

## **The Marshfield Area Community Foundation**

### **Announces New Fund Established: Bokern Academic Leadership Fund**

#### **under the Marshfield Education Foundation**

Jim and Emily Bokern have invested in the future of the School District of Marshfield, its students, and by doing so, the community. They have come forward to make a **very significant** donation to the Marshfield Education Foundation. They have established the Bokern Academic Leadership Fund under the Marshfield Education Foundation.

The School District of Marshfield voted in June of 2015 to establish the Marshfield Education Foundation. This Foundation isn't a new idea, but rather one that has been talked about for about 10 years. Earlier Boards of Education talked about establishing an Education Foundation but never made the leap to do so.

The first fund to be established under this umbrella was established by Carol Phillip's family in her memory in 2010, in hopes that a Foundation would come to be. Carol served on the Marshfield School Board for 21 years and was a strong advocate of education and the Marshfield School District. This fund will be used to further the vision of the education foundation.

Jim and Emily Bokern's contribution will be a turning point. Never has the Community Foundation received this large of a contribution to establish an endowed fund. Wikipedia explains "that an endowed fund is a donation of money or property to a nonprofit organization for the ongoing support of that organization. Usually the endowment is structured so that the principal amount is kept intact while the investment income is available for use, which allows for the donation to have an impact over a longer period than if it were spent all at once." At a Community Foundation, we set up funds for the purpose the fund holder wishes, within the rules established by the IRS and Community Foundation, to benefit a nonprofit. The Bokern Academic Leadership Fund is a legacy gift. It will be funded upon the Bokern's death. At that time the principal will be invested and the earnings spent each year with oversight from the awards committee, the School District of Marshfield, and MACF. This will allow for this legacy gift to keep on giving forever.

Jim Bokern taught for 27 years in the Marshfield School District. Emily Bokern is a kindergarten teacher in Antigo. They both value education and want to insure the Marshfield continues its tradition of excellence. Jim retired from his teaching position this year. But before he retired he wanted to give even more to the district he taught in and loved. He taught AP US History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Comparative Government, and Criminal Justice. He was an excellent teacher and he recognized that a good school needs great teachers to be great.

In establishing this fund at the Marshfield Area Community Foundation his goal was to sustain and grow the legacy of educational leadership and academic excellence at Marshfield Public Schools. Currently, Marshfield Public School District has a strong tradition as an academic leader in various programs, including Advanced Placement, FFA, and several science competitions. What distinguishes these programs from other fine programs at Marshfield Public Schools is their leadership role among academic peers in the region, state of Wisconsin and the nation. Additionally, their results are quantified through data and qualified by student's enthusiasm for their achievements. In the long-run, the above programs

may not exist, but their accomplishments should serve as a benchmark for standards and distribution of funds. A committee will meet annually to make recommendations for awards. Awards will be given for strong instructional excellence that distinguishes Marshfield as a leader, targeted professional development crucial to improve instruction so Marshfield can become a leader in student learning, or scholarships to empower teachers and/or students to excel in instructional leadership/achievement.

Thank you Jim and Emily Bokern for having this vision. Jim challenges others to look at what a great education they have received in Marshfield, or what a great career they may have had, and think how they might be able to help future students continue this tradition of excellence.