

## Supporting New Ideas: Chuck & Stephanie Jarrett

Innovation can only work if there are people willing to commit their time, talents and resources to help the new idea take shape. From the moment the plans for Stepstone Academy came to light, Chuck Jarrett knew he wanted to be involved. “I thought it was a fabulous idea,” Chuck said. “I immediately wanted to help make this idea come to fruition.” His wife, Stephanie, was also impressed by the idea behind Stepstone, as well as the academic results that came out of the school during its first few years. “Having worked as a volunteer in a number of schools in very different districts, the performance of Stepstone’s students from the very beginning has been exceptional and extremely encouraging,” Stephanie says.

New ideas continued to be an important part of the school’s growth, as teachers and staff learned more and more about the challenges facing the students and their families. At the end of Stepstone’s third year, another innovative strategy was brought to the Jarretts’ attention. Toni Miller, *Stepstone Academy Principal*, and Susan Hyland, *Stepstone Superintendent*, wanted to find a way to better support the students over break in order to help eliminate the learning loss many children suffer during the summer. They had an idea for a six-week summer program, based upon the school’s Momentum Learning model, which would provide reading instruction for the scholars and allow them to start back to school prepared to move forward in their new grade level.

Chuck and Stephanie knew that this was an idea they needed to support. “We had the means to help through our family fund with the Cleveland Foundation,” says Chuck. “We wanted these students to stay motivated over the summer so they wouldn’t lose the progress they had gained during the school year.” Thanks to the Jarretts’ \$50,000 donation, the idea for Stepstone’s summer program became a reality.

Our scholars began the school year confident, prepared and ready to succeed,” says Toni. “Teachers are spending less time re-teaching concepts this school year and can focus on teaching new concepts. We are so grateful to the Jarretts for their support. We couldn’t have done it without them.”

The Jarretts believe that innovation in education is key to the future that OhioGuidestone is working to build in our communities, and they are dedicated to continuing their support. “Stepstone Academy really gives a return on your investment by making a change in the community, one student at a time,” says Chuck. “The teachers and staff are not only motivating these students for their personal futures, they are working with the entire family unit and giving them the chance to succeed. Stephanie and I are thrilled to be a part of this, and we are excited to see what the future holds for Stepstone Academy.”

