



July 2026 Grants

Contact: Thomas H. Webb, Jr., Executive

Director Phone: 479-755-6880

twebb@thedegenfoundation.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fort Smith, AR (August 20, 2026) –The Degen Foundation is pleased to announce its July 2026 grant awards benefiting nonprofit organizations throughout the region. The Foundation awards grants to organizations that provide health services and promote health and educational opportunities for uninsured and underserved populations throughout the seven-county area it serves.

The Degen Foundation is a supporting organization of the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education (ACHE) and United Way of Fort Smith Area.

Grants totaling **\$554,279.00** were awarded in July to the following organizations.

Visit The Degen Foundation website for more information about grant opportunities:

www.thedegenfoundation.org

The Arkansas Colleges of Health Education (ACHE) was awarded a grant of **\$450,000.00** to support a variety of projects, including:

- \$160,000.00 for new LED Screens for both ARCOM Lecture Halls
 - \$35,000.00 for Anatomy Lab Tablets
- \$30,000.00 to assist with the 2026 Remote Area Medical Event (RAM)
- \$25,000.00 for the ACHE Journal of Medicine & Executive Leadership;
- \$200,000.00 to establish the John Taylor/Degen Foundation Endowed Scholarship Program

Top Picture: Chris Brown, ACHE Chief Financial Officer, signs the Letter of Agreement accepting Degen Foundation funding.

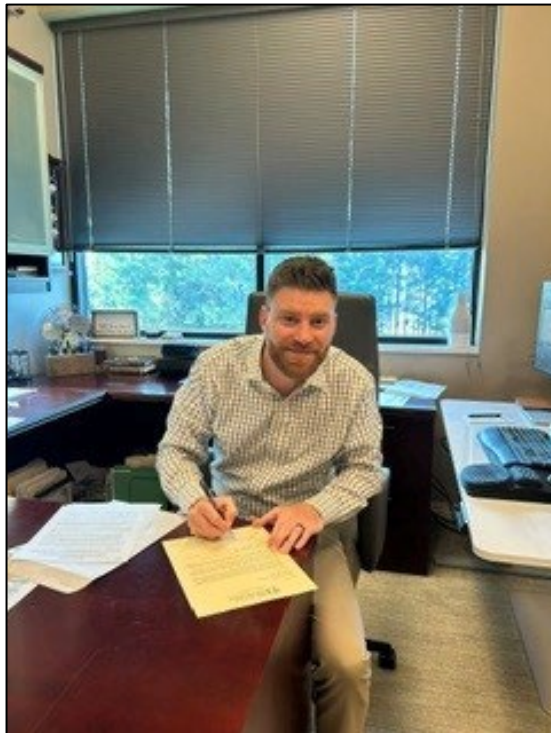
Second Picture: Garon Kerns, Director of IT Operations, pictured with the new LED screens that will enhance instruction in both ARCOM Lectures Halls

Third Picture: Dr. Joanne Peterson, ARCOM Chair of Anatomy, pictured with newly acquired tablets that will support anatomy laboratory instruction.

www.achehealth.edu

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The Community Services Clearinghouse received a grant for **\$7,800.00** to fund their “Fresh Food to Fight Cancer” project. Funding will provide six (6) months’ worth (\$300.00 weekly!) of fresh fruit and vegetables for clients of The Donald Reynolds Cancer Support House undergoing cancer treatment. Access to nutritious food is especially important for individuals facing the financial, physical and emotional challenges associated with cancer treatment. This program will provide approximately \$300 worth of fresh produce each week to help meet those needs.

L - R: Tom Webb, Degen Executive Director, Rebecca Ameis, Director of Grants & Scholarships, Aubrey Severe, CSC Director of Operations, Mitzy Little, Degen Vice Chair and United Way of Fort Smith Area Marketing Director, and Bob Cooper, Degen Chair



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The Community Dental Clinic, a program of the Crawford-Sebastian Community Development Council, received a grant in the amount of **\$20,301.74** to modernize their diagnostic capabilities through the purchase of digital intraoral sensors for peripheral (PA) and bitewing X-rays and the software required for integration of imaging into their existing Dentrix practice management system.

Enhanced radiographic imaging will improve the clinic's ability to detect tooth decay, identify infection and bone loss, determine tooth viability, diagnose conditions below the gum line, and better plan for extractions and denture fabrication.

The Degen Foundation is proud to support this investment in technology that will improve access to quality dental care for the patients served by the clinic.

L – R: Tom Webb, Degen Executive Director; Rebecca Ameis, Director of Grants & Scholarships; Marc Baker, Executive Director of CDC; Lisa Woodard, CDC Manager; Mitzy Little, Degen Vice Chair & Marketing Director of United Way Fort Smith Area, and Bob Cooper, Degen Chair

www.cscdcaaa.org



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The Sebastian Retired Citizens Association received a grant of **\$7,426.66** to launch its Medicare Expansion Project. This initiative will expand Medicare case management, benefits counseling, and healthcare navigation services for vulnerable older adults throughout Sebastian County and surrounding communities.

Funding will support the purchase of computer equipment, outreach materials, brochures, educational resources, training opportunities, participant support materials, and refreshments for community workshops and events.

As programs and resources available to older adults continue to evolve, this project will help ensure that seniors have access to the information and assistance needed to navigate important healthcare decisions.

Pictured left to right: Tom Webb, Degen Executive Director; Rebecca Ameis, Director of Grants & Scholarships; Victoria Guevara, SRCA Grant Overseer and her daughter, Deanna Rice, SRCA Executive Director; Mitzy Little, Degen Vice Chair and United Way Fort Smith Area Marketing Director; Carmen Oxford, Degen Board Member



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The Donald W. Reynolds Cancer Support House received a grant of **\$17,000.00** for its Patient Nutrition and Access Support Program.

This funding will provide protein shakes and gas cards for individuals undergoing cancer treatment. Gas cards will help patients travel to chemotherapy, radiation, and other essential medical appointments, while nutritional supplements will support patients experiencing treatment-related weight loss or difficulty maintaining adequate nutrition.

These services help reduce barriers to care and improve quality of life during treatment.

Pictured left to right front row: Mitzy Little, Degen Vice Chair; Ashley Boyd, DRCSH Community Engagement & Grants Administrator, Brooke Runser – DRCSH Board President and son, Dylan; Grace Wilmath, DRCSH Executive Director; Rachel Harper, DRCSH, Carmen Oxford, Degen Board Member; Rebecca Ameis, Director of Grants & Scholarships



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The Mansfield School District School-Based Health Center received a grant of **\$51,750.00** to purchase equipment for a new vision center within its health center, which opened in 2013 and is located on the elementary campus.

Funding will support the purchase of diagnostic equipment and supplies, including glasses, lenses, vision testing materials, a Reliance 520 Manual Tilt Exam Chair, Topcon SL-DS Slit Lamp with Tonometer, ClearChart Digital Acuity Chart, Reichert Autorefractor/Keratometer, and additional diagnostic tools.

The vision center will serve more than 800 students in the district, nearly 72% of whom live in poverty and may have limited access to vision care services.

The Degen Foundation is pleased to support this initiative, which will provide vital screenings, corrective treatment, and ongoing eye care services with a particular focus on uninsured and underserved students who might otherwise go without these essential healthcare services.

Pictured left to right: Rebecca Ameis, Director of Grants & Scholarships; Mitzy Little, Degen Vice Chair, Joe Staton, Mansfield Superintendent; Tom Webb, Degen Executive Director; Mary Brewer, SBHC Coordinator, and Carmon Oxford, Degen Board Member





Since 2001, The Degen Foundation has invested millions of dollars in nonprofit organizations that improve health, education, and quality of life throughout the Arkansas River Valley, continuing its mission of serving uninsured and underserved populations across the region.