



LASTING DIFFERENCE

The Innis Maggiore Endowed Scholarship for Communications was created to benefit not only students, but also to improve quality of life in Stark County.

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As the level of education rises in a community, so does its quality of life.

Dick Maggiore, Kent State University at Stark alumnus and president and CEO of the Canton-based advertising and public relations agency Innis Maggiore, first heard this statement during a meeting with the Stark Education Partnership, a non-profit organization that supports education reform in Stark County.

He took it to heart, and then, in 2007, he took it further – becoming a motivating force behind the Kent State University at Stark Innis Maggiore Endowed Scholarship for Communications. Since then, the growing endowment has helped several Stark County students majoring in communications and related fields to meet their tuition requirements. This year, two scholarships were awarded.

Linda Ferguson, director of advancement at Kent State Stark, notes that many scholarship sponsors, like Innis Maggiore, enjoy assisting specific groups of students. She adds, “We strive to help our donors find a ‘match’ in terms of their philanthropic goals.”

A More Permanent Solution

While Maggiore believes it’s imperative to assist with urgent problems in the community – such as poverty and unmet food and health-care needs – he and others at Innis Maggiore wanted to be part of what they see as a more permanent solution to these issues. He uses a well-known analogy to illustrate this vision: give people fish and feed them for a day; teach people to fish and feed them for a lifetime.

“Education has a great potential to uplift both individuals and communities, and we decided that, moving forward, this would be our primary way of giving back,” he says. “We chose Kent State Stark because it’s Stark County’s only public university that offers baccalaureate degrees – making it one of our most accessible institutions of higher education. In the end, the endowment is a gift that gives back to us all.”

Student loan debt in the U.S. has now exceeded \$1 trillion. Maggiore calls this catastrophic and notes that the endowment helps prevent some of that debt from happening in the first place.

“Scholarships often are the difference between students re-enrolling for a new semester or dropping out,” he notes.

Ferguson says Maggiore and his agency’s commitment to the Stark Campus is obvious, sincere and enthusiastic. “This gift is not only a gesture of generosity. It also serves as an affirmation of Kent State Stark’s achievements and as an inspiration to others,” she says. “We appreciate that Innis Maggiore is setting an example in the area of giving, as well as communicating about it, so that others recognize this endorsement of what we’re doing on the Stark Campus.”

Help Along the Path to Success

In 1974, Maggiore earned his associate degree from Kent State Stark and, together with his stepfather Chuck Innis, founded Innis Maggiore. Later, he completed his bachelor’s degree in psychology at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, Calif.

The agency has grown significantly and today is recognized as the nation’s leading advertising agency in the practice of positioning. He became president of Innis Maggiore in 1989 and, more recently, wrote the book, *The CEO’s #1 Responsibility: Identifying and Articulating Your Brand’s Position*. The agency works with leading brands, such as Aultman Hospital, Bank of America, GOJO Industries (makers of PURELL®), Goodyear, Nickel’s Bakery, Republic Steel and others.

Yet, he has never forgotten his experience at Kent State Stark. He says a cultural anthropology class with John Harkness, Ph.D., a recently retired professor of sociology and anthropology, was a significant turning point in his life.

“I grew up in Canton and graduated from Lehman High School. Dr. Harkness opened my eyes to a new and bigger world and that curiosity remains strong today,” he adds.

Today, Maggiore is chairman of the Kent State Stark Dean’s Advisory Board, which he was appointed to in 2003. He believes Kent State Stark is on the path toward continued success and growth.

“The board is working toward a lofty but attainable goal – that out of Ohio’s 88 counties, Stark would have the highest percentage of college grads,” Maggiore says. “We’re at 18 percent now and heading in the right direction. Scholarships are among the means to help us reach our goal.”