



**The Charitable Foundation**  
OF AIKEN

### President's Message

As we turn the calendar to a new year it is a natural time to be more reflective - not only what's behind us, but also what lies ahead. Whether thoughts go to milestones met, challenges overcome or opportunities awaiting us, we inevitably arrive at what matters most. At the heart of it all is the gift we leave behind for the residents of Aiken County. Our legacy. Our legacy begins here, in the present, in the day to day that reveals not only what we do, but also who we truly are. In the words of Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we do". We want to extend our heartfelt thanks for your incredible support, kindness, and generosity and for being part of the legacy of The Charitable Foundation of Aiken.

As we look forward, we are introducing additional options to facilitate efficient and easy donation options. You can continue to make a donation via a check or by using the link on our website. We just released a QR code which is linked directly to our secure website. We also introduced an option to facilitate a stock transfer into our Fidelity brokerage account. Please refer to our website for more details on these new options.

On behalf of our full Executive Board and Advisory Committee, we wish you continued success and health for the new year.

*Kathleen Bennett*

#### **The Executive Board**

Kathleen Bennett, President  
Julie Brozowski, Secretary  
Billie Messina, Treasurer

#### **Advisory Committee**

Daria Carney	Nancy Marks
Noble Diller	Patti Monczewski
Kathy English	Diana Peters
Andrea Gregory	Lark Snouffer
Angela Hodges	Christiane Stoffer
Terry Lee	MaryAnn Wennemer

**The Charitable Foundation of Aiken's mission is to pledge our resources to organizations that create life-changing opportunities for the residents of Aiken County, South Carolina. The Foundation will raise funds separately through annual giving programs such as the Circle of Giving and year-round fundraising initiatives. These funds will be dispersed under the guidance of the Foundation's executive board and advisory committee.**

# FOUNDATION NEWS

## A Message from the Board

*As we reflect on another remarkable year for the Charitable Foundation of Aiken, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported our mission. Your generosity and commitment have made a tremendous impact on our community. We proudly presented a check for \$25,000 to The Aiken Center for the Arts and a check for \$25,000 to Family Promise of Aiken County. Together, we've helped countless families and individuals find hope and opportunity.*

## 2025 Highlights

The Foundation provided funding to **The Aiken Center for the Arts** to support the Arts and Music Camp for special needs children, Joy in the Journey for Alzheimer's and dementia patients, the Aiken Youth Orchestra and ensemble, and art camps for children ages 5-10.

The Foundation provided funding to **Family Promise of Aiken** allowing them to offer one-on-one case management support for families with children that are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

The first annual **Polo n Blues** Fundraiser to benefit The Foundation raised \$13,000.

The Foundation announced that the 2025-2026 beneficiaries are **The Clubhouse Community of Hope** and **Public Education Partners of Aiken County**.

**The Clubhouse Community of Hope** is a community-based service dedicated to supporting and empowering people living with mental illness, known as Clubhouse members. Clubhouse members can recover by gaining access to opportunities for employment, socialization, education, skill development, housing and improved wellness.

**Public Education Partners (PEP).** Public Education Partners has united educators, business leaders, service organizations, and individuals who believe strong public schools are the foundation on which we, the community, will build the future of Aiken County.



## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MaryAnn Wennemer



MaryAnn moved to Aiken in 2015 after retirement from software consulting following a 25+ year career working for large IT companies. The Aiken area had so much to offer for retirees to keep busy doing sports, volunteering, and events that she quickly identified her interest and jumped right into volunteering for non-profits. A few months living in Aiken saw her join a non-profit, Women of Woodside and serve on their board for several years. MaryAnn likes to keep busy, so she also joined the SPCA Albrecht Center

volunteer group working with the animals and helping at events. A need was seen to build a dog park for exclusive use for shelter animals, and she organized several golf tournaments to raise money to build the park. She was a member of the board for several years and worked as Event Chair organizing large events to raise money to support the shelter.

The Executive Board of the Charitable Foundation of Aiken asked MaryAnn to join the Advisory Committee in 2024 to lend her experience with fundraising events and kickoff their first large fundraiser. The named event – Polo n Blues centered on a polo match, outdoor barbeque, raffle, and silent auction. It was successful and she is now working with her co-chair to hold the second annual Polo n Blues on Saturday, May 16 at La Bourgogne polo field in Wagner.

### INCREDIBLE NEWS !!!

The Charitable Foundation of Aiken has been selected by Aiken High School to be the recipient of all funds raised for the Miss Aiken High Pageant 2026 by participating contestants. The theme this year is the "Compass of Confidence". The pageant celebrates intelligence, leadership, and poise. The Foundation is honored to have been chosen. January 24th, 2026, 7-10 pm. The award and check will be presented to the Foundation that evening.


We are grateful for your support of The Charitable Foundation of Aiken. It is through your generous giving that we are able to support organizations which create life-changing opportunities for the residents of Aiken County. Consider one of the options:

- \* Circle of Giving - \$1000+
- \* Friend of the Foundation - \$500+
- \* Benefactor - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fundraising organization which allows donors to make tax deductible contributions to specific beneficiaries.

Tax ID# 85-3996900

Donations can be made via:

- [thecharitablefoundationofaiken.org](https://thecharitablefoundationofaiken.org)
- Check payable to The Charitable Foundation of Aiken, 262 East Gate Dr., #139, Aiken SC 29803
-  On your mobile device, use the photo mode, hover over QR code image which directs you to our website.

*Thank you!*