

## Eleven Area Nonprofits Receive Grants



2016 Grant recipients

Since its founding in 2012, South Cumberland Community Fund has invested more than \$650,000 on the South Cumberland Plateau by making direct grants to schools, cities, and nonprofit organizations and through its Capacity Building Program which is building a network of shared learning and mutual support among area nonprofit and civic leaders.

South Cumberland Community Fund celebrated its 2016 grants at the Big Red Barn in Beersheba Springs in late July. More than 120 people gathered to honor the new grantees and acknowledge the service of VISTA volunteers. Grants were made to the following organizations.

**ANIMAL ALLIANCE SOUTH CUMBERLAND** is an all-volunteer organization that makes available accessible, affordable spaying and neutering for pets across the Plateau. This grant of \$3,500 will purchase a tandem axle 7'x14' enclosed cargo trailer. AASC will use this trailer for two purposes: to store large items and transport them to the the organization's annual yard sale and to haul and distribute pallets of donated dog and cat food.

**GRUNDY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL** has an enrollment of about 725 students (grades 9–12) and a limited annual library budget. This grant of \$9,095 will help improve literacy and expand the library's capacity to be a teaching space for the school. This grant will pay for additional books, purchase a new computer and software for circulation and inventory, and help equip the library with advanced audio-visual capabilities.

**COALMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY** offers life-long learning for people of all ages, as well as access to technology and the Internet, and is open 20 hours each week. It offers a year-round story time for children, participates in the Interlibrary Loan program, and provides services such as fax, printing, and email access. This \$1,000 grant purchases a new desktop computer to replace an obsolete one, and provides funds to help purchase supplies for next year's summer reading program.

**FOLKS AT HOME** is dedicated to assisting older area residents live a dignified and comfortable lifestyle through coordination of services. Through this grant of \$3,040, Folks at Home will expand its Boost Your Brain and Memory Program, a program designed to help participants learn and practice the most promising strategies for keeping the brain healthy as they age. The goal is to expand the program into Monteagle, Tracy City, and Sewanee or Sherwood.

**GRUNDY COUNTY SWISS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, host of the Swiss Celebration and Festival for 41 years, maintains a farmhouse and museum to educate visitors about the unique history of the Swiss settlement in the Gruetli-Laager area since 1869. This grant of \$4,500 will replace all the gutters on the farmhouse and will support the creation of a new drainage system to protect the integrity of the historic building.

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## Partnerships and Progress: A Capacity Building Update



Leaders of nonprofit and civic groups across the Plateau participated in the SCCF workshops.

South Cumberland Community Fund, in partnership with the University of the South in Sewanee, is in its third year of bringing AmeriCorps VISTA, the national service program that works to alleviate poverty, to our region. AmeriCorps VISTA (Vol-

unteers In Service To America) was founded in 1965 as a national service program to fight poverty in America. AmeriCorps VISTA taps the skills, talents, and passion of more than 7,000 Americans annually to support community efforts to overcome poverty.

The VISTA program on the Plateau is part of the Fund's Capacity Building Program that seeks to build a network of shared learning and mutual support across our community...

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## OUR MISSION & VISION

The **VISION** of the South Cumberland Community Fund is that the Plateau be a place of hope and prosperity for all its residents and communities, inspired by the Fund's philanthropic and regional leadership.

The **MISSION** of the South Cumberland Community Fund is to improve the quality of life across the Plateau by increasing philanthropic giving and providing community leadership to build on the strength of the area's people, communities and natural setting; enhance community capacity and collaboration; and support innovative ways to solve community problems.

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## Eleven Grantees from Page 1

**GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** operates the Grundy County Heritage Center, which is a museum, a library, and a research center about the Plateau. The Historical Society is housed in a location with three separate roof structures, all of which now need repairs. This \$10,000 grant, combined with a USDA Rural Development grant and support from individual donors, will pay for repair to damage from previous roof leaks, and will help support the re-roofing of the three buildings.

**GRUNDY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY** provides safe and affordable housing for low-income families; of its 219 current residents, 76 are under the age of 18. This \$4,500 grant will purchase age-appropriate playground equipment for young children so that they and their families will have safe outdoor play space.

**TRACY CITY SOFTBALL & BASEBALL** operates an annual program for boys and girls ages 3–12. In addition to introducing them to the sport, the program helps children learn to work together as a team, to appreciate the benefits of hard work and practice, and to gain experience dealing with stressful situations, including losing. This grant of \$9,369 supports the development of a community softball/baseball complex and purchases portable aluminum bleachers.

**FRIENDS OF SOUTH CUMBERLAND'S "EVERY CHILD IN THE PARK"** program takes every fifth-grade class in Grundy County to one of the South Cumberland Parks for an all-day field trip. This grant of \$9,856 expands this program into the fourth grade. The grant will connect children to nature, support the preservation of the area's history and culture, and increase attendance at the Visitors Center by making it more widely known to area children and families.

**GRUNDY COUNTY YOUTH FOOTBALL** is a county-wide program that provides football and cheerleading for children ages 4 through eighth grade. This is one of the most formative experiences for young people in Grundy County, advancing life skills such as teamwork, discipline, sportsmanship, and the importance of physical fitness. This \$10,000 grant will purchase 100 new state-of-the-art football helmets to ensure the safest possible program.

**PELHAM VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE** provides the Pelham Valley community with primary fire response. Its service area includes Interstate 24, where they respond to emergency calls, some of which are complex accidents including hazardous materials. This grant of \$9,740 will purchase new for firefighters, keeping the program in compliance with federal standards and ensuring the safety of the 12 volunteers who dedicate their time and efforts to saving the lives of others.

## Partnerships from Page 1

of nonprofit and civic leaders. We've learned that people working in these fields have a sense of isolation and their work is challenging and difficult. The Capacity Building Program provides skills and resources across the Plateau that strengthens both the leaders and the organizations themselves.

Rural areas have been a difficult place for the AmeriCorps VISTA Program to work, as described recently by the state director, Robin Corindo. She said the leadership by South Cumberland Community Fund in the design and implementation of our program is a model she hopes will be replicated in other parts of the state and the country. Because of the partnership between SCCF and the University, we have been able to reach organizations that could never have participated in VISTA, organizations that are too small to manage a federal grant and, therefore, their own VISTA program, Corindo said.

There are 18 VISTAs in 2016–17 based at sites that include nonprofit organizations, public schools, the Grundy County Sheriff's office, and the Grundy County Mayor's office. Currently the program has three areas of interest: education, economic development, and health. VISTAs do not provide direct services but develop strategies and systems that bring greater capacity to the organizations they serve, strengthening our community in sustainable, long-lasting ways.



*Fresh, nutritious lunches were served to children this summer.*

One of the most visible programs made possible by the VISTA program is the South Cumberland Summer Meal Program, which just completed its second year and is a proven success. This year's effort served 5,800 healthy meals to more than 700 kids and teens. An essential part of the program is the leadership of area libraries, community centers, churches, and schools that serve as host sites. In addition to serving meals, each location offers activities such as reading programs, creative art projects, gardening programs, and outdoor games.

"You get to see all aspects of the meal program, from the planning all the way to the execution of seeing the children eat," said one site supervisor. "Often I was greeted by the hard-working staff as well as Chef Rick. They were always excited and eager to hear feedback from the kids, and equally as eager to be serving them. Because of the program our kids have learned that better choices don't have to taste bad, and also to lend a helping hand to the community!"



*Celebrate the good news of community partners and area programs and see SCCF videos, interviews, news updates, and more on Facebook.*



*Laura Willis on GCTV6.*

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**VISTA** worked with partner sites in Grundy and Franklin counties in summer 2016 for the second year of the South Cumberland Summer Meal Program, sponsored by the USDA. In addition to serving lunch, the project engaged young people with reading programs, arts and crafts activities, and other enrichment programs.

**11 MEAL SITES**

**3,076 MEALS SERVED**

**663 CHILDREN REACHED**

**4,743 HOURS SERVED**

## Picnic For the Plateau a Success



Howell and Madeline Adams (left) and Bob and Pat Ayres were honored at the Fund's 2016 Picnic For the Plateau.

*The Adams and the Ayres families, as a pair, are bookends, champions and legends in the northeast and the southwest borders of the Plateau.*

—Margaret Woods

**F**riends of South Cumberland Community Fund gathered in late June to celebrate two remarkable families who have been critical to the founding and the growth of the Fund. With the generous support of sponsor Tower Community Bank (and Lecia and Geoff Post) the event raised \$22,000 for the programs of the Fund.

Margaret Woods, board chair, in her remarks at the Picnic said, "In deciding to make a public occasion of this celebration, we were challenged to reflect on origins and energies that have defined the Fund and acknowledge the 'but for them, we would be naught' status of the prime benefactors of our burgeoning institution. Today we honor two families who knew, loved, led, and built this community before the Community Fund was a gleam in anyone's eye."

Key support for the event was provided by: Sewanee Inn Food & Beverage, Blue Chair Café & Tavern (and Jimmy Wilson), Myers Point (and John Goodson), St. Andrew's-Sewanee School, Sewanee: University of the South, and Stone Door Properties. The five-item auction of vacation getaways was made possible by donations from Charlestowne Hotels, Boyce Restaurant Concepts, Drs. Jan and Joe DeLozier, Cathy Ellis, Greene Street Market (and the Rev. Dr. Andy Anderson, Church of the Nativity), Land Trust for Tennessee, Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, Montea-gle Inn & Retreat Center, and Sewanee Inn.

SCCF is grateful to Sheri Lawrence, who chaired the event and the many volunteers who assisted in the success of the event including Laura Anderson, Tippy Anderson, Debbie Ball, Nancy Bowden, Nancy Burnett, Cathy Ellis, Knowles Harper, Katie Oliver, and Linda Parrish.

Geoff & Lecia Post, Leah Rhys, and Linda & Scott Parrish.



## AmeriCorps VISTA Voices

*My VISTA year taught me that there are so many ways to make a difference in your community beyond direct service.*

**T**his single quote is a perfect distillation of the experiences of the VISTAs who just completed their service on the Plateau: Elaine Babb, Jennifer Horton, Spike Hosch, McKenzie Liegl, Bobby Luffman and Hilda Vaughan.

As South Cumberland Community Fund and Sewanee's Office of Civic Engagement prepare for the next cohort of VISTAs, it is worth reviewing the lessons learned from the VISTAs ending their service. As they wrapped up their projects, each of them had a different perspective, yet fulfilling, experience. Some of their observations were:

### LEARNING ABOUT THE POWER OF NETWORKING AND COMMUNITIES

*As a VISTA, I got the chance to travel to Johnson City, Tennessee for the ReFrame Home Repair Association annual conference. It was a really great opportunity to capture best practices and network with other agencies like us.*

—Jennifer Horton  
Mountain T.O.P.

*There is always a need to serve and through that service, amazing relationships were developed. This was also a year of professional development for myself...very valuable to me.*

—Bobby Luffman  
Grundy County Health Council

### LEARNING ABOUT POVERTY IN AMERICA

*I learned that poverty is much more complicated than I realized and there are no quick or easy fixes. This perspective is humbling and will be important to remember in my post-VISTA life.*

—Hilda Vaughan  
SCCF's Capacity Building Program

*The biggest surprise to me has been the lack of awareness of the rural situation in the United States, and the lack of committed, accessible resources for the rural U.S.*

—Spike Hosch  
Sewanee's Babson Center and continuing in this role for 2016–17

### SEEING THEIR PROJECTS BEAR FRUIT

*I loved seeing all of the work come together. [Working in 2015] at the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, I helped write a grant for \$20,000 and they were awarded the grant. That was amazing! With the Grundy County Health Council [in 2016], watching the kids participate in Garden Club and be excited about science was awesome too.*

—McKenzie Liegl  
Grundy County Health Council

*I enjoyed writing a grant proposal for the Grundy County School System to fund coding programs. And they received the grant!*

—Vaughan

### SEEING THE BIG PICTURE OF VISTA SERVICE

*There are so many ways to make a difference in your community beyond direct service. While administering surveys or entering data is difficult to picture as a service to the community, I learned that these capacity building tasks are so important to supplement direct service.*

—Horton

### THEIR MOST IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY

*Community work requires a great deal of relationship building; the most valuable resources in a community are the people.*

—Elaine Babb  
Discover Together

*I learned about the validity and value of making a life in rural America and those aspects of rural life that keep people here.*

—Hosch

*In nonprofit work, you must move slow to move fast. Especially in evaluating programs... it takes time to gather data and track progress.*

—Horton



# SCCF

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*More than 120 people gathered at the Big Red Barn in Beersheba Springs for the SCCF grant award reception.*