

Annual Events Attract Record Numbers

More and more affiliated fund leaders now consider Nebraska Community Foundation's annual events as a "must do," if at all possible. Even if it means traveling the entire length of the state.

The numbers, the spirit, and even the temperatures soared to nearly record highs during NCF's annual events at McCook Community College this past November. Nearly 200 community leaders gathered for a full day of peer learning with their fellow affiliated fund leaders.



The McCook High School drumline was on hand to welcome guests to the 2016 Annual Banquet at the Peter & Dolores Graff Event Center on McCook Community College campus in November.

Nebraska Community Foundation staff facilitated a full day's worth of interactive coaching sessions. More than 50 highly experienced volunteers from affiliated funds served as mentors, panelists, and discussion leaders on how to invite people to invest in their hometowns and how to use grantmaking to create communities of choice for young families.

One engaging session encouraged participants to seek practical advice from their peers on their most perplexing challenges. Post-event surveys indicate that this type of

facilitated peer-level consultation was highly valued.

In the evening, nearly 400 guests gathered for the annual banquet to hear from volunteers who are putting their dreams to work – all in an effort to attract young families to their hometowns. The good news is – it's working!

McCook Fund Advisory Committee members spoke of the independent spirit and culture of creativity that has allowed the community to take on new projects and focus on building leadership among the next generation.

Red Cloud's message urged everyone to consider the importance of high-quality child development programs as a means to attract and nurture young families.

Speakers from Imperial – which has seen a dramatic increase in young adult residents in recent years – encouraged smaller communities to reach out to high school graduates and others who may have moved away, but still hold a strong attachment to

their hometowns.

Long after the program ended, the conversations continued throughout the halls of the Peter & Dolores Graff Events Center. Honorary NCF board member Mark Graff noted that "although my dad hated public recognition for his good works, he would have been very proud, as is my mom, that this facility is hosting great community leaders from across the state!"

Mark your calendars for NCF's Annual Affiliated Fund Training, Expo and Banquet on November 2, 2017 in La Vista! ■



Mason Holmes of Imperial tells his story of receiving a tangible invitation as a high school senior to return home sometime in the future. After completing his education and turning down a job elsewhere, he did just that. He says he has always felt a constant pull from his community.

Peer Consultation Ranks High Among Volunteers

Great opportunity... great experience.

Good session with lots of practical advice.

Lots of great ideas shared!

Peer mentors are so important!

Very helpful process.

The whole day was excellent, but this was superior!

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People Attraction Priority One

A record number of babies born!

Elementary enrollment exceeds high school enrollment by 40%!

Twenty- and thirty-somethings moving home at rates not seen in decades!

These are all headlines from rural Nebraska in 2016. The O'Neill hospital reported 174 births last year. Class size at the Red Cloud elementary school has jumped. Ord, McCook, Shickley, Diller, Ogallala, Albion, Imperial, Pender and Stuart all have many more young families living in their communities than they did 10 years ago.

What's the common thread? Each of these communities has focused on a simple, asset-based community development strategy for success:

- Shared vision,
- Distributed leadership,
- Citizen engagement, and
- Building an unrestricted endowment and using it to create magnetic communities!

This four-part strategy works like a magnet to attract young families.

People attraction is the community economic development imperative for our people to enjoy the good life in a prosperous Nebraska. In the 21st century economy, we can choose to live and work just about wherever we want. So today, the economic development question is not one of jobs. The better question is: Why here? Why do I want to live, work and raise my family in this community?

Affiliated fund leadership in each of these communities, and dozens of others throughout Nebraska, are building brighter futures by unleashing their talent and resources and having optimistic conversations about the future with youth and young adults.

In Red Cloud, a focus on heritage tourism industry (thanks to American novelist Willa Cather's deep connection

to the community) and early childhood development are the two driving forces behind "people attraction" and economic development.

In Albion, the affiliated fund is focused on high-quality after-school opportunities.

In Hebron, farmers and ranchers are helping the school provide locally sourced meat, fruits and vegetables.

In Ord, philanthropic support for the arts, entrepreneurship and leadership development is creating a vibrant culture.

In Shickley, over 65% of households in the school district have made a gift to their community's unrestricted endowment.

In Ogallala, public-private partnerships, fueled by philanthropy, are helping to recruit skilled workers to Keith County.

As this newsletter reveals, community successes are being celebrated in every region of Nebraska.

Communities can only be built and sustained by the people who live and work there. Nebraska Community Foundation is their value-added partner. Thanks to all of you who are helping make community dreams come true! ■

President & CEO Jeff Yost leads a peer learning session focused on "people attraction" during NCF's Affiliated Fund Annual Training in McCook.



Lunch & Learn with NCF

Earlier this year NCF launched its new, monthly “Lunch & Learn” series to explore cutting edge topics with our affiliated fund volunteers. Each 30-minute session presents a powerful idea to ponder and act upon during the following month. Lunch & Learns use videoconferencing to enable people to see and talk to one another.

Our first Lunch & Learn kicked off with Mark Graff of McCook repeating the popular presentation he gave during annual training. In it he compares the slow and steady process of climbing Mt. Everest to the work involved with endowment-building, grantmaking and people attraction. Mark gives this advice to volunteers:

- Establish a strong base camp.
- Know that complacency kills you.
- Prepare to be flexible.
- Know that things move more slowly as you get higher.
- Be relentless because it’s about the journey! (Not the money!)

Future presentations will feature volunteer Fund Advisory Committee members discussing a variety of techniques and topics, from asking for the right



Mark Graff of McCook Community Foundation Fund leads an engaging presentation during our 2016 Annual Training. He repeated the presentation during NCF’s first Lunch & Learn event in February.

contribution amount, to early childhood development investments and more. Lunch & Learn sessions occur on the first Wednesday of the month. Affiliated fund leaders should watch for an email invitation from NCF in the weeks and days leading up to the event. Others may view the recorded Lunch & Learns by going to NebraskaHometown.org/affiliated-funds/services/conferences.

Thanks go out to our experienced volunteers who have stepped forward to lead discussions! ■

Remembering Dale Tinstman

Nebraska Community Foundation lost a longtime friend and supporter when Dale Tinstman died on February 16, 2017. Dale will be remembered for his service to our country, his business acumen, which was instrumental in the success of companies across the Great Plains, and for his work on countless community boards, foundations and associations. Words from his obituary describe Dale’s outlook: “Never content with the status quo, Dale always believed that things could be better, that we could be better.”



Dale and his late wife Jean created a donor-advised fund with Nebraska Community Foundation in 2002. They made generous contributions over the past 15 years to numerous charitable causes, including Nebraska Community Foundation. It was their wish that, following their deaths, the remaining assets in their fund be distributed to benefit the communities of Wakefield, Diller, Tobias, and also the Nebraska Community Foundation Endowment.

During his lifetime, Dale worked to create positive change. His gifts to all of us continue his personal legacy. ■

Join us in welcoming our new member to the Board of Directors!

Dan Bahensky has been a lawyer in Kearney since 1977 and is a partner in the law firm of Parker, Grossart, Bahensky, Beucke, Bowman & Symington, L.L.P.

Dan has demonstrated a deep commitment to community volunteerism, serving on numerous boards throughout his life. He is past president of the Kearney Library Board, Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation, Citizen Advocacy of Central Nebraska, and Kearney State College Foundation.

Dan is currently involved with the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Nebraska Goodwill Foundation, Nebraska Golf Hall of Fame, and the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Welcome, Dan! Thank you for volunteering your talent and expertise in service to our statewide community-building movement! ■



Dan Bahensky

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Affiliated Fund Updates

More than 160 students in the Norfolk area will have the opportunity to participate in charitable projects this year, thanks to the **Philanthropy Council of Northeast Nebraska's** annual Youth Philanthropy Contest. This year, 18 projects were awarded funding through the Connie Fund, an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation, and many generous individuals and businesses. Now in its sixth year, the contest has resulted in more than \$100,000 for youth projects that have touched thousands of lives in Northeast Nebraska. Read more at philanthropycouncilne.org.



Youth Philanthropy Contest winners Valeria Jiminez, Norma Hernandez, Arly Pineda, Katlyn Villareal and Noemi Hernandez will partner with the Salvation Army's summer food program to provide fun and free activities for the children who attend. Their project, Helping Hands with Kids Krusin' Kitchen, was one of 18 youth projects awarded funding earlier this year.

Eustis Community Foundation Fund

provides significant annual support to underwrite programs at the community's licensed childcare facility. Longtime ECF Fund Advisory Committee member and NCF board member, Judy Brockmeier, explains, "We continue to support Kinder Haus because it is very important to Eustis. Good childcare and pre-school are essential to attracting young couples. In addition to Eustis, we serve other surrounding communities, and most of the time we're at capacity. Providing this service is one of our goals, not just for the present but for future generations."



Kids and families from miles around enjoy the professionalism and security of Kinder Haus Childcare Center in Eustis.

Keith County Community Foundation Fund

is investing in workforce development by partnering with Keith County Area Development. The program uses tuition reimbursement to recruit skilled individuals who will work in the community for a minimum of two years. KCCFF provided \$6,000 in matching funds for a total of \$12,000. In addition, the employer would contribute about \$12,000 for the employee's tuition cost. KCAD board member Jason Tickle said, "We really see this as just the start. We have ambitious goals for the program. We just want to be successful at bringing people back to Keith County, and we want to benefit the business community so they can have another tool in their box for recruiting."



Keith County Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee member Jacob Hovendick (center) presents a matching grant to representatives of Keith County Area Development, Jason Tickle and Mary Wilson.

Shickley Community Foundation Fund

continues its significant support of its schools. The Fund has committed \$25,000 for the construction of a greenhouse to augment agricultural education and to provide a source of locally grown food for students. Ag instructor Kristin Witte grew up on a farm near Scribner and says, "Having a greenhouse helps students apply what they learn about plant structures in class through a hands-on and fun way. They're able to see another side of the agriculture industry."



Shickley students Mikaela Anderson and Jady Kleinschmidt harvest salad greens grown in the school's new greenhouse and used in school lunches.

Wasua Community Foundation Fund's

recent grants have focused on building skills for residents of all ages, through adult leadership, TeamMates mentoring, swimming lessons and computer access. Treasurer Darren Vanness explained, "We're excited to support our new library by investing in computers to offer all members of our community expanded capabilities with reliable internet. It's a great example of enhanced opportunities in our small community!"



Claire Kumm and Caleb Woockman enjoy working in the computer lab of the Lincoln Township Library in Wausa.

Our Team is Growing!

In order to better serve Nebraska Community Foundation's 224 affiliated funds and 251 communities, our team is growing! Read a little about our four newest employees below and feel free to reach out and say "hello!"

Janny Crotty, Affiliated Fund Development Coordinator

Janny works from her home office in Auburn, providing training and technical assistance to NCF's community-based affiliated funds in southeast Nebraska. Prior to joining the NCF team in July 2016, she worked at Peru State College and the University of Nebraska



Foundation. In her spare time, Janny enjoys working on their newly restored historic home, camping and spending time with her husband Ryan and their two children, Liston and Nash.
jcrotty@nebcommfound.org

Phuong Dinh, IT System Administrator

Phuong joined NCF in September 2016 as IT System Administrator, a newly created position. Phuong is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to improve IT systems and infrastructure. He previously worked for the State of Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance and Fiserv Financial Services. He and his wife Kimiko live in Lincoln with their two children. One of the family's favorite pastimes is fishing at Nebraska's many "great" lakes. pdinh@nebcommfound.org



Kristine Gale, Affiliated Fund Development Coordinator

Since September 2016, Kristine has worked from her home office in Bassett, providing training and education to NCF affiliated funds in north-central Nebraska. Before NCF, she was economic development director in Bassett and worked for the Fremont Area Community Foundation and Nebraska State Fair 1868 Foundation. Kristine and her husband, David, are founding members of the Rock County Community Fund, an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation. They have three sons: Jack, Charlie, and Thomas.
kgale@nebcommfound.org



Carrie Malek-Madani, Director of Marketing & Communications

Carrie joined the NCF staff in February 2017. She is responsible for developing and implementing NCF's communications and marketing goals and strategies to build awareness and support for NCF and its affiliated funds. Prior to NCF, Carrie worked for the Lied Center for Performing Arts, S&S Public Relations, and the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Originally from Vermillion, South Dakota, Carrie lives in Lincoln with her husband, Gunnar, and daughter, Eleanor.
cmalek-madani@nebcommfound.org



Save the Date

Annual Training, Expo and Banquet
Thursday, November 2, 2017
Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center
La Vista, Nebraska

For more information call **402-323-7330** or email info@nebcommfound.org.

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Lunch & Learn with Us!

NCF's "Lunch & Learn" series is a virtual path to peer learning. Log-in on the first Wednesday of the month to explore cutting edge topics – like how to make an ask or why community-building is a lot like mountain climbing – with your fellow volunteers. Each 30-minute session is designed to give you a powerful idea to ponder for the next month. Check out our Upcoming Events page at nebcommfound.org for more information and to register.

Stay Connected With NCF E-Newsletters

If you are a Fund Advisory Committee member and haven't been getting our bi-weekly e-newsletter, contact **Juli Rosso** at jrosso@nebcommfound.org right away. We'll make sure we have your correct email address. Be sure to add "Carrie Malek-Madani" as a safe sender to your inbox.

Community Impact

Embracing Everyone in the Community

Soon children in Northeast Nebraska with different abilities will have the opportunity to play side-by-side with all their playmates in one delightful location!

Volunteers for Embrace Park are nearing their goal for building a fully accessible playground and splashpad in Norfolk, just west of the YMCA. The specialized equipment will allow children of all abilities to play together. Fundraising for the \$700,000 project is being handled through the Norfolk Area Community Foundation Fund.

Early inspiration came from Emily Afrank, a physical therapist who works with children to function at home and in the community with the least amount of restriction possible. “The outpouring of

support has been humbling to say the least,” Emily said. “We’ve had contributions of all sizes from nearly 150 donors.”

Embrace Park is another example of public-private partnerships with our affiliated funds that create attractive communities for young families. The facility will be owned and maintained by the City of Norfolk. The city plans to add parking and two new sports fields adjacent to Embrace Park, as well. ■



An artist's rendering of Embrace Park, an inclusive, accessible playground to be constructed in Norfolk near the YMCA.

Acting on Opportunity in Albion



(L-r) Boone Central School students Braxton Shively, Anthony DeWitt, Cooper Worrell and Zeke Sandman can look forward to the Cardinal Kids Club after-school program beginning next fall. The program is one of a handful of Nebraska school districts receiving a grant to develop pilot programs for expanded learning opportunities.

Over the past year, Boone County Foundation Fund provided a structure and financial support for a planning committee on childcare. A former teacher, Lindsey Jarecki, led an effort to find out what the community needed most. Through months of research, surveys and visiting with providers and families, the

committee determined that after-school programming was a primary need.

“With more and more families moving into the area, we need to provide better support. Employees literally have to leave work so they can pick up their kids after school. This hurts both the employer and the family,” Lindsey said.

Last fall the BCFE presented its case to the Boone Central School board and offered to play a leading role in launching and supporting a program in partnership with the school.

Meanwhile, Nebraska Community Foundation was working with its colleagues in education to identify communities that had the capacity to participate in a grant-funded pilot program, the Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Design Challenge. The goal is to create programs that can be replicated in other districts across the state.

With its early success in demonstrating community support, Boone County was a great fit. In December, the school board

agreed to be part of a 30-month, \$893,000 collaborative grant program with four other districts: Auburn, Beatrice, Centura and Grand Island.

Fund Advisory Committee member and program director Mollie Morrow said, “We are a unique district in that we have support right off the bat from our Boone County Foundation Fund. The ELO grant allows us to tap into community and school partners to establish sustainable after-school programming with a strong STEM focus. Having a partnership between the school and the community is key to establishing a program like this, but it also creates ties between the kids, businesses and people. Our hope is to create a model for other districts across the state, ensuring kids are being challenged beyond the school day.”

Kurt Kruse, BCFE chair, added, “We plan to continue our commitment to sustain this program. It is long-term investments like this that make our community stronger going forward.” ■

Investment in Arts Enlivens Valley County



(L-r) Abigail Moody as Rapunzel, Anna Olson as Madame Gothel, and Colette Olson as the Prince performed in a theater event that brought together youths from different schools and children who are home schooled.

There's a healthy appetite for culture and entertainment in Valley County, where audiences file into the renovated Golden Husk theater in Ord for community productions of Broadway musicals and live concerts featuring local artists and legendary names like the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

One of the theater's most ambitious efforts to date has been the staging of *Rapunzel*, a Missoula Children's Theatre production. The cast of 35 youth actors from across the Loup Valley had only five days from audition to performance to learn their lines, original songs and stage presence. The audience of more than 200 were entertained with the humorous twist on the original fairytale and an uplifting message of hope, forgiveness and kindness.

Funding to bring the world renowned Missoula Children's Theatre was provided through the Valley County Community Foundation Fund.

"The residency was a wonderful opportunity for youth to develop creative talents, new friendships and connections with professional artists. We are extremely thankful for the opportunity to bring this quality production to Valley County," said Dahn Hagge, director of The Golden Husk.

The people in Valley County have a can-do spirit, and the belief that their hometown has everything it needs to attract young families. Thanks to generous, visionary supporters, the community also has more than \$4 million in endowed philanthropic resources to take full advantage of opportunities that put dreams to work. ■



A cast of 35 youths performed in the children's musical, *Rapunzel*, at The Golden Husk theater in Ord, sponsored by the Valley County Community Foundation Fund.

Popular "Voice" Performs in Imperial

On February 17, Imperial Community Foundation Fund presented a free concert featuring Josh Hoyer and his band, Soul Colossal. Four days later, news spread that Hoyer was slated as a contestant this season on NBC's hit show, *The Voice*.

Organizers admit, the timing of the announcement could have been better. Despite the fact that the concert fell on a



Imperial Community Foundation Fund presents Josh Hoyer & Soul Colossal, performing at the VFW Hall in February.

night with a home high school basketball game, audience turn-out was very good.

ICFF vice chair Tyler Pribbeno helped bring Josh Hoyer to his western Nebraska hometown, as he has with other shows over the past several months.

Tyler and his fellow Fund Advisory Committee members believe that fun is a kind of community impact worth investing in. "Our mission statement says we are 'dedicated to enriching the quality of life.' Sponsoring activities and events engages people. In turn, they learn about the Fund and in the future, they may be motivated to volunteer and support us," said Tyler.

Tyler says "having nothing to do" is a common complaint coming from young people in smaller towns. "When NCF did a youth survey here a couple years ago, we

were surprised that so many said they'd be happy to return to Imperial someday. One of the main barriers was lack of entertainment."

With Imperial's increasing population of 30- to 40-year-olds, the Fund is looking at different ideas that would attract young people. In fact, a group of fourth graders have proposed the development of a skate park for the city. "It's pretty amazing to see 30 kids, just 10-year-olds, sitting around with professionals talking to city officials!" Tyler remarked.

"I would encourage other affiliated funds to just ask people what they would like to see in their hometown. Especially new people who are moving in. There's real value in engaging in conversations which can lead to active participation in community life." ■



NEBRASKA COMMUNITY

F O U N D A T I O N

PO Box 83107
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Investing in Programming

Early Childhood Development Key for People Attraction

Childcare is a matter of high importance here in Nebraska, where 71% of children under six years old have all available parents in the workforce. Five years ago, NCF helped leaders in Red Cloud organize efforts to address a critical shortage in childcare, and went a step further to commit to creating high-quality, early childhood education.



Kayzen and Zanthony Gomez enjoy helping with a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Valley Child Development Center to serve Red Cloud and the surrounding area beginning later this year.

Having affordable, high-quality childcare is essential to attracting a quality workforce. Providing this key amenity should be considered a long-term investment that “pays” dividends by increasing overall social and economic vitality.

Red Cloud Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee members have embraced this vision and have helped lead a community-wide campaign to raise awareness and support for the project.

Success is on the horizon. Later this year, a new 7,200 square-foot, multi-million-dollar facility – The Valley Child Development Center – will open to families in the community and surrounding area. Board members

promise that a high-quality educational experience will be the focus.

Dennis Hansen, RCCFF chair explains, “We can build a beautiful building, but if we don’t have a quality program operating inside, we’re missing the target. Thanks to generous donors like Great Plains Communications, we’re getting help we need to ensure high quality in our operations. And of course, a robust endowment will help guarantee that funding will be in place to keep that quality affordable.”

“We believe supporting local projects should not just be limited to brick and mortar or the ‘capital’ campaign. These facilities will need support to deliver their programming and operation, to do the work they need to do. Public support directed to operations will help keep service fees low and provide opportunities for more in the community to participate.”

Casey Garrigan
Marketing & Sales Relations Manager
Great Plains Communications

NCF and our affiliated funds will continue to play a leadership role in helping more communities welcome newcomers by providing what today’s families need – access to high-quality, reliable and affordable childhood development. ■