

SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUNDATIONS



“Never Throw Away a Kid”

Our title is a phrase of wisdom from Mr. Martin Weisgold, a long-time Principal at Wyalusing School District. That advice, “Never throw away a kid,” impressed his son Marc Weisgold. Marc became the Principal of Elk Lake Elementary and founder, in 2024, of the Elk Lake Warrior Empowerment Foundation. Marc is a fireball of energy who became frustrated when seeing innovative educational ideas scrapped and abandoned due to a lack of school funding. He had a desire to address this problem and also to create something that would “outlive his time,” a Legacy.

Marc’s connections to Elk Lake run deep. He grew up in Elk Lake, attended Elk Lake School District for all 13 years of his K–12 education, completed college, and was subsequently offered a position in his home school district. He has worked there ever since. Now Marc and his wife have a daughter of their own attending Elk Lake and participating in sports. Marc genuinely

“loves, loves, loves, adores and cares for” the Elk Lake community—where he wants to stay and continue to raise his family. He asks, “Why wouldn’t you?” His passion is the energy pack charging the Warrior Empowerment Foundation forward.

A year ago, Marc began discussing funding shortages with local friends, and then with Community Foundation CEO Cristine Clayton and Director of Operations Jill Swingle. He raised the idea for a new community playground on school grounds to be used by everyone. Cristine’s response was positive, “I think we can help you.” We did. Joining the effort was Elementary Assistant Principal Kammy Puza, whose technical expertise, forward-thinking vision, and unwavering follow-through proved invaluable at every stage of the project. The collaboration was a phenomenal success.

This success encouraged Marc to consider an Elk





Lake endowment to tackle other projects, big and small, which were beyond the scope of normal school funding. A door-knocking campaign rallied the neighbors and local businesses. Folks were eager to help with donations of their time and skills, knowing these contributions would benefit their own kids and grandkids. The big win of the Playground project tipped a snowball of enthusiasm toward taking on an additional 15 projects, and still counting! They include: Adaptive Swim Equipment for special needs students; Applied Tech; Art Award Banners; Band Room; Chemo Crochet; Elementary Concession Stand; Guitars; Physics Lab; Legacy Poppy Project; Pickleball Courts; Scorer's Table; Snap Circuits; Title1 Chromebooks; Wellness Center; and a new 50-foot flagpole honoring veterans who served their country and who also worked at or graduated from Elk Lake.

Together, these projects “cast a wide net” to support as many as possible and to respect and nurture everyone’s potential. We congratulate Marc Weisgold, the entire Elk Lake Warrior Empowerment Foundation Committee, and the Elk Lake community on their success in creating a perpetual Legacy that benefits so many.

Learn more at
elklakeschool.org-empowerment-foundation

Donley Legacy Gives & Grows

One of this Community Foundation’s first major educational gifts arrived in 2006. After twenty years in our care, it is stronger than ever. It was a fully developed trust fund valued at \$360,000 that had been created from the estate of the Donley family of New Milford. When Harry Donley, the last family sibling, passed away in 2004, his Will directed that any remainder in the estate be used to create a college scholarship to benefit a graduate of Blue Ridge School District. That generous Legacy names and memorializes all four Donley siblings: Harry, Josephine, Maurice and Paul.

In accordance with the Donley family’s wishes, each year their endowment generates up to \$5,000 in college financial assistance for a Blue Ridge High School graduate. Recipients have a huge incentive to maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0. If they do, they become eligible over each of the next three years to receive an additional \$5,000 scholarship annually, for a possible total of \$20,000.

Attorney Michael Giangrieco of Montrose represented the Donley estate with William Lewis, also of Montrose, serving as Financial Advisor. From 2006 to 2026, through prudent professional investment and “the miracle of compounding interest”, the Donley Family Memorial Scholarship has grown in value to over \$450,000, even as it bestows generous recurring scholarships each year.

