

The family of **Paula Rengel** is one that has deep roots in the City of Sandusky. Born a Pheiffer, Paula also shares relations to the Dorn and Mylander families, and has ancestors that have resided within Sandusky's borders since at least the 1850s. While the efforts of her forebearers have played important roles in her life, it is her own dedication to improving the local area and encouraging its people that have proven her as a truly remarkable leader of Erie County.

Paula was born and raised in Sandusky, Ohio and attended Sandusky High School, graduating in 1971. She then attended Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland until she graduated in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in French Literature. She married David Rengel, and after spending a few years living on the east coast the two returned to Sandusky where they raised their three sons.



Paula is currently the owner of Battery Park Marina, located in downtown Sandusky. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the City of Sandusky was seeking someone to renovate and take over management of the marina. With rising water levels, the concrete piers that made up the original marina proved to be safety hazards, and debris from winters of public ice skating had been building up on the floor of the marina. Paula's parents, Paul and Catherine Jane (Dorn) Pheiffer, had spent several years boating along the east coast, traveling from Sandusky all the way down to Florida and back, and had seen and found temporary dockage in a variety of marinas. These experiences provided them with unique visions for what Battery Park could become, and Paul Pheiffer's proposal was chosen for the redesign. Construction began in late 1983, and the marina was reopened in 1985, with continual additions being made until the first restaurant opened in 1986. In 2014, Paula took over the leadership roles following her late father and late brother, John Pheiffer.

Growing up, Paula's father was someone who had a significant influence on her; his generous and giving nature were very important aspects of his character. Pheiffer was instrumental in various area organizations, serving as a board member of Citizens Bank and Chairman of the board of Good Samaritan Hospital, and was very active in Boy Scouts, his church, and his alma mater, Heidelberg College (now Heidelberg University). Paula describes him as someone who would do anything for anyone in need, and watching him be very active and philanthropic in the area played a large role in her upbringing and charitable aspirations.



Paula began her term on the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation in 2005, as she was nominated to represent Perkins Township. She currently serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Grants Committee. Serving as the leader of the Grants Committee has been especially rewarding for Paula, as she has enjoyed dispersing available money, but more importantly, understanding the needs of the community and acknowledging the dedication and diligence community members put forth in order to address these needs. "I'm impressed with the energy in our community," she said.

Under her leadership, the Grants Committee has helped, among many, many other causes, fight hunger with grants to Care and Share of Erie County, expand programming at Sandusky Artisans Recovery Community Center to help more clients recover from mental

health issues and substance abuse disorders, and provide athletic equipment for children who attend the after school and summer programs at the Nehemiah Center. While 2017 is her last year holding these leadership positions, as well as serving on the Board of Directors, she may continue to sit on the Grants Committee if she chooses. Paula also serves on the board at Firelands Regional Medical Center, and is a past treasurer of Bay Area Soccer League.

As her terms on the Community Foundation's Board of Directors come to an end, Paula has several hopes for the future of the Foundation. She envisions the Foundation continuing to be a leader in the community in aspects of grantmaking, fundraising, and supporting initiatives and nonprofits, but she would like to see the Foundation stretch to reach a wider population within Erie County. "I think there are a lot of donors out there that aren't aware of how they can impact their community in a greater sense by associating with the Community Foundation," she said. She hopes for continued encouragement of using the Foundation as a vehicle for funds, just as her own family has done with the Pheiffer Family Fund for St. Stephen United Church of Christ, as well as the Dave and Paula Rengel Legacy Fund, both established through the Community Foundation.

While Paula looks toward the future and is optimistic about Sandusky's continued downtown and waterfront development, she also promotes the importance of respecting and learning from the past. She would like to see people open their eyes a little more, and recognize the abundance of history and resources the local area provides. For her, the most influential of history goes back to her own family— one that shares an extensive past of working in and giving back to the community, and whose impact on the area will no doubt leave a long and lasting legacy.