

DOING GOOD IN
Your Backyard.

Thomas Putnam

Tioga County, PA

Endowment &
Scholarship Fund

*To help area children participate in
the performing arts curriculum.*

Setting the Stage for a Future of Giving

Not a lot of people know it, but Tioga County, Pennsylvania, has a long and rich tradition of community performing arts. From John Bannister Gibson—Wellsboro’s first judge—using his log cabin courtroom for fiddle shows and after-hours dances to the “Almost World Famous” Wellsboro Town Band regaling park-goers on the Green each summer, the arts have always been alive in Tioga.

Just ask Thomas Putnam. He felt it when he was a kid, and he still feels it today.

Now 68 years old, Putnam lives outside of Wellsboro, the small town he visited each year when he was growing up. Splitting his time as a child between his family’s home in Pontiac, Michigan, and a summer cottage in Tioga County, Putnam reflects fondly on his youth.

“I had a wonderful childhood as the youngest of four children,” Putnam said. “My parents were both musicians and educators, so I was surrounded by music and the arts.”

After graduating from Pontiac Central High School, Putnam’s scholastic endeavors led him down a winding road. There was a year studying theater at Illinois Wesleyan, two more working with physically handicapped children, and a year on a commune in southeast Ohio. That was then followed by the completion of a bachelor’s in education from Mansfield University, a master’s in English from Bucknell University, and a doctorate (all but dissertation) in English from Penn State University.

Through it all, his spirit remained connected to music and theater—the first of his loves—and to Wellsboro, where his mother was raised and where his maternal relatives still reside today.





Both funds help so many people, directly and indirectly,” Thomas Putnam said. “The scholarship fund for choirs enables children to participate who might otherwise not be able to, and it’s a wonderful way to honor a remarkable woman. The HG Endowment Fund will help to keep this community nonprofit alive and well for generations to come.

That’s why Putnam, who also taught an assortment of subjects and grade levels in a variety of schools for 20 years, founded Hamilton-Gibson Productions in Wellsboro in 1991. Hamilton-Gibson produces 6-8 mainstage productions per year, and includes programming for children and youth. They conduct theatre art camps and workshops. Additionally, they hold bi-weekly senior citizen gatherings and hold the Hamilton-Gibson Women’s Project.

As Hamilton-Gibson’s artistic director, Putnam has been instrumental in imparting his love for music and theater onto thousands of Tioga County residents of all ages. But he didn’t do it alone.

In 2016, the board explored ways to set up an endowment and settled on Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT) to start the Hamilton-Gibson Productions Endowment Fund, to help with future needs. Additionally, the Katherine Ann Brennan Memorial Scholarship Hamilton-Gibson Fund was started by Adam Brennan in memory of his late wife, Katherine.

“Katherine Brennan was a major part of [Hamilton-Gibson’s] choral arts program for area children,” Putnam said. “She directed two of our children’s choirs.”

When Brennan died of cancer, her husband knew he wanted to start a scholarship fund in her honor to help area children who lacked the financial resources to participate in the performing arts curriculum.

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Putnam, whose philosophy is that we are here to give, said he is thankful for CFTT for their management of a fund that is doing so much for the performing arts community of Tioga County.

“It’s beautiful,” he said of the community he’s been a part of since childhood. “It’s generous and truly community-minded.”

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