

# J. MARION SIMS Foundation

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2017

### **J. Marion Sims Foundation Makes 2018 Community Heart & Soul® Awards**

**Monday, November 20, 2017** – The Foundation made its first Community Heart & Soul® awards in two SC towns this morning. Community representatives met at the Kershaw Town Hall and the Fort Lawn Community Center to hear about their designation as South Carolina's first Heart & Soul communities.

“We are so excited and humbled to be named as one of the first Heart & Soul towns in the Southeast and we plan to use this well,” said Scott Whaley, a leader of the Kershaw team and professor at University of South Carolina- Lancaster.



*Members of the Kershaw Heart & Soul planning committee received a check of \$100,000 from Foundation Chair, Robert Folks and Executive Director, Susan DeVenny.*

Kershaw community members worked together and in sub-teams to develop their Heart & Soul application over the summer and fall of 2017. Of the roughly twenty-two participants involved, almost half are high school students.

“I can’t wait to wake Kershaw up a little and not just be where you pass through to get to Camden or Lancaster but to be our own place,” said Haven Miller, a Heath Springs resident and local high school student.

Kershaw will be awarded \$100k over two years to cover the cost of a Heart & Soul Project Coordinator and community engagement activities.

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*Youth Representatives from Kershaw's Heart & Soul Team from left to right;  
Haven Miller, Chloe Mungo, Stiles Joyce, Rebekah Debruhl,  
Elivea Jones, Kayla Hall, and Semaj Digby.*

In Fort Lawn, SC, community members gathered at the Fort Lawn Community Center to receive news of their Heart & Soul award, also \$100k over two years.



*Members of the Fort Lawn community and the 29714 area were presented with the second check of the day.*

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*Libby Sweatt- Lambert, Director of the Fort Lawn Community Center (holding check) and Sarah Stallings (middle) and Sadie Blackmon looks on.*

“It’s amazing to see our community come together and we are excited to have this opportunity to move the town and area forward,” said Sarah Stallings Fort Lawn Heart & Soul team member, former Chair of the Board of Directors, Fort Lawn Community Center and current Emeriti Board member of the Center, “I can’t wait to see what we will do together.”

Community Heart & Soul is a resident-driven community development methodology created by the Orton Family Foundation. Tested over a decade in towns primarily in New England and the Rocky Mountain West, Heart & Soul brings people together to build stronger, healthier, and more economically vibrant communities. Through Heart & Soul, residents consider the unique character of their town and experience the deep emotional connection between people who live there. Over a two-year period, residents ask themselves what matters most to them, and derive their “Heart & Soul®” - a set of collective insights that can guide a community in making the best decisions about its future.

The initiative is a part of the J. Marion Sims Foundation commitment to community engagement. The Foundation partnership is the Orton Family Foundation’s first in the Southeastern United States.

“Our communities are ripe for Heart & Soul,” said Robert Folks, Chair, J. Marion Sims Foundation. “We share the values of our partners at the Orton Family Foundation about the wisdom found in all people in our small towns. We can’t wait to see our first Heart & Soul communities get started.”

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*The J. Marion Sims Foundation is entering its third decade of service to the community, with a focus on transforming the health and wellness of Lancaster County, Fort Lawn, and Great Falls, SC. For information about the Foundation, please visit [www.jmsims.org](http://www.jmsims.org) or contact the Foundation at (803) 286-8772.*

*The Orton Family Foundation is focused on building stronger, healthier and more economically vibrant small cities and towns across America. Founded in Vermont in 1995, the foundation devoted more than a decade to working with small towns to create a community development model that helps build trust and empowers residents to shape the future of their communities. Community Heart & Soul® projects are underway across the country creating positive change that is resident-driven and recognizes the value in the unique character of each place and the deep emotional connection of the people who live there.*