



BARBERTON

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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NEWS RELEASE
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Barberton Community Foundation Launches New Leadership Development Scholarship for Experienced Professionals

Barberton, Ohio — Barberton Community Foundation is launching a new Leadership Development Scholarship to help experienced professionals become stronger leaders through the Heart to Heart Purposeful Leadership Program in Akron.

The scholarship will be announced publicly for the first time at Heart to Heart Leadership 33rd Annual Breakfast on May 12, 2026, at the John S. Knight Center in downtown Akron. The annual event brings together leaders, employers, and community partners from across the region to celebrate purpose-driven leadership and the lasting impact of values-based leadership.

The Foundation created this scholarship for professionals who live or work in Barberton and are ready to expand their influence within their organizations and across the community. In alignment with the Foundation's strategic priority of career pathways, the scholarship helps remove financial barriers while encouraging shared investment. The Foundation provides matching scholarship support for up to 50% of program costs, not to exceed \$2,500 per recipient. The remaining balance may be funded by the applicant, their employer, or a combination of both.

"Career pathways are not just about access. They are about progression," said Josh Gordon, executive director of the Foundation. "This scholarship is for professionals who have already built experience and are ready for more responsibility. If we want stronger organizations and a stronger community, we must invest in the people who are ready to lead at the next level."

The Purposeful Leadership Program combines structured leadership training, one-on-one coaching, and a 360-degree leadership assessment to help participants better understand how they lead, communicate, and influence others. Through research-based learning, practical application, and peer engagement, participants gain tools they can put to work immediately.

“We are always looking for ways to partner to develop more purposeful leaders,” said Jeremy Lile, president and chief executive officer of Heart to Heart Leadership. “That’s why we’re thrilled about this opportunity to partner with Barberton Community Foundation to make our Purposeful Leadership Program more accessible to folks who live and or work in their community. We know that graduates of our program enhance their own lives as well as the lives, organizations, and communities around them. This is a win-win.”

Applications for the Fall 2026 Purposeful Leadership Program open June 1. Eligible applicants who live or work in Barberton may indicate their interest in the Barberton Community Foundation Leadership Development Scholarship during the application process through Heart to Heart Purposeful Leadership Program. Additional scholarship details are available at barbertoncf.org.

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About Heart to Heart Leadership

Heart to Heart Leadership is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit changing the world by cultivating purposeful leaders. For more than 35 years, the organization has partnered with individuals and organizations across sectors to develop values-based, purpose-driven leadership. Through exceptional programs, participants connect inner values with daily work and leadership practices, supporting leaders at all career stages. Its highly rated offerings include the Purposeful Leadership Program (a comprehensive experience for seasoned leaders), Inside the Heart of Leadership (a series for leaders at any level), Working as One (a program designed for teams), and more.

About Barberton Community Foundation

Established in 1996, Barberton Community Foundation has awarded over 8,500 grants and scholarships totaling more than \$109 million since its inception. The Foundation strives to improve, now and forever, the quality of life for Barberton residents by providing leadership on vital issues, fostering collaboration and creating a legacy of giving to do good. The Foundation strengthens the community for current and future generations by proactively directing its grant dollars to the community’s greatest needs. To read more about Barberton Community Foundation visit www.barbertoncf.org or follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/barbertoncommunityfoundation.