

DOING GOOD IN
Your Backyard.

Donna L. Mettler

Tioga County, PA

Endowment Fund

*To provide scholarships to students in
the Wellsboro Area School District.*

A Legacy Built in the Classroom and for the Classroom

From her formative years in McKean County, Pennsylvania, through her time at Lock Haven University and all across the decades spent educating youth in Lycoming, Perry, and Tioga Counties, Dr. Donna L. Mettler has always lived her life by adhering to one particular philosophy.

“If we look for and expect the best from our experiences, we’ll have a full and enriching life.”

And what a life it’s been for Mettler, whose career in public education spans more than 40 years.

“I was always a good student and enjoyed all schoolwork,” Mettler said. “My grandmother, two aunts and an uncle were teachers. One aunt in particular, I would go to school with her in the summertime and help her get her classroom ready, and I think that’s what made me start thinking about going into teaching.”

While at Lock Haven, Mettler became interested in special education, a focus area that was just beginning its rise to prominence in colleges like the one she attended. With a degree and dual certification in elementary education and special education in hand, Mettler—who had married her husband, Ken, during this time—would spend the next 14 years as a special education teacher and reading specialist.

With aspirations of furthering her career and the type of flexibility that came with Ken’s job as a state police officer, Mettler ultimately obtained a Master of Education Degree and Doctorate in Educational Leadership, spent 14 years as an elementary school principal, and another six years as the Superintendent of the Wellsboro Area School District.



When I retired, I knew I wanted to set up some kind of permanent endowment fund that would support young people,” she said. “I really wanted to encourage and support other people that could pursue such a rewarding career. My husband (Ken) knew my career gave me so much pleasure and thought it was too bad that it had to end. I said, ‘Well, this could be a way that I could continue having an influence on young people.

“Young children just seem so appreciative,” Mettler said of her experience in elementary education. “I just lived for their smiles and hugs and excitement whenever they would do something new and have success. It just made my day to see a child really happy.”

After retiring from the school district, Mettler shifted her focus to educating school administrators through the PA Department of Education’s Inspired Leadership Program, a professional development program she helped to develop. Mettler recognized that while her job was finished, her work was not.

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Mettler discussed her plan with Suzanne Lee, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT), who was extremely encouraging of the idea. Lee explained to Mettler that CFTT’s expertise and experience in overseeing scholarship funds of this sort would allow the longtime educator to cement her legacy with an initiative that would carry on for years to come.

While it took some time to finalize the fund, including narrowing down the types of scholarships that would be offered and ensuring they checked Mettler’s boxes, the Dr. Donna L. Mettler Scholarship Fund in 2020 presented two seniors in the Wellsboro Area School District with \$5,000 scholarships. The recipients for 2021 have been selected and will be awarded during June graduation.

“All four students are going into elementary education, and I’m beyond excited about it,” Mettler added. I’m feeling really rewarded that well-deserving students are getting some help. I think the scholarships will really help families that might be struggling financially.”

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