



VJ Wilkins
FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE FOR GRANT AWARDS 2022

The VIRGINIA J. WILKINS FOUNDATION (V.J. Wilkins Foundation), a private, not-for-profit Foundation incorporated in the State of Kansas, acting through its Board of Trustees recently awarded Grant Applications received in 2022.

The Foundation's Mission is to maximize the value of its finances so that it may assist the community of Arkansas City in providing a quality cultural environment of Arts, Music, language and other endeavors, which many times are shadowed by the importance placed upon athletic achievements.

Grant recipients must be in keeping with the Mission of the Foundation which is to financially assist organizations within the community having an IRS 501(c)(3) designation or organizations affiliated under an umbrella of an organization having charitable or philanthropic IRS designation or educational institutions.

The Foundation prefers projects where matching funds are contributed by the applicant. If the Grant applicant is unable to provide financial assistance, the applicant must be willing to participate with in-kind services and to be a willing partner in all forms of communications exposed to the public such as press releases, banners, newsletters or advertising.

Since inception in 2014, the Foundation has conferred gifts exceeding \$3.7 million dollars to the community of Arkansas City to enhance the cultural environment of arts, music, language and other endeavors.

Recipients for 2022 include:

The Arkansas City Area Arts Council participating in three (3) initiatives in bringing Art and Cultural experiences to people of all ages in the community. The Burford Theater continues to serve as headquarters for the Bison-Bison Film Festival which spans seven states including Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa and Texas and the film festival is currently scheduled at the Burford Theatre March 31 and April 1 & 2nd of 2023. The Arts Council continues to sponsor concerts at the Burford Theatre and will continue this tradition in 2023 with the V.J. Wilkins Foundation being a major sponsor for the Concert Series which will venture into country-western entertainment, pop music, and performances that have a basis in fine arts-classical and opera. The Arts Council will also provide the "Kids Act" program for children led by Gia Watson, Ballet of Wichita conducted in the Rotunda at Wilson Park, and the Missoula Children's Theatre held in the Burford Theatre with the V.J. Wilkins Foundation being a primary sponsor.

The Foundation has approved a request by the Cowley College Theatre to provide funding to initiate a Professional Summer stock company to include an eight week program concluding with two shows featuring "Guys & Dolls" and Disney's "Tarzan."

The Foundation has approved a Grant Request by the Ark Valley Players to provide community members in construction of theatrical sets.

The Foundation approved a request from the Etzanoa Conservancy to build an outdoor educational center to allow for a "hands-on" approach to archeology in both scientific inquiry and cultural understanding.

The Foundation also approved a Grant to continue the community wide celebration of Tacolalah in Wilson Park the 1st Saturday in May.

CAMP HORIZON was awarded a Grant to enhance the audio/video for music, dancing, performing and other creative arts in their summer programming.

MARTIN LUTHER KING CELEBRATION OF UNITY conducted in concert with the Federal Holiday observing the birthday of Dr. King, the third (3rd) Monday in January of each year was awarded a Grant in partnership with Cowley College, the City of Arkansas City and the Arkansas City Ministerial Alliance to bring featured speaker Michael Bradford, a Professor of Drama at the University of Connecticut to the event for 2023 and the performance of his award winning play, "Fathers and Sons."

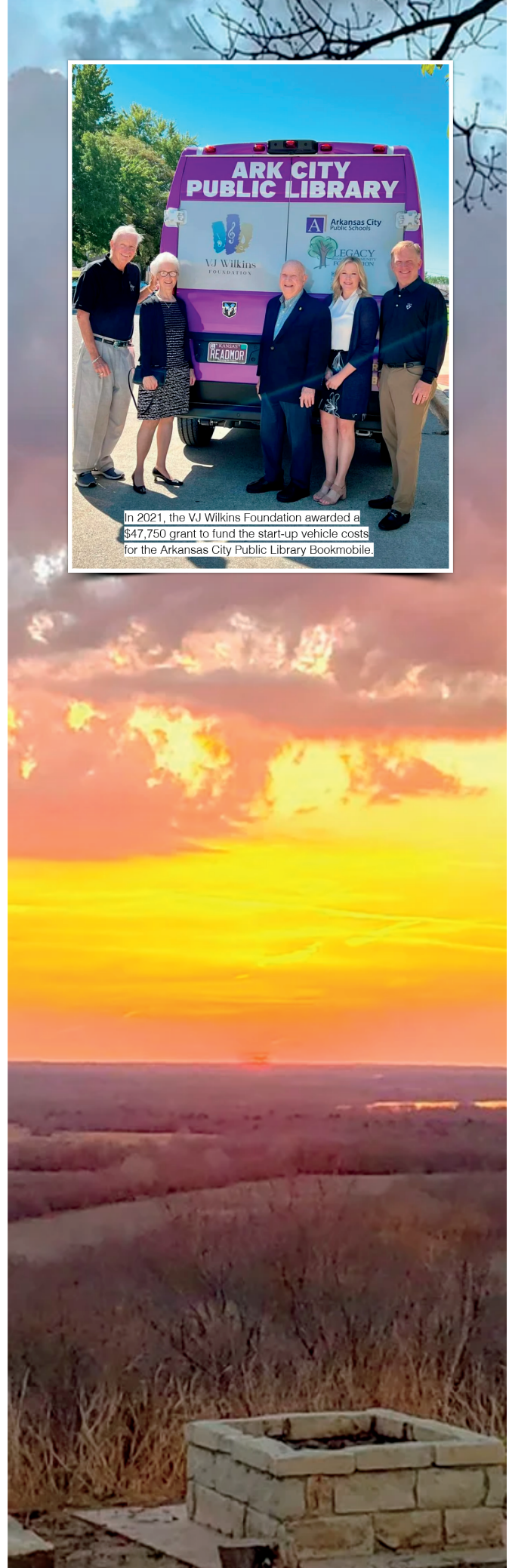
The Foundation continues to support the efforts of Legacy, a Regional Community Foundation in developing the Nitty Gritty Theatre/Ittby Bitty Play to address common mental health challenges for students. Past emphasis of focusing on High School age will be expanded to younger students.

The trustees of the VJ Wilkins Foundation have been interested in assisting to sponsor a (1) day grant writing seminar and were informed of a basic workshop scheduled October 6, 2022 at the Arkansas City Rec Center to be taught by Heather Fuesz and Shannon Martin of Professional Grant Services Inc. To encourage participation the VJ Foundation will make available a limited number of scholarships as selected by the instructors or Yazmin Wood, Executive Director of Legacy to secure participants emphasizing similar Mission Statements or goals of the VJ Foundation.

Otis W. Morrow, local Attorney, assisted Ms. Wilkins in creating the Foundation and is serving as a Member of its initial Board of Trustees along with Ms. Wilkin's cousin James M. Wilkins, a prominent business man of Denver, Colorado, also serving as Trustee by appointment of Ms. Wilkins. Business people David G. Wilkins of Denver Colorado and Karen E. Zeller and Jennifer Munson of Arkansas City complete the Board of Trustees.

A benefit of this type of Foundation is that a minimum of 5% of the account value of the Foundation must be expended yearly and therefore each year provides an opportunity to renew funding for projects in the community satisfying its Mission Statement.

Additional information or assistance in making an application to be funded in 2023 can be obtained [HERE](#) on the Foundation's Website: The deadline for filing grants for 2023 is June 30, 2023.



Past

The VIRGINIA J. WILKINS FOUNDATION (V.J. Wilkins Foundation), a private, not-for-profit Foundation incorporated in the State of Kansas, acting through its Board of Trustees recently awarded Grant Applications received in 2021.

The Foundation's Mission is to maximize the value of its finances so that it may assist the community of Arkansas City in providing a quality cultural environment of Arts, Music, language and other endeavors, which many times are shadowed by the importance placed upon athletic achievements.

Grant recipients must be in keeping with the Mission of the Foundation which is to financially assist organizations within the community having an IRS 501(c)(3) designation or organizations affiliated under an umbrella of an organization having charitable or philanthropic IRS designation or educational institutions.

The Foundation prefers projects where matching funds are contributed by the applicant. If the Grant applicant is unable to provide financial assistance, the applicant must be willing to participate with in-kind services and to be a willing partner in all forms of communications exposed to the public such as press releases, banners, newsletters or advertising.

Since inception in 2014, the Foundation has conferred gifts exceeding \$3.4 million dollars to the community of Arkansas City to enhance the cultural environment of arts, music, language and other endeavors.

Recipients for 2021 include: the Arkansas City Area Arts Council participating in three (3) initiatives in bringing Art and Cultural experiences to people of all ages in the community. The Burford Theater is now headquarters for the Bison-Bison Film Festival which spans six states including Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas and the film festival is currently scheduled at the Burford Theatre April 1, 2 and 3 rd of 2022. The Arts Council continues to sponsor concerts at the Burford Theatre and will continue this tradition in 2022 with the V.J. Wilkins Foundation being a major sponsor for the Concert Series. The Arts Council will also provide art classes for children to be held after school in the summer with the V.J. Wilkins Foundation being a primary sponsor. The Foundation has approved a request by the Cowley College Theatre to provide funding for the acquisition of state of the art Theatre equipment which will be utilized for performances as well as training students in the latest technology involving Theatre management.

The Foundation has approved a Grant Request by the Ark City Farm and Art Market which will replace a three (3) year Governmental Grant provided by National Parks and Recreation expiring at the end of this year.

The Foundation has issued a Matching Grant to assist the Etzanoa Conservancy in its goal to build a cultural Immersion Center at the Dyer Preserve, East of Arkansas City. The Matching Grant will provide \$1.00 for each dollar received by the Etzanoa Conservancy up to \$500,000.00 with the Grant to expire December 31, 2022.

The Foundation also approved a Grant for the Music Program at the Sacred Heart School to be utilized for music, education materials, equipment and expenses involving Professional Clinicians.

The VJ Wilkins Foundation has awarded a \$47,750 grant to fund the start-up vehicle costs for the Arkansas City Public Library Bookmobile. A summer route is being planned for the bookmobile that will include stops along the USD 470 Sally Spot summer lunch bus, as well as the Ark City Rec Center's IYQ Camp. During the school year, the library hopes the bookmobile can collaborate with elementary schools and childcare centers for regular storytimes, as well as attend community events, parades and festivals.

\$2,500 was awarded to the Tacolalah Festival. The V.J. Wilkins Foundation is the presenting sponsor of this cultural performing arts festival.

The Foundation has been involved in the past several years with Legacy, a Regional Community Foundation in developing the Nitty Gritty Theatre/Ittby Bitty Play to address common mental health challenges for students primarily of High School age.

In the past year, the Foundation has supported the City of Arkansas City with the Wilson Park improvement project, Community Band Concert Series, and Tacolalah in observance of the 150 th Anniversary of the community of Arkansas City.

Otis W. Morrow, local Attorney, assisted Ms. Wilkins in creating the Foundation and is serving as a Member of its initial Board of Trustees along with Ms. Wilkin's cousin James M. Wilkins, a prominent business man of Denver, Colorado, also serving as Trustee by appointment of Ms. Wilkins. Business people David G. Wilkins of Denver Colorado and Karen E. Zeller and Jennifer Munson of Arkansas City complete the Board of Trustees.

A benefit of this type of Foundation is that a minimum of 5% of the account value of the Foundation must be expended yearly and therefore each year provides an opportunity to renew funding for projects in the community satisfying its Mission Statement.

Recipients for 2018 include:

- The Arkalalah Executive Committee to assist in funding the concert at the Rotunda in Wilson Park to initiate the community's 87 th Annual Celebration of Arkalalah utilizing as a theme "Mardi Gras Madness"
- The City of Arkansas City is a recipient of a Challenge Grant wherein the Foundation will assist in the financing of Wilson Park improvements including a water/splash pad for children which necessitated moving playground equipment to another location, partially enclosing the Wilson Park Rotunda to make it usable all year and to remove existing tennis courts to provide a Farmers Market with off-street parking;
- The Arkansas City Arts Council has been approved a monetary Grant to assist in funding concerts and other entertainment to support the Burford Theatre by six (6) performances (one every other month);
- The Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce received a monetary Grant to assist in renovation of the Stan Herd Mural located in downtown Arkansas City;
- The Foundation has issued a Challenge Grant to the Burford to assist in renovating the old soda fountain area north of the foyer for a catering kitchen;
- The Foundation has offered \$50,000.00 as a Challenge Grant with the remaining construction project cost of \$25,000.00 to be funded on or before June 30, 2019;
- In regard to the remaining unpaid pledge of the Foundation for the Burford Renovation Project, the Foundation and the Board of Directors of the Burford have agreed to establish an Endowed Operating Fund with portions of the remaining financial pledge as it is paid;
- Camp Horizon received a Challenge Grant from the Foundation to assist in the financing and renovation of its recreation and performance area to become the Camp's "social hub";
- The Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum was awarded a Grant for the development of a 3-D replica of the Etzanoa Native American Settlement installed on a 3 x 6 foot table, including lighted buttons and a narration to inform the patrons as to aspect of the Settlements. Additional monies were funded to assist in renovation of the facade of the Museum;
- Cowley College Music was awarded a Grant for assisting in the upgrading of the College's Band Room with electronic equipment;
- Etzanoa Conservancy was awarded a Grant to provide "seed money" to assist in the financing of a Director of the Etzanoa Project;
- Southwestern College's Twelfth Annual Music Camp scheduled in June of each year will receive a Grant award;
- USD #470 School District was awarded monies to continue in providing clinical performance opportunities by bringing renown Professionals and Clinicians to the Schools;
- - providing travel and off-campus training to students - providing opportunities for student performances on the National and State levels with students matching the Foundation donation for fund raising events - improving conservancy and inventory of instruments, music, libraries and resources - providing professional development/training at events such as the Midwest Bank and Orchestra Clinic, the KMEA Music Conference and a National Conference and Vocal and Instrumental Music - and providing a Challenge Grant to the School District in regard to desired improvements at the Middle School Auditorium. The Foundation is especially pleased with the special Music concert performed at the Arkansas City High School composed by Gary Gackstatter and dedicated to Etzanoa: "Earth, Sky, Rivers and People".

In 2014, the Foundation awarded \$450,000 to the community. In 2015, the Foundation awarded \$416,777.00 to the community. Recipients for 2015 included: the Arkansas City Area Arts Council to establish a "seeds mentoring" program to facilitate local artists seeking growth in their discipline and as well as growth of the Arkansas City Arts Program; the City of Arkansas City to pay for a master plan for Wilson Park and the additional 4.5 acre vacated hospital parcel located North of Birch Avenue, between 1st and 2nd Streets; the Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum to complete installation of HVAC for its Theater area and updating its sound system; Cowley College for musical instruments and to initiate a Theater in the round featuring William Shakespeare's "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream" will be performed; the Arkansas City Public Library to assist in converting micro-film to digital; the Chaplain Nature Center for rebuilding the staircase, providing access to the lower Forrest flood plain; and the Burford Renovation Project, which celebrated its completion in the fall of 2016.