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Hendricks County Community Foundation Encourages Civic Engagement Through Voter Education Videos

The Hendricks County Community Foundation (HCCF) recently released a series of videos to educate the public on a vital civic duty and fundamental right for all citizens - voting in public elections. With the May primaries drawing near as well as the general election in November, the timing is ideal for motivating residents in Hendricks County to be ready and equipped for voting.

HCCF partnered with Anne Engelhardt, Chair of the Hendricks County GOP, Cindy Hohman, Chair of the Hendricks County Democrats, DJ Hoskins, Hendricks County Chief Deputy Clerk of Elections and Ash Interactive Digital Services to create a series of eight Voter Education videos. The videos cover important information, including how to register to vote, how to vote early, voting by mail, absentee voting, who's on the ballot, how to find your polling location, election security and the importance of voting. You can view each of these videos on the HCCF website at www.hendrickscountycf.org.

Despite the importance of elections, and particularly those at the local level, Hendricks County had a voter turnout of only 56% in 2016. In 2019, HCCF conducted a Community Needs Assessment that highlighted a fear that "Community leaders have self-interest rather than social responsibility and lack overall community knowledge." Through extensive experience with local elected officials who are truly committed to the betterment of the county, the Community Foundation believes this issue is a result of the general public not being adequately informed and engaged with local officials. HCCF is working towards a more educated and active electorate to help bridge the gap and build trust between the voters and their elected representatives.

In 2020, HCCF partnered with Indiana Citizen to encourage voter education and involvement and Hendricks County voter turnout rose to 72% that year, an increase of 16%. There were only 8 counties in the State with higher voter turnout. The statewide growth in voter turnout was only 9%, meaning Hendricks was on the leading edge.

In further efforts to increase voter engagement, the Community Foundation partnered with the Hendricks County GOP, the Hendricks County Democrats and The Republican Newspaper to present "Meet the Candidates" Forums last month to offer residents the opportunity to meet candidates for public office and learn their positions on issues important to them. Additionally, HCCF partnered with The Republican to create the 2024 Primary Election Guide, listing all the current candidates for office in Hendricks County. Recordings of the forums, the Election Guide and the link to the Vote Hendricks County website can all be found on the Foundation's website at www.hendrickscountycf.org.

Eric Hessel, HCCF's Vice President of Programs, commented, "I think the noise from Washington often trickles down to our local politics; but from experience, we know our locally

elected officials run to serve and make their communities better in thoughtful and meaningful ways. However, there is clearly a disconnect between those voting in our local elections and those that are elected. We hope our Voter Education and Engagement efforts encourage local people to engage in their most impactful civic duty: voting."

The Mission of the Hendricks County Community Foundation: To be a trusted community partner in understanding needs, aligning resources, and empowering people to address today's priorities and create lasting impact. Our vision is Hendricks County as a place where everyone has the opportunity to have a fulfilling life and the tools they need to build a stronger future together. The Community Foundation manages assets of over \$20 million in a collection of funds created by individuals, families, businesses and organizations for charitable purposes. In 2023, the Community Foundation gave over \$1.7M in grants to charitable organizations and scholarships to local students. For more information, call 317-268-6240 or visit www.hendrickscountycf.org

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