole package we have to offer. Once they are here, they are also often here forever, as they get it!

“THE SPIRIT OF COLUMBUS IS REAL AND I BELIEVE THE MOMENTUM BEHIND IT WILL SUSTAIN!”

—MATT WALTER

**Your family is very generous with both time and financial support in our community. What are some of the causes and interests that are particularly meaningful to you and your family? Why?**

My wife *Seanna* and I both have a deeply ingrained sense of responsibility to help others. It is a common interest of ours. We both saw firsthand many examples of the power of a helping hand growing up. We have been especially focused on creating educational opportunities—scholarships and financial aid

programs for students both in the Columbus area and at the post-high school level.

We are also very moved by opportunities to help where people have basic needs issues. This has been a very uneven economic recovery and there are a lot of people struggling in our own backyard despite the successes of our city. We want to do more here.

**What is most inspiring to you about The Columbus Foundation?**

I am really drawn to organizations that are continually moving forward, always improving. Every time I get the chance to see the Foundation in action, whether as a donor, a GC member, or just as a member of the community, I am thoroughly impressed by the passion and the creativity I see from the Foundation team. They do such great work, in a super-efficient, thoughtful, collaborative, and humble manner. Above all else, the commitment of our team at the Foundation is just infectious—it is great to watch.

**What are some things you enjoy doing in your free time?**

We have three children and they are in a great and busy stage of life right now, and so we are very focused on soaking in as much of that goodness as we can. But I am a very avid golfer. My whole family is also huge *Buckeye* sports fans! Go Bucks!

**What does The Spirit of Columbus mean to you?**

Columbus is a very special place, not just for those of us who grew up here, but newcomers feel it as well. I think there is abundant energy and commitment to move our businesses and community forward. There is also a great tradition here of our leaders—both private and public—working together for the greater good.

# The Power of Words

**FOR FIFTEEN YEARS**, Columbus Foundation donor and Governing Committee member Dwight Smith has lived by his own special word. A word that reminds him of who he is, and who he is striving to be. His word? SOLD.

“I never hide my faith and therefore I often share that I am sold out to Christ,” Smith explained. “S stands for silence (be careful with the words that you use), the O stands for Obedience as I desire to be obedient to Christ, the L stands for Leverage—to whom much is given much is required—and the D stands for Discipline.”

With this as a premise, he created **My Special Word**, a nonprofit program that focuses on inspiring youth through powerful words that help illustrate their worth. Used in schools, camps, and afterschool and summer youth programs, My Special Word gives children the opportunity to discover their own special word. Nearly 2,000 young people are expected to participate in My Special Word during summer programs offered throughout central Ohio this year.

“Positive words are the result of having positive values and self-esteem,” explained Smith. “Imagine a world in which the very words that we use to communicate with others—including how we describe ourselves—are inspiring and uplifting. We all choose our words. Let’s use them as rays of sunshine to light up our world and to uplift others.”

Smith has visited local schools to share the program, and is always moved by the excitement the children share when they choose their words. It is this excitement, and positive feeling of the kids’ empowerment that he hopes will grow as the program does. The *My Special Word Fund* was established at the Foundation in 2016 and is used to help youth-serving organizations throughout central Ohio cover the cost of the program. Through the fund, qualifying organizations can receive a grant of up to \$2,000 to fund the implementation of their My Special Word program.

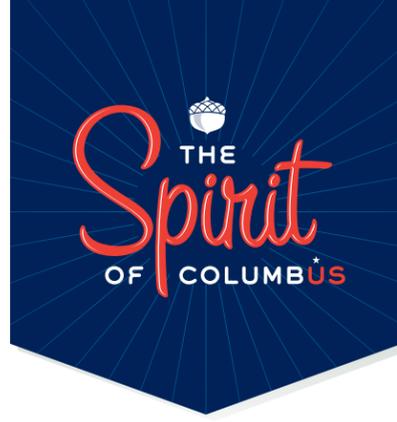
“Given my love for children, my hope is that the My Special Word program will allow our great nation to have a conversation, a positive and wonderful conversation, one that encourages our children to express and appreciate their individuality by answering the question, ‘what is your special word?’” Smith said. “With this simple question and answer, we have the opportunity to share more about our values and to commit in a public way, with personal accountability, our desire to grow as a person.”

In May, a picture book, *My Special Word*, and the first in a series of chapter books, *What’s My Word*, will be released. Copies of both will be available at [myspecialword.com](http://myspecialword.com). *What’s My Word* will also be available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



Photo courtesy of KIPP Columbus

More than 300 children at KIPP Columbus are engaged with the My Special Word program, an initiative developed by Columbus Foundation donor and Governing Committee member Dwight Smith.



The Columbus Foundation captures **The Spirit of Columbus** through images that showcase our community. Check out [columbusfoundation.org](http://columbusfoundation.org) and follow along on our Facebook page as we continue to celebrate our city’s remarkable spirit through captivating photography.

[www.facebook.com/TheColumbusFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/TheColumbusFoundation)



★ Columbus is home to America’s only metal whistle manufacturer, **American Whistle!** It’s a pretty cool process—check out a tour.

Photo by Nick George

★ We celebrate the legacy of this great American hero, **John Glenn**.



★ Say hello to Milo the Robot! Milo engages children with autism by delivering research-based lessons about social behaviors, emotions, and expressions at **LifeTown Columbus**.

Photo courtesy of LifeTown Columbus

★ It’s all hands on deck in the **Local Matters** kitchen. This fun and interactive cooking class brings everyone together to learn about healthy food—regardless of skill level or ability to pay.



**TAKE ACTION:** To learn more about My Special Word, visit [myspecialword.com](http://myspecialword.com).



## SPIRIT OF COLUMBUS AWARD CELEBRATES 5 YEARS!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2017 SPIRIT OF COLUMBUS AWARD WINNER

## Michelle Alexander



**The Spirit of Columbus Award**, affectionately known as “The Jerries” in honor of aviatrix Jerrie Mock, was established in 2013 and recognizes individuals who have exhibited exemplary community spirit through their accomplishments.

On April 17, **Michelle Alexander** was named the 2017 winner of The Spirit of Columbus Award. She was presented with a bronze maquette of the Jerrie Mock sculpture on permanent display at John Glenn Columbus International Airport. In addition, she received a \$5,000 grant to support the nonprofit of her choice.

A legal scholar, advocate, civil rights attorney, and author of the groundbreaking book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Alexander was presented the award for her work in drawing national attention to the issues of mass incarceration of African American youth and men in the United States, and for igniting a movement that is inspiring organizations and

**“Yearning for a deeper connection and a sense of purpose in our lives is what being human is all about. In my own view, it’s our refusal to deal openly and honestly with race that leads us to keep repeating these cycles of exclusion and division, and rebirthing a caste-like system that we claim we’ve left behind.”**

**—MICHELLE ALEXANDER**

individuals to take constructive action on criminal justice reform.

Mock was named the first recipient of The Spirit of Columbus Award in 2013. Past recipients of the award are Jeni Britton Bauer, David Brown, Denny Griffith, Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Jane Grote Abell, and Tanny Crane.

Mock was the first woman to fly solo around the world, in her 11-year-old Cessna airplane with “Spirit of Columbus” emblazoned on its side. The 38-year-old Bexley housewife and mother of three took off from Port Columbus on March 19, 1964. She landed safely back in Columbus on April 17 after 29 days, 21 stops, and more than 23,000 miles.