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INNOVATIONS FIGHT ISSUES FROM ILLITERACY TO THE HEROIN EPIDEMIC

COLUMBUS, OH (March 18, 2016)—Five central Ohio nonprofit organizations targeting critical community issues—homelessness, poverty, the heroin epidemic, illiteracy, early childhood education, and the spread of HIV and the health and wellness of the LGBTQ community—have been named “5 Nonprofits to Watch” in 2016 by The Columbus Foundation, one of the nation’s largest community foundations.

The five organizations illustrate the vast and diverse needs of the community and the increasing sophistication of organizations trying to meet those needs.

“These organizations are addressing many of the most pressing issues facing our community,” said Douglas F. Kridler, president of The Columbus Foundation, the nation’s seventh-largest community foundation. “They have an immeasurable impact on our neighborhoods and the people who live in them. This year, we believe they are poised to expand their imprint.”

The five organizations include: the AIDS Resource Center Ohio, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Community Properties of Ohio, HandsOn Central Ohio and Maryhaven. Each was awarded a \$5,000 Foundation grant.

The Foundation began identifying five ‘Nonprofits to Watch’ two years ago as a way to share effective philanthropy and educate its 2,000 donor members for new ways to make a positive impact on the community, and to better-inform the community at large. The nonprofits are recommended by the Foundation’s Community Research staff from thousands of organizations working to improve life in central Ohio. Staff narrowed the list to the most innovative, collaborative nonprofits with strong leadership, and whose work addresses a critical community need, according to Lisa Courtice, the Foundation’s executive vice president.

AIDS Resource Center Ohio Inc. (ARC): Formed in the mid-1980s to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS through awareness, advocacy, and care, the organization has grown into a large and sophisticated one focusing on healthcare for the LGBTQ population. Building on its remarkable success, the group will expand its services in 2016 to serve anyone in need of care. About 80 percent of ARC’s patients with AIDS have no detectable virus in their bodies (also referred to as the viral suppression rate) compared to the national rate of 30 percent. The organization’s growth has been fueled by its comprehensive pharmacies in Columbus and Dayton. It also manages the local needle exchange program, and offers naloxone to reverse opioid overdose. With a budget of \$44 million and 13 offices in 10 Ohio cities, it offers support services to tens of

thousands of individuals as well as direct medical and pharmaceutical care to over 5,000 people, of whom 1,400 are in central Ohio.

Columbus Metropolitan Library: The prestigious national library is in the midst of a \$131 million renovation and building program, with a dozen libraries either being renovated or built across the community. The new buildings will be energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and designed to attract citizens of all demographic groups. The jewel of the library system, the Main Library, will open after a \$30 million overhaul, and will then be host to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions convention, drawing an estimated 5,000 attendees from 120 countries. Together, the libraries have over two million items including books, ebooks, audio books, compact discs, DVDs, magazines, maps, and sheet music—all of which circulates more than 17 million times per year by 874,000 holders of library cards.

Community Properties of Ohio (CPO): Formed in 2003 to acquire and manage a large, scattered-site Section 8 housing portfolio in Columbus, CPO has spent over a decade transforming these residences that suffered from poor maintenance, high crime, and concentrated poverty. Following a massive, \$133 million renovation, the units now provide quality housing with support services to a population consisting largely of young, single women with children, many of whom are racial and ethnic minorities. Working in partnership with a number of local nonprofits and community organizations, CPO this year will expand its innovative Scholar House, providing affordable housing and creating a critical support system, including on-site childcare. CPO owns more than 1,000 units in ~~more than 200 units in~~ seven Columbus neighborhoods.

HandsOn Central Ohio: Serving as the front-door information and referral line for the region, HandsOn provides 24-hour telephone support, responding to over 600,000 callers annually—an average of over 1,640 calls per day every day of the year. The agency has information on over 3,000 programs operated by more than 1,000 nonprofit and government organizations, ranging from social services and education to healthcare and emergency food. HandsOn has recently taken on the single-point-of-access for families and individuals needing emergency shelter. In 2016, the organization will play a greater role in helping align community resources with its needs through data it collects and then analyzes, allowing it to provide insights to social service organizations on trends emerging in the community.

Maryhaven, Inc.: Helping more than 7,000 men, women, and adolescents overcome addictions and restore their lives from addictive and mental illness, Maryhaven is one of our community's oldest, largest, and most comprehensive behavioral health providers specializing in addictive illnesses. As the community evolves, Maryhaven steps up to address expanding challenges. Central Ohio has an opiate epidemic, and Maryhaven is working to curb its growth. An expansion will bring on line additional residential beds for detox and treatment. Today, an estimated 75 to 80 percent of all Maryhaven clients are addicted to heroin or another opiate.

With a budget of more than \$16 million, Maryhaven provides services to adults and adolescents for a wide range of addictive behaviors as well as prevention services.

“Columbus is home to many outstanding nonprofit organizations, led by visionary leaders who have committed their lives to improving our community,” Kridler said. “Today, we recognize these five who are on the cutting edge of innovation and transforming lives.”

Nonprofit organizations are a key component of the business sector in our region and are tied as the third largest employer in Columbus.

The Columbus Foundation and its donors awarded more than \$142.9 million in grants in 2014. Given the scope of the Foundation’s grantmaking and its knowledge of the nonprofit sector, the Foundation is unique in its ability to share information and resources with those who want to strategically invest in central Ohio’s nonprofits.

About The Columbus Foundation

The Columbus Foundation is the *trusted philanthropic advisor*[®] to 2,400 individuals, families, and businesses who have created charitable funds and planned gifts to make a difference in the lives of others through the most effective philanthropy possible. Serving the region for more than 70 years, The Columbus Foundation is the seventh largest community foundation in the United States. The Foundation’s online marketplace, PowerPhilanthropy,[®] makes giving mobile, easy, and smart. For more information, visit columbusfoundation.org or call 614/251-4000.