The Menard County Historical Society had been offering scholarships to high school students in a small capacity for many years, but when the society received some larger bequests in 2016, it turned to the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

The Menard County Historical Society Fund was created through the Community Foundation to give scholarship funding to graduating high school seniors from the three schools in Menard County: Athens, Greenview and Petersburg.

“For many years, we had smaller bequests that provided scholarships, and they were invested in Certificates of Deposit,” said LuAnn DeRocchi, current president of the Historical Society. “We knew we needed a more impactful and organized arrangement with this larger bequest, which allows us to expand our scholarship program.”

The primary focus for the scholarships will be toward students who are pursuing a degree involving history, LuAnn said.

“We would also like to expand our requirements to include volunteer and service commitments within some components of the Historical Society, such as maybe volunteering at the museum,” she said.

The Community Foundation came “highly recommended,” and LuAnn noted that setting up the Society’s new fund has been convenient and pleasant. The Historical Society hopes that the revised scholarship program
will benefit not only individual students and their families, but the entire community as well by encouraging a renewed awareness about the significance of history and community service.

“Through the Menard County Historical Fund, we’re hoping to be able to provide substantially more funds than we have in the past for the scholarships. Our goal is that it will always be self-sustaining so we can use the fund's profits to provide the scholarships,” LuAnn said. “Our main hope is to enrich the students’ lives by giving them the means to a better education, and for the future for history and community service, we’re hoping this will enhance the community also.”

For more information on starting a fund or to contribute to the Menard County Historical Society Fund, please contact the Community Foundation at 217-789-4431.