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Fund Story

A Legacy of Learning and Service: The Peggy Shidaker Every Child Counts Fund



For nearly five decades, Peggy Shidaker dedicated her life to helping students succeed not only in the classroom, but in life. Today, her commitment to Starke County's children continues through the Peggy Shidaker Every Child Counts Fund, ensuring her passion for education will make an impact for generations to come.

Shidaker began teaching French and journalism at Knox High School in 1978 and went on to spend 31 years inspiring students who still affectionately call her "Mademoiselle." She went on to serve as curriculum director and assistant superintendent, retiring in June 2026 after an extraordinary 48-year career with Knox Community School Corporation. Throughout her career, Shidaker worked tirelessly to create opportunities for students. She helped establish the corporation's alternative education program, giving students at risk of not graduating a pathway to earn their diplomas, launched the Title I Preschool program to give young learners a strong start, and served as the district's McKinney-Vento liaison, advocating for students and families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

“Teachers know there’s so much more to education than academics,” said Shidaker, reflecting on those years.

Her dedication to serving others didn't end with retirement. Shidaker continues to give back as treasurer of the Starke County Resource Center, helping connect local families with resources and the support they need to thrive. Through both her career and volunteer work, she has seen firsthand how a little help can change a child's future. In recognition of her decades of service, a commemorative bench now stands outside the Knox Community School Corporation Central Office as a lasting tribute to the difference she has made in the lives of countless students, educators, and families.

Shidaker established her charitable fund in 2013 to support educational programs and help local students and families facing financial challenges. Originally created to honor her parents, the fund has evolved into a lasting way to meet the needs of children throughout Starke County. "I feel blessed that I have a way to help other people," she said. "Any way that this fund can help people, that's what it's all about."

Looking ahead, Shidaker hopes the fund will continue supporting children who simply need an extra hand. "I hope the fund continues to support our families in Starke County, especially the children and youth who need a little extra help," she said. "I'm hopeful that when needs arise, I'm able to make a small contribution to their world."

As Peggy celebrates her retirement, friends, former students, colleagues, and community members are invited to honor her remarkable legacy by making a gift to the Peggy Shidaker Every Child Counts Fund. Every contribution helps carry forward the work to which she has devoted her life—opening doors for students, supporting families, and strengthening the Starke County community for generations to come.