The Delaware County Medical Society Public Health Fund

What Happened To The Money That Was Dropped In The Bucket

By Harry V. Armitage, MD

In the fall of 1963 the Delaware County Medical Society conducted a mass immunization program against poliomyelitis. During the drive, called VOP (Victory Over Polio), Type I, II, and III Oral Sabin vaccine was administered to 476,980 people, immunizing 87% of the county’s population.

As a result, this dreaded disease, in children called infantile paralysis, was stopped dead in it’s tracks and has not occurred in the County since that time. The vaccine was administered on six Sundays during September, October, and November at seventy five feeding stations which were opened in public school buildings throughout the county. At each station the public was invited to make voluntary contributions to offset the cost of the program.

Contributions were dropped into buckets placed near the doors of the feeding stations, and when the drive was concluded, the amount collected was found to be much larger than had been expected; and happily, the ultimate cost of the program was much less than had been anticipated, since Wyeth Laboratories donated the vaccine at not cost to the Society, and many organizations and individual volunteers supplied free services. Thus, when the drive reached completion, the County Society found itself in possession of an unexpected windfall amounting to $145,000.
The Board of Directors of the County Society, after considering various ways in which this money could be used to benefit the citizens of Delaware County, decided to form a corporation to manage the money and to apply to the Internal Revenue Service for treatment as an Organization Exempt from taxes. By February of 1964 a corporate charter had been obtained, and with a Board of Directors appointed, the first meeting of the Delaware County Medical Society Public Health Fund, Inc. was held. Officers elected at this meeting were Harry V. Armitage, M.D., President, Howard F. Reed, Esq., Secretary, and Arthur D. Reynolds, M.D., Treasurer. The directors decided that the Fund should be used to provide limited financial resources, so called “seed money”, to public health groups in Delaware County that would not otherwise have money available for special projects. The Secretary agreed to draft By-Laws for the Fund and present them for approval at the next meeting.

After a change from tax-exempt status to that of a Private Foundation in 1971, investment management was turned over to the Investment Committee and grew to $95,000 in 1982. In 1985, the assets were transferred to Merrill Lynch where they were guided by Graham Andrews who was also the President of the Fund. In 2009, the Fund was moved to Wells Fargo Advisors and as of 12/31/12 the value of the Fund is $374,037.

From its' beginning the Fund has awarded annual grants to organizations engaged in public health endeavors. The Fund’s Examination Committee processes applications for grants and allocates money to the grantees. The amount of money awarded each year is based on income received from invested assets. Some 60 organizations and group have received grants varying between $200 and $3,600 in size.
For 2012 they included:

1. American Red Cross
2. CAADC-Community Action Agency of Delaware County
3. BeatCancer.org
4. CHEO-Community Health & Education Outreach
5. ChesPenn Health Services
6. Clarke PA School for the Deaf
7. Delco Memorial Foundation
8. Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County
9. Family & Community Service
10. Family Support Line
11. The Foundation of the Delaware County Medical Society
12. Leaning Ally
13. Pathways
14. Philabundance
15. Planned Lifetime Assistance Network
16. Planned Parenthood
17. Presbyterian Children’s Village
18. Senior Community Services
19. Surrey Community Services
20. The Salvation Army
21. Thresholds
22. Volunteers in Action
23. Wayne Senior Center
24. Women’s Resource Center
The Fund’s annual meeting is held in November. Members of the Board are: John Rosecky, President, David Smilk, Esq., Secretary, Robert Plotkin, M.D., David McKeighan, Richard Nelson, D.D.S., Rekha Yagnik, M.D., Donna Scott, M.D., David Kramer, CPA, and Frederic Hellman, M.D.

To contact the Fund, please use the following:

Delaware County Medical Society Public Health Fund

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