



STRONGER TOGETHER

For Good. For Ever.

**IOWA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS**



This publication was produced by the Iowa Council of Foundations (ICoF) for its Iowa Community Foundations Initiative. The ICoF, organized in 1998, is a nonprofit organization that plays a leadership role in promoting philanthropy and effective grantmaking in Iowa. For more information about the ICoF, please visit www.IowaCouncilofFoundations.org. To learn more about the organization's Iowa Community Foundations Initiative, please visit www.IowaCommunityFoundations.org

All across the state, community foundations and nonprofit organizations are working together to ensure local charitable programs will continue to serve the people of Iowa—

TODAY, TOMORROW
AND ALWAYS.

STRONGER TOGETHER FOR GOOD. FOR EVER.

Throughout Iowa, community foundations and nonprofit organizations are working together to improve their communities. These partnerships create stronger communities for all of us: Your organization delivers the much-needed services and programs that serve your area, while your local community foundation provides a vehicle for you to build endowments. These funds ensure the important work you do will continue for generations to come.

Whether your nonprofit organization is new or has been around for decades, chances are that concerns about sustainability and financial support have been on your agenda numerous times. A partnership with your local community foundation can be an important—and helpful—part of that conversation.

On pages 5 to 20, read about some of the powerful ways nonprofit groups like yours and local community foundations are working together to positively affect the quality of life in Iowa's communities—today, tomorrow and always.

YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Community foundations are nonprofit organizations that focus on building local philanthropy by connecting people to the causes that matter most to them. More than 130 community foundations and affiliates serve every corner of Iowa, providing a trusted and valuable resource to individuals, families, businesses and professional advisors, as well as to nonprofit organizations like yours. When your organization is ready to explore or enhance an endowment-building effort or is looking for an innovative way to make an impact in your community, your local community foundation is the place to start. Visit www.IowaCommunityFoundations.org to connect locally or contact the Iowa Council of Foundations (www.IowaCouncilofFoundations.org) for more information.

A RESOURCE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Community foundations and nonprofit organizations can work together in many ways; a common strategy for partnership is to build long-term endowment funds that support charitable projects and programs in perpetuity. In an endowment partnership, a community foundation can provide your organization with a range of services—including fund management, donor education, marketing and administrative assistance—that enable you to remain focused on putting your mission into action. Nonprofit groups in fields such as education, health, human services, the arts, historic preservation and the environment are discovering that partnering with their local community foundation helps them more effectively fulfill their goals.

Contributions made to a community foundation can be in any amount and in a variety of forms, including cash, appreciated stocks, real estate or other assets, and can be made today or through an estate plan.

HOW AN ENDOWMENT COULD WORK FOR YOUR NONPROFIT

An essential component of the work of community foundations is building a permanent collection of endowed funds through contributions made by many donors for a variety of charitable causes. Contributions made to endowment funds are carefully invested for maximum return and growth, ensuring that the funds will exist in perpetuity. The growth of the endowment funds and the income earned help provide the financial support necessary to help carry out

charitable objectives, such as the mission your organization works to implement every day. Endowed funds held at local community foundations typically have a granting policy in the range of 5%. With designated or agency endowments, this means that over time, more grant dollars are available to support your nonprofit organization and, at the same time, the endowment fund itself continues to grow.

YEAR 1
ESTABLISH AN ENDOWMENT FUND
\$10,000 GIFT

YEAR 15
\$9,500 IN CUMULATIVE GRANT SUPPORT
\$16,000 FUND BALANCE

YEAR 25
\$19,000 IN CUMULATIVE GRANT SUPPORT
\$23,000 FUND BALANCE

YEAR 50
\$66,000 IN CUMULATIVE GRANT SUPPORT
\$57,000 FUND BALANCE

This illustration assumes a 4.5% granting policy and 8.5% rate of return.

TYPES OF ENDOWMENTS

There are five major types of endowment funds that can be established, or contributed to, at local community foundations. Grants are then awarded to support charitable projects and programs through an application process, through a donor recommendation or as a designated contribution, such as to your charitable organization.

DESIGNATED FUNDS are established by a donor or a group of donors to provide grant support to a specific nonprofit organization or project. A designated fund may support, for example, the general mission of a nonprofit agency, the ongoing maintenance for a building, or a specific program, all in perpetuity.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS provide grants to support a broad range of needs, enabling the community foundation to respond to the most pressing demands, now and in the future.

FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS are established to support a particular area of interest such as education or community development; the community foundation's board awards grants to nonprofit organizations or programs serving that purpose.

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS give donors the opportunity to be actively involved in the decision-making process. They recommend to the community foundation board which programs or agencies receive grants.

AGENCY ENDOWMENT FUNDS are similar to Designated Funds in that they support a specific nonprofit organization or project; the difference is that these funds are established at the local community foundation *by the nonprofit organization* itself. Nonprofit agencies often view an Agency Endowment Fund as a simple and efficient way to help create sustainability and support the nonprofit's mission in perpetuity.

ENDOW IOWA TAX CREDIT

The Endow Iowa Tax Credit can benefit donors who contribute to any type of endowment fund at qualified community foundations, including *designated and agency endowments to support a particular nonprofit organization*. The Iowa Legislature created the program, and since 2004 it has provided a tangible incentive to establish and grow endowment funds for Iowa charitable causes at qualified community foundations. Endow Iowa provides donors the opportunity to apply (on a first-come, first-served basis) for a 25 percent State of Iowa tax credit. Contact your local community foundation to determine if it is qualified to participate in the program and to learn more about how your organization and donors who are passionate about your work can benefit through Endow Iowa. Individuals, businesses or financial institutions can claim Endow Iowa Tax Credits.

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BRAVO GREATER DES MOINES

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DES MOINES

An innovative partnership between Bravo Greater Des Moines and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines provides funding for “Connecting Kids and Culture.” Each year, the program gives some 39,000 elementary students the opportunity to experience the area’s arts and cultural offerings in ways that directly relate to what they’re learning in the classroom.

The Community Foundation and Bravo, a nonprofit organization devoted to strengthening the metro area’s arts and cultural community, joined forces to respond to a need: Bravo was hearing from arts organizations that tighter school budgets meant students were getting fewer opportunities to experience, and learn from, the city’s cultural offerings.

At the same time, schools were expressing similar concerns to the Community Foundation. Bravo and the Community Foundation decided to jointly address the problem on behalf of the community.

“From my perspective, working together makes perfect sense,” says MD Isley, executive director of Bravo. The Community Foundation “has the philanthropic and development expertise, while we have connections in the arts. We’re both very proud of the program.”

The Community Foundation administers the program’s non-endowed funds, and the two groups team up to develop marketing and promotional opportunities. “We work together to make sure teachers are aware of the program and take advantage of it,” says Isley.

Bravo and the Community Foundation support Connecting Kids and

Culture by combining the contributions each receives from an annual Champions Tour charity golf event sponsored by The Principal Financial Group. The funds cover the transportation and admission costs of the field experiences. The program’s value, Isley emphasizes, stems from the fact that the field experiences are aligned with local school districts’ core curriculum goals in subjects such as math, science and language arts.

Since the program was established in 2008, Bravo and the Community Foundation have funded Connecting Kids and Culture on an annual basis. But the two organizations are looking at opportunities to establish an endowment, says Isley, a vital step to ensuring the program can deepen the educational experience for both today’s and tomorrow’s students. 🐾

BURLINGTON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF DES MOINES COUNTY

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE GREAT RIVER BEND)

The Burlington Educational Foundation recently faced an enviable challenge: how to best manage growth. The organization had grown from funding two \$300 student scholarships during its first year in 1986 to \$39,000 in scholarships and \$29,000 in teacher grants in 2008. While the increase meant better-equipped classrooms and greater opportunities for Burlington students, it also presented administrative challenges.

“With the growth, we started facing some interesting issues,” says Jerry Parks, a board member of the Burlington

Educational Foundation and vice president of the Community Foundation of Des Moines County. “The school district provided secretarial support, but with the growing number of donations, especially memorial donations, it became hard for the district to keep up.”

Those challenges spurred the Burlington board to investigate partnering with the Community Foundation of Des Moines County. In 2007, the board decided to place a third of its funds with the Community Foundation. “It seemed like the prudent way to go,” Parks says. “A number of people on the board felt (partnering) would be a way to be a little more aggressive with our investments and pursue a higher rate of return.”

The Community Foundation also provides needed administrative support, freeing up the Burlington organization to focus on its primary mission: serving the 4,145 students and 320 teachers in the district’s nine buildings.

Parks believes the Endow Iowa Tax Credit offers “big advantages” to donors. Another benefit of partnering with the Community Foundation is “simply the idea of being involved in a vehicle that grows your own community,” Parks says. “The Community Foundation gives people a way to connect with their community and provides for the betterment of the community forever.”

COUNCIL ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



SIouxLAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For the past 20 years, requests for services at the Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence (CSADV) have grown each year. “But that’s not saying our funding and support sources keep growing to meet that demand,” says Margaret Sanders, the executive director of CSADV, a Sioux City agency that annually serves more than 1,000 women and children throughout northwestern Iowa. “Many people think we’re funded completely through the government or through some other steady flow of income. That’s erroneous thinking.”

The continual funding concerns prompted the agency’s board of directors to establish an endowment at the

Siouxland Community Foundation about eight years ago. “Our support goes up and down on a yearly basis, and we wanted to try to establish a way so that money would always be available for the organization—so that there’d be some financial stability,” says Sanders.

She says donors appreciate the fact that CSADV only utilizes the interest from the endowment. If a nonprofit organization holds an endowment privately, she says, the board could be tempted to structure it so that the principal could be spent during tough economic times. But the fund at the Community Foundation “is a true endowment, and that’s what donors want.”

A big plus to partnering with the Community Foundation is being able to rely on the Foundation’s investment

knowledge, Sanders says. “We have a better and safer return than we would if we held the endowment privately,” she notes. “The (Community Foundation’s) experts know how to invest. That frees us from those worries.”

Without such worries, CSADV’s staff can more fully concentrate on providing a safe environment and a variety of support services to women and children in crisis. “As each year goes by, hundreds are touched by our direct services, shelter and our prevention education program. CSADV has truly saved lives,” says Sanders. “Each and every day, we recognize the challenge before us—safety, shelter, services and adequate funding.”



FRIENDS OF LAKESIDE LAB

OKOBOJI FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DES MOINES)

For more than 100 years, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory in Milford has provided hands-on education for public university students and the general public. The state-owned facility's 147-acre campus, located on West Okoboji Lake in northwestern Iowa, offers workshops, programs and research opportunities on water quality and ecology.

But state budget strains and the unpredictability of funding have at times threatened the organization's century-old tradition of research and service. Determined to ensure that the lab's important work can continue, the Friends of Lakeside Lab in 1999 launched an ambitious 10-year, \$2-million endowment campaign, which recently drew to a successful close, says Barbara

Mendenhall, treasurer of the Friends group, a nonprofit organization that supports Lakeside Lab.

Those funds are held in several endowments, including two—an agency endowment and an Endow Iowa qualified fund—that were established in 2009 through the Okoboji Foundation. The Friends partnered with the Okoboji Foundation so donors could benefit from the Endow Iowa Tax Credit, says Mendenhall.

"Because we were nearing the end of our campaign when we (partnered) with the Foundation, we wanted to provide an incentive to previous donors to contribute a little more," she says. "The tax credit is a great opportunity." The Friends group raised \$40,000 for the endowment funds in the first six months of being able to offer the Endow Iowa Tax Credit.

To continue to build the endowment funds to support Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, the Friends group plans to explore a legacy campaign and other ways to partner with the Okoboji Foundation to encourage supporters to include a gift in their estate plans, Mendenhall says.

Because the Board of Regents has directed Lakeside Lab to become more self-sustaining, the need for the stable source of income an endowment provides will become even more critical in the future, says Mendenhall. Peter van der Linden, executive director of Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, agrees. Proceeds from the endowments "over the long run will yield steady gifts that will help us meet our needs," he says, enabling Lakeside Lab to continue to support its many educational and research programs. ☺



FROELICH FOUNDATION

CLAYTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DUBUQUE)

At one time, the tiny town of Froelich was a thriving country village. Boasting a proud heritage, this northeastern Iowa community was home to John Froelich, who invented the first gasoline-powered tractor in 1892 that eventually led to the John Deere tractor. But by the mid-1980s, the last store had closed, and Froelich "was ready for the wrecking ball," recalls Dennis Eilers, a writer and community leader.

But a committed group of area residents decided not to let that happen. They formed a nonprofit group, called the Froelich Foundation, and raised funds to renovate the deteriorating old general store. Since then, the entire town has been turned into a historic village with an array of programs, events and

visitor attractions, including a train depot, blacksmith shop, museum, an 1866 schoolhouse, and a huge barn that serves as a community center. Today, Froelich draws several thousand visitors annually.

The village provides a vehicle for people to learn about, and celebrate, John Froelich's significant contribution as well as the area's rural heritage, says Eilers. "It's important to keep telling this story—to keep it going for future generations," he says.

That goal prompted the organization to establish an endowment at the Clayton County Community Foundation in 2009. "With the endowment, I believe we can encourage people to leave larger gifts to our nonprofit organization because they know their money will be protected in perpetuity and that it will grow over time," he says. "That's important to a lot

of people."

Eilers adds the Endow Iowa Tax Credit has "sparked interest" in the endowment, leading to "one-on-one meetings that have produced good results." The Froelich Foundation is working in partnership with the Community Foundation to share the opportunity with attorneys, donors, community members and others who are passionate about the village and ensuring its future.

Eventually, the endowment "will create another revenue stream," lessening the organization's annual fundraising demands, says Eilers. And that will allow the Froelich Foundation to continue telling the story about an important inventor and his lasting legacy. ☺



HELP LEGAL ASSISTANCE

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE GREAT RIVER BEND

When HELP Legal Assistance in Davenport received an unexpected bequest in 2005, the organization debated how to best put the gift to use, eventually deciding to use it to start an endowment, rather than to meet every-day operating expenses. “It had long been the goal of the board to establish an endowment...to insulate the organization from the vagaries of annual funding,” notes Janelle Swanberg, executive director of HELP.

The 40-year-old organization is supported by a combination of sources, including the state and federal government and other grantmakers. But those funds fluctuate “and especially

during an economic downturn can be insufficient for us to keep staff and fulfill our mission,” she says. That mission is to provide high-quality legal services—“a full measure of justice”—to some of the area’s most vulnerable residents, says Swanberg.

HELP’S dedication to its mission led the board to partner with the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend. “Those on HELP’s board were familiar with the Community Foundation and felt it would be an efficient mechanism for starting the endowment,” says Swanberg. “The feeling was that (the partnership) would fit our needs—that the Community Foundation could handle the (endowment) details” while the organization focused on serving its clients. In addition, establishing the

endowment at the Community Foundation also allows HELP’s supporters to take advantage of the Endow Iowa Tax Credit, Swanberg notes.

The Community Foundation has assisted HELP with several initiatives to build the fund, such as a matching challenge as well as a planned giving campaign in celebration of the organization’s 40th anniversary, showing attorneys and other community members how they can provide for a future gift through their estates.

Swanberg adds the endowment can be “attractive to those who’d like to leave a legacy that will go forward in making legal justice fully available to all.”



HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

NORTH LEE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE GREAT RIVER BEND)

When the Marquette and Aquinas Catholic school districts in southeastern Iowa merged, becoming Holy Trinity Catholic Schools, the two districts’ foundations joined forces, too. As the foundations worked through the challenges of merging, they realized that partnering with the North Lee County Community Foundation would help them reach their goals more effectively.

“We were looking to grow the foundation more aggressively,” says Rich Rump, executive director for the Holy Trinity Catholic Schools Educational Foundation. When the two foundations combined, “part of the agreement was to use the income from the initial combined assets for scholarships for needy students.

While we’re always looking for ways to help families afford a private education, we also realized that there were people who might have a desire to support other areas of the school...and we saw how easy it would be to establish additional endowments through the Community Foundation.”

Today, five endowments at the Community Foundation benefit Holy Trinity schools; in addition to tuition assistance, endowments fund teacher benefits, technology, capital improvements and general needs at the district’s four schools.

One of the most rewarding aspects of working with the Community Foundation has been the ability to draw on the organization’s financial, marketing and legal expertise, notes Rump. “The Community Foundation is looking over

the investment managers, making sure we’re getting the best return for our money,” says Rump. Freed from such tasks, the organization can focus on how to best serve the district’s 400 students and 49 teachers and administrators.

The Endow Iowa Tax Credit also spurred the Holy Trinity Foundation to partner with the Community Foundation. The credit is a “big incentive” for donors to contribute to the endowed funds, Rump says.

Another advantage to the partnership: Donors can establish designated funds at the Community Foundation that benefit the school district. So far, two families have set up designated endowments for Holy Trinity, Rump says.



INDIAN CREEK NATURE CENTER

GREATER CEDAR RAPIDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Rich Patterson remembers when the recession of the early 1980s forced the Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids to “live on a hand-to-mouth budget.” At one particular meeting, as the board struggled to figure out how to make payroll, “one frustrated member stood up, slapped his fist on the table and said, ‘Let’s do it!’” recalls Patterson, who’s been the director of the Nature Center for 32 years.

What that board member wanted to do was establish an endowment so the Nature Center could move beyond survival mode. The board heeded his advice, and over the years, the endowment fund increased steadily. Eventually “it grew to the point where it became prudent to switch the assets to

the Community Foundation to manage,” says Patterson.

Today, the Nature Center has 19 separate funds at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation. The total endowed funds provide about 20 percent of the Nature Center’s budget, up from 7 percent just a few years ago. The organization’s goal is for endowed funds to cover 40 to 50 percent of the budget by 2023, which will be the Nature Center’s 50th anniversary.

The endowments ensure that the Nature Center can continue to meet its primary goal of protecting and restoring woodlands, prairie and wetlands as well as providing environmental education and programs. Four miles of trails wind through the 234-acre preserve, which also has an interpretive center, barn and other facilities.

The Nature Center includes an endowment component in all capital projects to create a cash stream to cover new projects’ maintenance costs. That ensures the acquisitions “won’t become financial parasites,” Patterson says. “I’ve seen many nonprofits not anticipate the long-term needs (of an acquisition or expansion), and eventually there’s a crisis. An endowment helps avoid that.”

The Endow Iowa Tax Credit “has been hugely helpful” in building the endowments, Patterson says. “It’s been a great incentive to (donors),” he says.

He adds that a growing number of donors realize that giving to an endowment through the Community Foundation “is a way to ensure everlasting life for the organization, at least everlasting financial life.” ☺

MAQUOKETA VALLEY DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS



FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE OF DELAWARE COUNTY

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DUBUQUE)

Keith Kramer’s vision was clear when he spearheaded Maquoketa Valley Dollars for Scholars in 1999 to serve the Maquoketa Valley School District communities of Delhi, Hopkinton and Earlville. “I always wanted a scholarship program that touches everyone, not just the top two or three percent of students,” says Kramer. “I wanted to make sure every student who applies gets a scholarship of some sort.” He also wanted to ensure that the program endured long after his involvement ended.

To fulfill that vision, he set up endowed funds for the program, using certificates of deposits as the vehicle. But then when the Foundation for the Future of Delaware County was established in 2005, Kramer and the Dollars for

Scholars board reconsidered their approach. Though board members initially were skeptical about transferring the endowments to the Community Foundation, “once we understood what the Foundation could do for us, we realized it was a fantastic opportunity,” says Kramer. “The Community Foundation has been a great tool for us.”

A key reason the partnership is effective is because of the Endow Iowa Tax Credit, which has provided a major incentive to Dollars for Scholars supporters, says Kramer. He finds that when he explains the credit to donors one-to-one, they more easily understand the benefits. That often prompts them to make a larger gift, he says.

The partnership with the Community Foundation also will ensure Dollars for Scholars continues in

perpetuity, giving future students opportunities they might not otherwise have, notes Kramer. For the 2009-2010 school year, 58 high school seniors received a total of \$50,005 in scholarships, with individual scholarships ranging from \$675 to \$1,400. Since the first scholarships were awarded in 2001, a total of 552 graduates have received \$319,798 in scholarship money.

Kramer has seen the scholarships change attitudes and change lives. “The impact in 10 years has been tremendous,” he says. “It’s changed the perspective of both kids and parents. Now it’s not a matter of if a (student) will go to college but where.” With the endowment, that positive impact will be assured for generations to come. ☺

NATIONAL MISSISSIPPI RIVER MUSEUM AND AQUARIUM



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DUBUQUE

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium's partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque "has been a godsend," says Ginger Sakas, the Museum's director of development. The Community Foundation has played a major role in the Museum's ambitious goal to increase its endowment by \$5 million as part of a \$40 million expansion.

"The board of directors knew that along with raising money for brick and mortar, you need to raise money to sustain the Museum for the future," says Sakas. The Museum's new National River Center houses three galleries featuring aquariums, interactive exhibits

and state-of-the-art displays. The addition is expected to boost attendance to the award-winning Museum, which draws more than 200,000 visitors annually.

The Community Foundation helps donors understand the importance of an endowment to the Museum's future, she says. "Some donors aren't familiar with endowments. The Community Foundation can explain, in an effective and concise way, how the donor's gift can have an impact both on the organization and on them personally."

The Community Foundation "helps us identify donors who are interested in endowments and in our projects," Sakas says, adding that sometimes a Community Foundation staff member accompanies her on calls to visit with donors. That's "allowed new donors to

incorporate a gift to the endowment as part of (their gift) to the overall capital campaign."

The Community Foundation also has helped donors understand the benefits of the Endow Iowa Tax Credit, Sakas says. "When people are making decisions about at what level they can give, being able to offer the Endow Iowa Tax Credit is a real incentive," prompting some donors to give larger gifts, she says.

The Museum's endowment at the Community Foundation "appeals to donors of all ages," Sakas adds. "The endowment gives stability to our future. Our supporters know that their gift will allow the children of tomorrow, from all over the world, to learn about this treasure called the Mississippi River." 🐟

PRINCESS THEATER



RINGGOLD COUNTY FUND

(A COMPONENT OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL IOWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

For seven decades, the Princess Theater in Mount Ayr drew people to this south-central Iowa town for vaudeville, movies and other shows. But by 1985, the landmark theater—originally built as a department store in 1887—was forced to close because of declining attendance. It then housed a plumbing supply center and a bar, steadily deteriorating to the point where it was crumbling.

When a group of community members, called the Princess Theater Troupe, decided in 2005 to launch a capital campaign to restore and reopen the charitable venue, they didn't want to take any risk that the same fate would await it. "From the beginning, we knew we needed a plan for self-sufficiency," says Michell Ricker, a member of the

Princess Theater's board of directors and chairwoman of fundraising.

So the group established the Princess Theater Endowment at the South Central Iowa Community Foundation. "We saw the endowment as a way to ensure permanency," she says.

Both the capital and endowment campaigns were major successes. The renovated theater reopened in 2008, and the endowment goal was reached earlier than planned, with \$300,000 raised for the fund.

The community group decided to partner with the Foundation because it "has a proven track record of making sound investments and doing the work effectively," says Ricker. "We didn't want the burden of meeting all the laws and dealing with attorneys and taxes—we wanted to leave it to them."

The partnership with the Community Foundation frees up the Princess Theater Troupe to focus on the theater, which, since reopening, has thrived as a center of community activity. In addition to hosting live performances and movies, it serves as a venue for after-school reading programs, student drama clubs and other events.

Ricker adds that Mount Ayr has come to appreciate the value of an endowment. "The community first saw the endowment work with a teen center in town. That was the test case," she says. "Now the bowling alley is being refurbished as a nonprofit and they're raising money for an endowment. The county has learned how to make something permanent." 🐟



ROCCS YOUTH POD

DECATUR COUNTY FUND

(A COMPONENT OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL IOWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

It's never too early to learn about the power of endowments and giving back to your community. Just ask the students involved in ROCCS Youth Pod in Decatur County in south-central Iowa.

The youth-led granting organization, which was started through funding from the Dekko Foundation, involves 15 to 20 students from the county's three high schools. ROCCS (which stands for Restoring our County, Communities and Schools) partnered with the Decatur County Fund to establish two endowments: a grantmaking fund and a scholarship fund, explains Diane Ross, executive

director of the South Central Iowa Community Foundation.

The students help raise money for the scholarship endowment and help select the scholarship recipients; last year, they gave out three awards ranging from \$100 to \$150, Ross says.

For the granting fund, the students meet once a month to carefully review requests for community projects, then make recommendations to the Community Foundation's board. Proceeds from the ROCCS endowment have supported a playground, a swimming pool and after-prom parties, as well as health, education and conservation programs, Ross says.

The students' involvement doesn't stop with grant recommendations; ROCCS members also provide some of

the hands-on work the various projects require.

Throughout the entire process—the fundraising, grant reviews and volunteer work—the students, who are from rival high schools, learn how to collaborate and cooperate, Ross says. In addition, they “grow to understand their county as a whole,” she says. “They learn about philanthropy and volunteerism. We see them as future Foundation and community leaders because they're definitely learning the process. It's quite impressive watching them.”

THE SPECTRUM NETWORK

WINNESHIEK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTHEAST IOWA)



The Spectrum Network “fell into” an endowment partnership at the Winneshiek County Community Foundation, says Toni Smith, executive director of the Decorah nonprofit organization. The agency provides customized employment services and living assistance to adults who face a variety of barriers, such as disabilities, substance abuse and mental illness.

A few years ago, the Community Foundation's chairman called Smith to tell her about a donor who was interested in contributing to The Spectrum Network. The chairman “wondered how I felt about establishing an endowment,”

recalls Smith. “That's how we got started.”

Today, Smith views the designated endowment at the Community Foundation as critical to The Spectrum Network's future. “We just celebrated our 35th year, and we want to ensure we have another 35 years—and many years after that,” says Smith. “The endowment is a promise to the community and to our clients that we will be able to continue providing the services they expect...and that our clients will continue to have the opportunity to change their lives.”

A valuable aspect of partnering with the Community Foundation is utilizing their expertise, she says. “Our skill set is serving people with disabilities, not raising money through endowments,” Smith says.

With the endowment in the hands of the Community Foundation, Smith and her staff can focus on their main goal: helping clients build the skills and support systems they need to work and live independently. The organization also has more time to spearhead innovative inclusion projects such as creating a traveling exhibit of client artwork and publishing a book of essays written by people who live with disabilities.

“The Community Foundation is like an ace in the hole,” Smith says. “It's there for the betterment of everyone and helps to make this area in northeast Iowa a very special place for all of us.”



WATERLOO- CEDAR FALLS SYMPHONY

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTHEAST IOWA

The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony has provided an arts and cultural cornerstone to the Cedar Valley since 1929. To ensure its longstanding tradition, supporters of the Symphony established an endowment in 1986 with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, and in 2004 the Symphony focused on growing the endowment as part of its 75th anniversary fundraising campaign.

The organization raised \$1.1 million for the endowment in just nine months, an impressive accomplishment for a symphony of its size. “We wanted the stability of having funds we know we can rely on,” says Susan Munnik, marketing director for the organization.

When donors contribute to the Symphony’s endowment fund at the

Community Foundation, they “trust their money will be invested wisely and ethically,” says Munnik. “The credibility the Community Foundation has with donors—that’s the big thing.” And the opportunity for donors to access the Endow Iowa Tax Credit is an added benefit. “The Community Foundation has helped us stay on top of that opportunity—(it) helps donors understand the credit,” she says.

The endowment also has opened the door to more planned gifts, Munnik says. “Planned giving is a way for us to keep building the endowment, to make sure the Symphony is moving forward,” she says. “But it’s hard for an organization like ours to put all materials together on planned gifts.... The Community Foundation has helped with that.”

The strong partnership the

Symphony enjoys with the Community Foundation gives the group the freedom to focus on its main purpose: In addition to presenting a full performance season, the Symphony offers a variety of youth and educational programs.

The 75th anniversary endowment campaign was an added benefit of the longtime partnership between the two organizations. Some donors have established designated endowment funds that have helped to underwrite musicians or fund youth concerts or other programs. “The thing we really love about the Community Foundation,” says Munnik, “is the work they do as an advocate for nonprofits and donors. Across the region, (the Community Foundation) educates donors about what an endowment is and why it’s important. Donors respond to that.”



WRIGHT MEDICAL FOUNDATION

WRIGHT COUNTY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DES MOINES)

Since 1982, Wright Medical Foundation has supported Wright Medical Center in Clarion in myriad ways, including providing funding for medical equipment, health care services, scholarships and other programs. Even with its successful track record and strong donor support, the organization decided to establish an agency endowment at the Wright County Charitable Foundation as well.

The partnership with the Wright County Charitable Foundation provides Wright Medical Foundation’s donors with more giving options and opens another avenue of support, notes Duane Asbe, planned giving officer for Wright Medical Foundation. “We felt that the Endow Iowa Tax Credit would be an additional benefit to donors,” he says.

Although the Medical Foundation has enjoyed a “good, solid base” of donors over the years, the Endow Iowa Tax Credit “enables us to keep an offer out there to pique donors’ interest as far as new giving opportunities,” Asbe adds. “Over the past six to eight months, we’ve visited with a number of people about (the credit) and it’s been received favorably.” Already, the Endow Iowa Tax Credit has spurred several people who had not previously given to make donations.

As new challenges continually emerge in the rapidly changing health care environment, the endowment at the Charitable Foundation also will help ensure that Wright Medical Center can meet the growing needs of the community and continue to deliver high-quality services, says Asbe. “The

money will be there for many years to come,” he says. “Donors have the opportunity to leave a legacy that will last long after they’re gone.”

Asbe is excited about another aspect of the partnership. He notes that the Medical Center not only serves Clarion, a town of about 3,000 people in north-central Iowa, but the entire 14,334-person county and beyond. Wright County Charitable Foundation is also a county-wide entity, giving the two organizations the opportunity to work hand-in-hand to build and promote philanthropy throughout the area. The partnership “is a win-win situation for both foundations as well as for all our residents,” he says.

YOUTH & SHELTER SERVICES INC.



STORY COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

(AN AFFILIATE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER DES MOINES)

For nearly 35 years, Youth & Shelter Services (YSS) has helped countless homeless and troubled youth conquer obstacles and become self-sufficient. The Ames-based organization serves more than 8,000 young people each year through its residential, treatment and educational programs, and supporters want to make sure that work continues for generations to come, notes Dennis Peterson, YSS' planned giving officer.

An endowment fund YSS established at the Story County Community Foundation in 2006 helps provide the long-term assurance donors are looking for, he says. "Often people who give the largest gifts want to invest in an

organization that's sustainable," he says. "An endowment really speaks to that."

The Endow Iowa Tax Credit has boosted interest in endowment giving, Peterson says. "The first gift to the YSS Endow Iowa Fund was \$1,000 from a longtime supporter. By May 2010, contributions to the fund had grown to \$270,000." Although YSS has its own separate foundation, forming an endowment with the Community Foundation was important in order to offer donors the tax credit. Peterson explains that for many donors, receiving a state tax credit as well as the charitable deduction at the federal level is an added bonus. "The Endow Iowa Tax Credit is a great tool for fundraising," he says.

Endowment is so important to YSS that when launching its capital campaign for the new Family Life Center, the

organization's 20th facility in Central Iowa, they also initiated a campaign to raise money for an endowment to help support the facility's programs.

"We are centered on donor interests and try to be alert to every opportunity," Peterson says, adding that the Community Foundation is a valuable resource YSS draws on to meet donor goals and fulfill its mission of helping young people build lives based on self-respect and self-reliance.

"Some people who donate to YSS have experienced our services first-hand and are grateful for our help, while others contribute because they know the work we do is important for the community" he says. "There's been a lot of goodwill that's been built over the years." ☺

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