



10 Years

of Helping Children
Become Champions



BEN CURTIS
FAMILY
FOUNDATION



10 Years of Service

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A Letter From the Founders *of the Ben Curtis Family Foundation*

To all of our Champions, we want to say “thank you” for joining us in our mission – without your support, we would not be able to help as many children as we do.

For us, 2022 was about adapting to the new “normal,” making sure the quality and consistency of our programs never waived. Our ongoing mission is ensure that children are at the heart of everything we do. We also want to make sure we serve the specific needs of each district and any child who needs a Birdie Bag gets one.

This past year our goal was to ensure that the needs of all of the children/ schools in the districts we serve were being met. We were very focused on the twelve districts we serve, able to meet their increasing needs. We saw a 3.3% increase from August to December in the amount of children in need of a Birdie Bag and were able to fulfill it. Everyone is feeling the effects of inflation, making it difficult for families to ensure there is food in the home. Teachers who are on the front lines every day have done an incredible job of identifying any child struggling with food insecurity and getting a Birdie Bag into their hands. We wouldn't be successful without them.

BCFF also felt the effects of the economy. Our cost of food doubled in 2022 as well as a rise in many of our supplies. We re-examined the items in our Birdie Bags as well as the sourcing to ensure we are being as cost efficient as possible. We had multiple new districts reach out to us wanting to implement our Birdie Bag program in their school and were not able to due to funding and costs.

As we move further into 2023, many families are going to be facing more financial challenges. In March, SNAP benefits returned to pre-COVID amounts, reducing monthly benefits by \$95 or more per month. Your support is needed now more than ever and we hope you will continue to join us in our fight to alleviate child food insecurity. One child, one Birdie Bag at a time.

**Ben and Candace
Curtis**





“They begin to see their own ability to have control over who they are and what happens to them – and not victims of circumstances – but masters of their own destiny.”

Julie Troman

Former Principal at Holden Elementary in the
Kent School District – the first recipient of
Birdie Bags in 2013





This Bag Tells Children That *Somebody Cares*

In golf, the word “par” means what’s expected of you. How many shots you should have on any given hole.

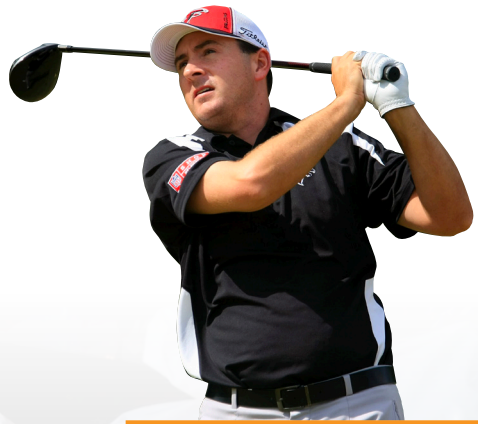
“Birdie” is a word that means shooting one under par. It means, you’ve come out ahead of what’s expected of you.

That’s perfect for our mission. Because it reminds our Foundation that the world of golf has been our blessing. The Birdie Bag is also a blessing to the now **5,600** children who receive them in 12 different school districts who are encouraged to believe that they, too, **can come out ahead**.

The Birdie Bag tells children that people love them and care about them.

It says, “Kids – you don’t have to worry so much about this. Do your homework. Join teams. Be in clubs. Play with your friends.”

This Birdie Bag can help reduce the fear, anxiety and other health challenges that come with food insecurity... so that these children can face their own futures with a clearer path to give their **best effort** and become **Champions of their own destiny**.



A Letter From the Board

of the Ben Curtis Family Foundation

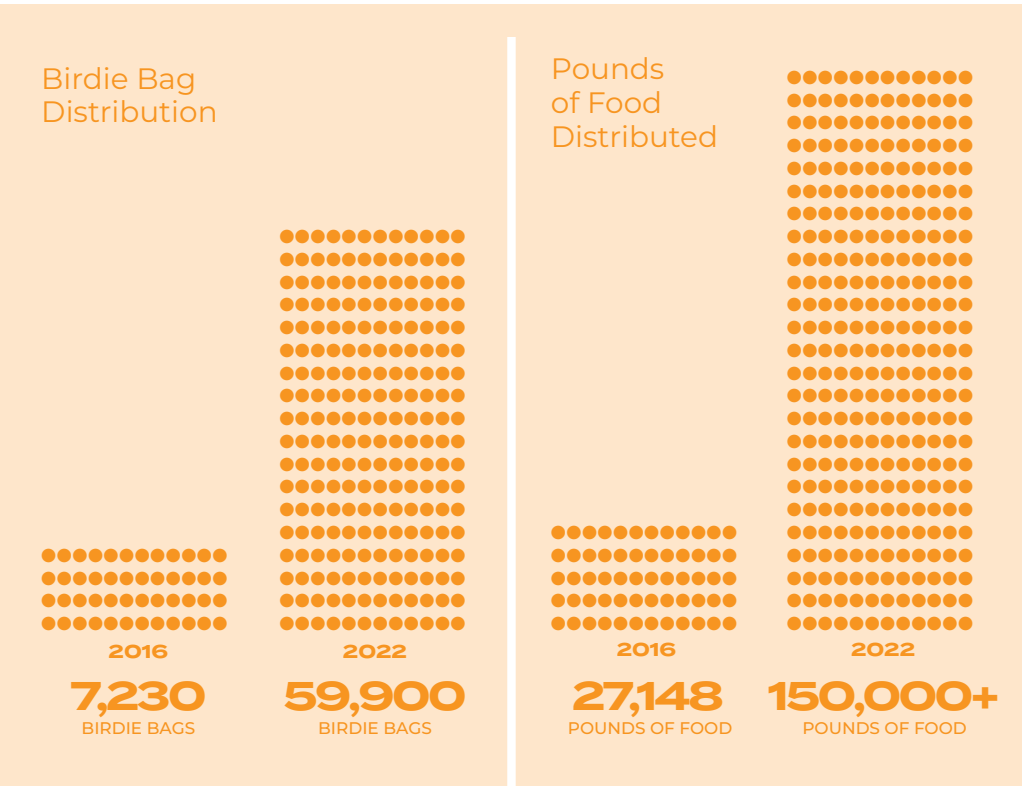
The work we do at the Ben Curtis Family Foundation is much needed and we are seeing the impact it is having across the 12 districts we serve. We want to thank all of you who have given your time, talent or treasure to help so many children (and families) at a time when it is needed most.

Recent Accomplishments

In 2022, we were able to perfect our Lean processes into our programs and tweak them to be as efficient as possible. We also were able to expand our volunteer base to include many student groups from the districts we serve to help us pack our Birdie Bags and wrap gifts for A Very Merry Dinner. It was a delight to see kids helping kids in their community.

Future Impact

In 2023, we will continue to serve our current 12 districts hoping we can continue to meet the need. Our goal is to ensure that any child will have a Birdie Bag that needs one if we see a rise in our numbers again as we move forward. Your support is critical to our success in achieving our goals. We couldn't do what we do without it.



Ten Years Ago - *How Did This All Begin?*

The View From Our First Principal

Once Ben and Candace Curtis decided to put their newly discovered cause into action, they looked around at their own hometown and reached out to the Kent City School District.

Beginnings

In 2013, Ben and Candace met with the Assistant Superintendent **Tom Larkin**, who introduced them to Holden Elementary principal **Julie Troman**. Holden statistically had the highest percentage of students below the poverty level. Already in place was a food backpack program. But Julie recalls there was a lot of “red tape” – forms to sign, parental approval and so on.

“Ben and Candace had a vision to provide easy access so that children could self-identify as needing help,” Julie says. “Their food was directly accessible to the kids without that red tape.”

Julie worked with Tom Larkin to build the program. “That first year we built the plane as we flew it,” she reflects. “Typically we tried to do it monthly, in conjunction with a long weekend, or over a holiday when they wouldn’t have access to the breakfast and lunch program.”

How It Succeeded

Simplicity was the key to success. “By keeping it as simple as possible, it didn’t restrict. By not having a big sign up, it normalized the receiving of Birdie Bags. It empowered children to make the call for themselves.”

“Any opportunity for children to know they have a voice and agency over their circumstance is good. They begin to see their own ability to have control over who they are and what happens to them – and not victims of circumstances – but masters of their own destiny. The world doesn’t happen to them.”

Julie Troman, now a Coordinator of Field Placement for the State University of New York, praises the Foundation.

“In my entire career as a public school principal, I don’t think I’ve been part of something that was born of an immediate local need, and worked with people who gave so unselfishly to help kids that they might never meet,” Julie says.

What Children Remember

Julie asserts, “I’m sure there are kids who will forever remember that these people showed up and gave them something to eat over long weekends.”

Ten years later, every time the program grows and every time it expands, it helps more children.



Tom Larkin
Kent City School District
Assistant Superintendent



Julie Troman
Kent City School District
Former Principal





10 Years of Fighting Food Insecurity

Ten Years Ago

Ben and Candace Curtis had already been exploring ways that they could give back to their community. They did not take for granted their blessings, which came as the result of dedicated hard work and, as always, luck.

They wanted to share those blessings. One night, while flipping through the TV channels, they saw a documentary about hunger in America. “We were moved by a family’s struggle with food insecurity,” states Candace. “Ben and I wondered how that must feel, not only for the kids, but for the parents who are not able to provide for their children.”

Ben and Candace were also surprised that this was happening right here – right in our own communities.

Growing More Efficient

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It is important to know that though hunger and food insecurity are closely related, they are distinct concepts. Hunger refers to a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while food insecurity refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.

The Curtis family uncovered research that revealed in Portage, Summit and Stark Counties, nearly 20% of children suffered from food insecurity.

Beginnings

Starting with just one school building in the Kent City School District, a group of volunteers assembled what came to be known as Birdie Bags, filled with non-perishable food and snacks – and later hygiene products – to give to children so that they'd be guaranteed something to eat on long weekends.

With help from educator Julie Troman (see page 8) the Curtises learned more about how to make their mission work so that children benefit without overly complicated operations.

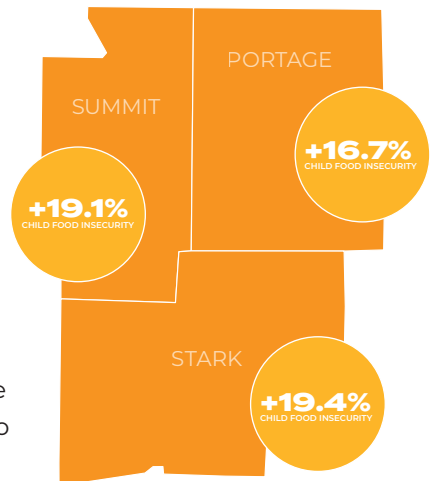
Growth


Ten years later, food insecurity still impacts area school children. The Ben Curtis Family Foundation now services 5,600 students across 12 school districts in Stark, Summit and Portage Counties, where the child food insecurity rate is approximately 18.5% – higher than the national average.

This fact moves our hearts – but it also inspires us to keep going. In ten years, the collective efforts of donors, volunteers, partners and schools have made a difference. It will continue to do so... one child at a time.

Other Insecurities

After partnering with schools in our community to provide Birdie Bags, we've uncovered another challenge: technology insecurity, or inconsistent access to the technology needed for kids to thrive in school. The Foundation will always seek ways to face problems like these to give our local school children the tools they need to succeed.





“Many times the students are hungry throughout the day and a simple snack will do the trick to get them back on track! Thank you to everyone involved who makes this project come together.”

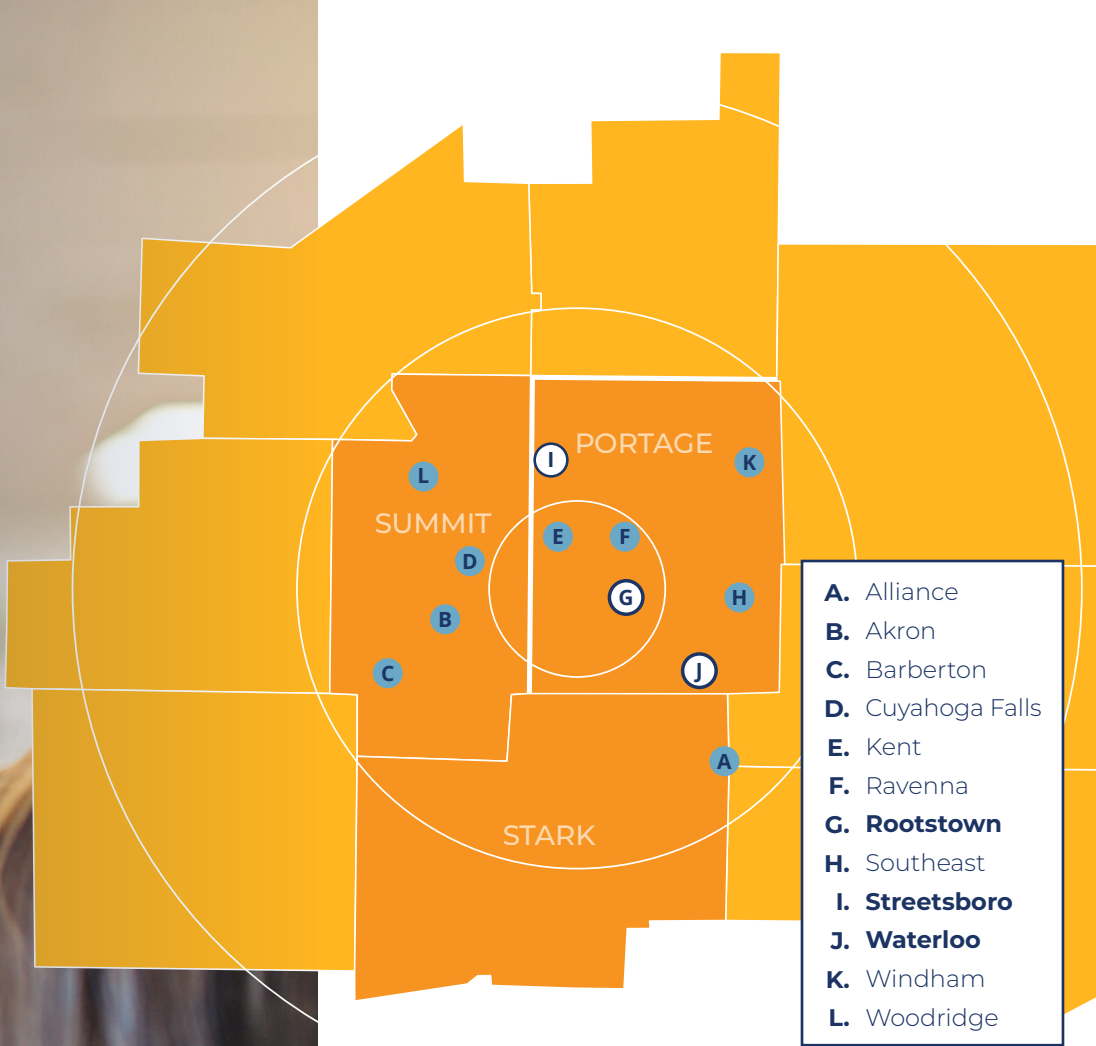
Mrs. Melissa Krska, School Counselor
BARBERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

“I really like the Cheez-Its, granola bars, Jello cups and Goldfish crackers!”

Kansas McKee, Student
BARBERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

“The bags also set up an opportunity for discussion about proper nutrition, eating habits and sleep schedules - things that may not necessarily be modeled at home.”

Nurse Bochar, Student
BARBERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL



Districts *We Serve*

This past year, the Ben Curtis Family Foundation added three new schools to the list of districts we serve – **Streetsboro, Rootstown and Waterloo.**

So what began ten years ago – serving one building within the Kent City School District – has now expanded to 12 school districts. Not all districts are alike, and the Foundation builds strong relationships with all districts who are interested in partnering with us to provide the best ways to help students.

With your help, we serve more districts – and more students – providing children with the support they need to do their best every day and become their own best champions.

5 Reasons Why the Community Supports the Ben Curtis Family Foundation

1. Food Insecurity Harms Our Children

According to Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States, Ohio ranked 14th in food insecurity in the United States in 2022. Not having consistent access to enough food can affect cognitive abilities, overall health, moods, and attention spans—not to mention the psychological effects of living with scarcity. **Many people share our goal to reduce this threat to our children.**

2. We Focus on Helping Children Locally

Everyone who donates, volunteers and partners with the Foundation can rest assured that their efforts stay local, helping children who attend schools in Summit, Portage and Stark Counties. **Helping local children and their families makes us all stronger.**

3. Our 10 Years Have Resulted in Continuous Improvements

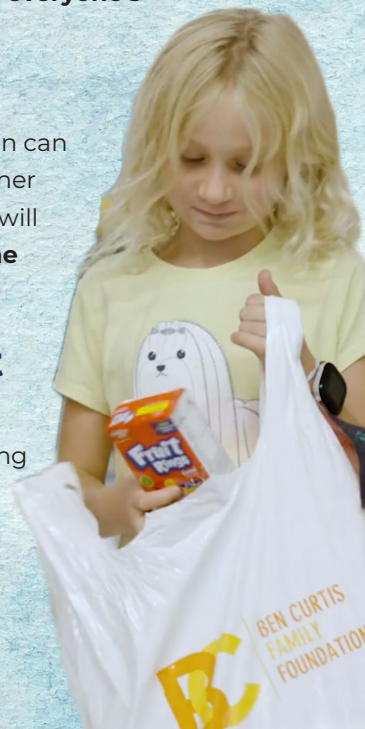
Since we began we have worked with a growing number of partners who have taught us how to streamline processes, organize our warehouse and get the most out of our resources. Our skills have grown, enabling us to serve more children. **By supporting and partnering with us, the Foundation maximizes everyone's efforts to help more children.**

4. Your Support Helps Children Learn

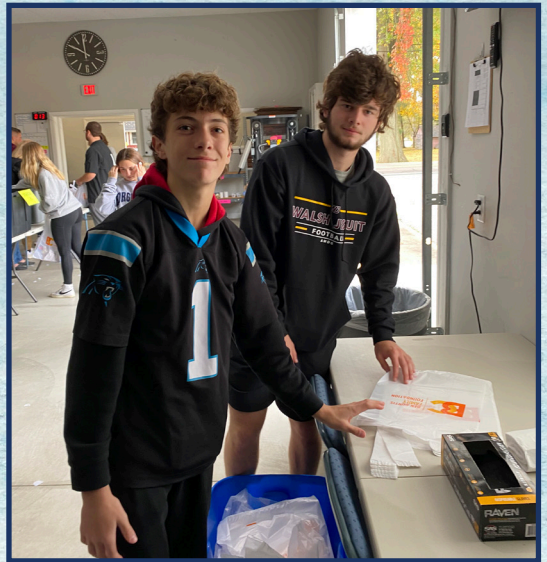
Simply put, when food insecurity is reduced or eliminated, children can concentrate better and focus on doing their best in school and other activities. If they are less prone to sickness, then their attendance will improve. **Overall, our children's education is enhanced when the threat of food insecurity goes away.**

5. It's Not Just About Food...It's About the Future

A bag of nonperishable food and toiletries goes a long way in telling children that their community loves them, cares about them, and wants them to become their own best champions. **Your support helps area students focus on achievement, not worry about whether or not they have a next meal.**



Our Mission Is **Impossible** Without Great Volunteers



(Clockwise from top): Southeast High School's Leo Club spend the afternoon packing Birdie Bags; Volunteers wrapping presents and assembling Birdie Bags; More the merrier – volunteers from Kent Roosevelt High School's National Honor Society spend an afternoon giving back to their community.

A Caring Community

For the past ten years, the Foundation could never have made the impact we have without our volunteers, supporters and community partners.

Here are just a few of the many stories that illustrate how working together can help more children in more communities – and in turn – bless more people with the joys of giving.

KAPCO

Nearly 100 (a majority) of KAPCO employees buy and contribute new gifts from the wish lists the Foundation shares with them – all directly going to students in local school districts who participate in our annual A Very Merry Dinner.

“Christmas is so very special for children,” says Erin Reed, who organizes the Giving Tree at KAPCO. “So if we can help kids who don’t have their basic needs met – help them smile at Christmas – that’s super rewarding to us.”

“We plan to continue and even expand our participation,” adds Chuck Noll, VP of Sales & Marketing. The Foundation thanks KAPCO for their participation in promoting the event on social media, which encouraged some of KAPCO’s vendors to also participate.



Barberton Community Foundation

Working closely with the Barberton City School District for the fifth year, the Barberton Community Foundation continues to support our cause with the Birdie Bag Pass-Through Fund. The Barberton Community Foundation is a living example of giving back locally, as this fund helps us distribute between 1,500-1,700 bags each month during the school year as well as bags during the summer.



BARBERTON
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Change for Change

Change for Change is an event sponsored by The City of Barberton and Mayor William B. Judge. Each month this fundraiser is held on behalf of a local non-profit and is designed to raise awareness for the group and collect donations for their cause. The Ben Curtis Family Foundation was the grateful recipient of one of these events. This is a great example of community members giving back to benefit their own neighbors in helping us provide Birdie Bags for Barberton City School District students.



Kaulig Foundation

Much thanks goes to the Kaulig Foundation, the private family foundation founded by Matt and Lisa Kaulig to provide grants to Northeast Ohio public charities that benefit children and families. In 2019, the Kaulig Foundation first awarded the Ben Curtis Family Foundation a \$15,000 grant. Since then, the Kaulig Foundation's continued support has amounted to more than \$80,000. In turn, Ben Curtis has made guest appearances at several Kaulig Foundation events, attracting golf enthusiasts to support the Kaulig family mission to support many local nonprofits, including ours.

Kaulig Giving

These and many other individuals and organizations give their time, talent, financial support and other resources to the Foundation. In addition, they want to join us in our fight against child food insecurity as they learn about just how many local school children do not have the basic essentials needed to do their best in school and other life activities.

Together we make a difference – one child at a time.

The View

From a Kent Business



If hearing about the Foundation from an educator is valuable, so is seeing it from the point of view of a local business owner we partner in Kent.

Leadership isn't about just one thing. Rebekah Wright-Kulis is a 3rd generation president of Wright Heating and Cooling who recognizes the importance of strong schools to any community.

Wright-Kulis is both a business and civic leader. Recognized by the chamber of commerce as Small Business Person of the Year, she also serves as a member of the Board of Education for the Kent City School District.

Year after year, Wright Heating and Air Conditioning has sponsored A Very Merry Dinner events. Their location is set up as a Giving Tree site, complete with decorated Christmas trees and children's wish lists.

"We promote the event and people come in and pick up the forms," Rebekah says warmly. "It is so much fun for me to see – in just a few weeks – so many people bringing in bundles of gifts to our office. Even though they never will see these children opening the gifts, they are grateful for the opportunity to give back to local children who need it."

From everyday meals and snacks... to a once-a-year holiday feast, the Foundation has given dignity, joy and empowerment to many children and their families for ten years.



Champions for Our Children

Everyone who helps our cause to eliminate food and other insecurities is a champion, too – including all of our donors, partners and volunteers. We thank them all – each and every one – with a couple of special shout-outs here!



Sue Schwartzhoff

Sue volunteers with us on a weekly basis.



Paul Sellman

We can count on Paul to ensure our packing line is uninterrupted.



Bob & Terri Duesing

They know the process and guide our other volunteers to where help is needed the most.



More Champions for the Children

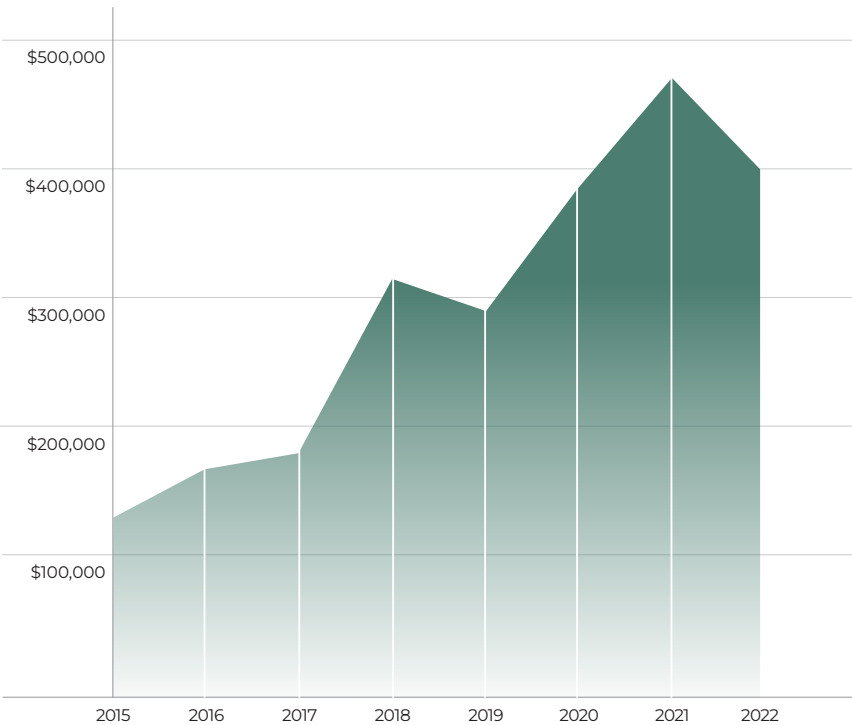
Andrew's Moving and Storage + Metis Construction + White House Chicken ensure that Barberton and Kent's Birdie Bags are delivered to each building when they're needed. There are also school Champions in every district that drive their vehicle, trailer, van, or box truck to our facility to pick them up each month. Without them, our mission wouldn't be possible!



2022 Financial Statement

As of and For the Years Ended:	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total Revenue	\$356,474	\$505,586	\$391,245	\$304,958	\$194,424
Total Expenses	\$518,628	\$416,262	\$321,658	\$232,194	\$130,909
Revenue Less Expenses	\$-162,154	\$89,324	\$69,587	\$72,764	\$63,515
Contributions and Grants	\$400,084	\$485,908	\$392,305	\$295,075	\$100,032

BEN CURTIS FAMILY FOUNDATION SUPPORT



BCFF Support (Gifts, Grants, Contributions and Membership Fees)

2022	\$400,084
2021	\$485,908
2020	\$392,305
2019	\$295,075
2018	\$307,653
2017	\$186,261
2016	\$176,096
2015	\$131,676
Total	\$1,982,743



Ben Curtis, 2003



KSU Women's Golf



KSU Men's Golf

Celebrating Our Volunteers

How the Local Golf Community Has Supported Our Journey

Before he became a professional golfer, Ben Curtis was a collegiate golfer for Kent State University. It was here he met his future wife, Candace Beatty, who competed on the women's golf team. Ben and Candace also made important, lifelong friends and associations at KSU that helped shape the way the Foundation operates today.

Current Coaches and Teams

Jon Mills, a former KSU golfer and college teammate with Ben, is currently the **KSU Men's Golf** coach. Coach Mills' team continues the tradition of volunteering. "I love how, when Candace or Sara text me for help, my guys will drop what they're doing and be at the Foundation warehouse in an hour." Jon credits the Foundation for "the low-key approach [that] is unintimidating and makes it okay for children to ask for help. I notice that when we deliver to schools, it's creating a system that is accepted by everyone."

KSU Women's Golf coach Casey Van Damme is also impressed by the athletes' involvement. "It's a great thing for our student athletes," Coach Van Damme says. "It's powerful for them to see just how many Birdie Bags are being assembled – just how many children and their families need this help. When they see what's in the bags, like shampoo and toothpaste, they become aware that we should not take for granted the small conveniences most of us enjoy."

The Women's Team also participates in wrapping presents for A Very Merry Dinner.

"I've been around many Foundations and causes," states Coach Van Damme. "What makes the Ben Curtis Family Foundation different: They are action oriented. Without red tape or fanfare, they give back and they give locally."



Herb Page, Retired KSU Golf Coach

"I met Ben when he was just fifteen," said Herb Page, as he was scouting young talent for the KSU golf team. Herb was the director of golf programs, where he got to know Candace, also a collegiate golfer. "Candace lights the room up. Ben is the most humble, solid individual I've ever known."

Herb selected Ben to receive an endowed golf scholarship in 1996 from entrepreneur and golf enthusiast Steve Cress. The scholarship was the start of a lifelong friendship between Steve and the Curtis family as well as support for their Foundation.

Steve Cress contributed generously to the Foundation's first golf outing and has been a supporter ever since. Steve is currently CEO of Mid's Homestyle Pasta Sauces. As a food industry manufacturer, he has long been contacted by food banks and other charities to help with food insecurity. He understands the Foundation's cause.

"It's phenomenal what they have done," Steve says. "Candace and Ben are two special people in my life. God bless them and the work they do for children."

Roughly 10 years after college, the Curtises formed the Foundation to alleviate food insecurity. From the start, Coach Page and the men and women's golf teams volunteered, assembling Birdie Bags and loading the golf team vans that Herb and Ben would drive to schools. "When they asked us to help, we were glad to do it and proud that we could be part of it."

Ten years later, the KSU golf teams still volunteer their time. "Our athletes learn at ages 18, 19 and 20 about the importance of giving back," Herb says with pride.

"It has come a long way since those Kent State teams volunteering their vans, the number of children they help is incredible. They have touched so many families in a great way."



Ten years after Ben Curtis, KSU welcomed another stellar collegiate golfer, **Corey Connors**, who is currently playing on the PGA Tour. In 2020, Corey Connors won the RSM Birdies Fore Love competition, earning money for three charities, including Mia's Miracles, the Corey and Malory Connors Family Fund and **\$50,000 for the Ben Curtis Family Foundation**. Thanks Corey!

Beyond

the Birdie Bag Program

The Birdie Bag is a symbol of what the Ben Curtis Family Foundation contributes to the lives of school children in the 12 school districts we serve. Beyond the Birdie Bag, these fundraising events also contribute to our overall operation to ensure Birdie Bags reach the area school children who benefit from them.

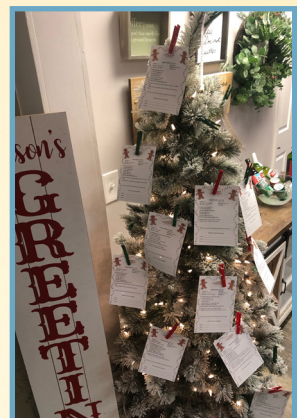


8th Annual Golf Classic

On August 5, 2022, the Foundation hosted our Golf Classic at the Country Club of Hudson, also home of the Ben Curtis Golf Academy. We raised over \$130,000 that will support our mission to alleviate childhood hunger in Northeast Ohio. Special thanks to our title sponsor Kaulig Giving, and all of our other sponsors, for making this event possible!

A Very Merry Dinner

Giving Trees decorated to celebrate the holidays and placed in participating businesses and other organizations come complete with gift requests. Participants who buy those gifts and return them to the tree benefit children participating in our Christmas program, A Very Merry Dinner. In 2022, there were 531 kids and 191 families for the drive-through event in 5 different districts. Our volunteers wrapped an estimated 5,500 gifts and school faculty helped us carry out the event the day of. We expanded to an additional school – Alliance – along with Kent, Ravenna, Windham and Southeast.





Other Events on Our Behalf

🍷 Merlot & Manicures

For the 8th year, Evelyn Dickerson Hair Design hosted the Merlot and Manicures on October 12, 2022 at the Kent State University Hotel & Conference Center. All donations supported the Foundation.

💧 Serenity Spa Event

On November 4, 2022 the Studio 9 Salon and Spa in Munroe Falls hosted the 3rd Annual Serenity Spa night benefiting the Ben Curtis Family Foundation.

As you can see, no matter what your business or passion, there is always a way we can work together to help alleviate food insecurity – and other challenges – that face our local school children. **Spreading awareness and generating resources helps them become their own best champions!**

Our Donors

“Our donors make it possible for us to reach more children suffering from food insecurity and other challenges. Because of you, more children have food to eat and hygiene products as a first step towards good hygiene. Most of all, these children know they are not forgotten.”

Ben and Candace Curtis

**Major
Champion**

Kaulig Giving

Hole-In-One

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**Double Eagle
Champion**

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Jeff Harnden	Mark and Deborah Jones	Olivia Labajetta	Merilee
Darrin and Michelle Hartman	Nick Jones	Richard and Mary Ann Lambert	Taylor and Angel Marshall
Rashmi Harvey	Matt Jurcevic	Todd Lancaster	Brandon Martin
Daniel Hazlett	Kass Family	Maureen Larkin	Marisa Martin
Lynn Heisler	The Katz Family	Tom and Amy Larkin	Terry McClaskey
David and Amy Henderson	Leslee Keegan	Frank LaRose	Joyce McCombs
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Jay Meagrow	Nicole Hicks	Jonathan Repp	Anthony and Francesca Siracusa
Chris Meduri	Eric Nida	Joseph & Brenda Richardson	Jeanne Smith
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Gregg Mylett	ProForma	Robert Riggie and Chrystal Shook	Unity Health Network, LLC
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Carina Wagner	Scott and Kelly Winer	Larry and Mary Wright	Colman and Jayme Zsiros
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Susan Weber			
Miles Welo			

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In memory of Walter Day

Given by Jonathan Day

In memory of Dianne Andrick

Given by William Andrick

In memory of Judy Crocker

Given by William Andrick

In honor of Tom Eby

Given by John and Mary Carol Lewis

In memory of William Eldredge

Given by Tamesin Eldredge

In memory of Larry Hannum

Given by James and Derna Bish

In memory of Bill Hinkle

Given by Steve Hinkle

In memory of Kevin Ryan

Given by Linda Ryan

In celebration of Lori Seymour

Given by Matthew Seymour





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