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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YSHS Alumni Complete Institute, Learn Leadership Skills

(Yellow Springs, OH) – Ten Yellow Springs High School alumni were awarded fellowships to attend the Nonprofit Leadership Institute hosted by the Yellow Springs Community Foundation. The Institute took place May 20-24 in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Fellowships were awarded to Allison Bothwell '17, Hannah Brown '13, Ian Chick '15, Grant Crawford '18, Wisdom Mesure '17, Kenny McKinley '17, Lucas Mulhall '18, Elle Peifer '18, Emma Peifer-Burns '13, and Joshua Seitz '15.

Nonprofit Leadership Institute graduates must complete 30 hours of collaborative and project-oriented instruction, including interaction with nonprofit executive directors and other representatives and also hands-on work experience. Topics included nonprofit structure and organization, work practices and collaboration, volunteer management, marketing, development and grant writing, boards and trustees, strategic planning, financials and budgets, and grants review.

During the Institute, participants visited several nonprofits, learning about how they work, the challenges they face, and their benefit to local communities. They tended an arboretum of native trees with the Yellow Springs Tree Committee, assisted staff at the Yellow Springs Senior Center, monitored bluebird populations and worked with plant management at Agraria, painted and tended properties for Home Inc., managed invasive plants for the Tecumseh Land Trust, and lent a hand at The Riding Centre.

The Nonprofit Leadership Institute was a good fit for the Yellow Springs community and for a younger generation that is much needed in the nonprofit world. Many of the participants are interested in nonprofits and community, and they are recognizing the impact those organizations can have on where they live. Bothwell, who is studying anthropology and American studies and the University of Alabama, found that the Institute helped her to “better understand the logistics of nonprofits, how they function internally, and what drives them to success.” For Crawford, pursuing an English degree at Ohio

University, “the wide ranging panels were especially interesting, and the volunteer work was especially fulfilling.”

The importance of collaboration also left a strong impression. Peifer, studying sociology at Ohio Wesleyan with minors in business and fine arts, reflected that “collaboration is very important throughout nonprofits,” and “connection is the best marketing tool.” Brown, who completed a degree in peace studies from Manchester University in 2018, agreed, noting that “almost all the nonprofits we visited collaborated with other nonprofits, and that opens a wider door to other resources, donations, funders, grants, and volunteers.” As a specific case, Mesure, studying acting at Columbia College Chicago, pointed out that “seeing the Yellow Springs Senior Center work with Home Inc. to fully design an affordable house that is safe for a senior to live in was a great example of collaboration.”

The Institute also instilled the value of persistence and vision. Lucas Mulhall, who is deciding between environmental sustainability or peace and global studies at Earlham College, observed that “often people just talk about their passions, but hearing from Emily [Seibel, Home Inc.] how her passion translated into her depth of knowledge—I found that very inspiring.” But acting on those inspirations takes effort. McKinley, studying business and analytics and Ohio University, noticed “how dedicated these nonprofit workers are because it can take so much more effort than it seems.”

Community was a common thread through the week of the Institute. Seitz, working on an economics degree at Wright State University, appreciated “learning how nonprofits operate and seeing that firsthand. The more interwoven nonprofits are with their communities, the more reach and impact they have.” Peifer-Burns, who earned a degree in Liberal Studies from Wright State in 2017, was reminded of the importance to “keep giving and be invested. Collaboration brings about more awareness. It can connect groups that may not even know of the other.”

Chick, majoring in environmental science at Allegheny College with a minor in educational studies, understood the importance of nonprofits for communities, and the need for the younger generations to become contributors and leaders: “It felt great to help my community. I realized that nonprofit boards lack a younger generation, and I have the power to change that and volunteer myself.”

The Nonprofit Leadership Institute is funded by an endowment that focuses on engaging students with nonprofits. The YSCF is exploring opportunities to expand the Institute to reach current and future community leaders and those interested in nonprofit work in other Ohio communities.

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The Yellow Springs Community Foundation is a public charitable foundation established to benefit the community of Yellow Springs and Miami Township in Ohio. The YSCF enhances community life by supporting a broad array of activities that include helping the elderly, the young, the sick, and the socially disadvantaged; promoting the arts and other cultural activities; promoting scientific research; providing scholarships; supporting public recreation, conservation, and environmental improvement. More at www.yscf.org. Nonprofit Leadership Institute: www.yscf.org/nonprofit-leadership-institute.