

CONNECTIONS



Stationary bike riders James Wonnacott, Carrie West and Heather Bailey helped a local initiative aimed at preventing Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) during Norfolk area's Big Give in May. Bikers who peddled every hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. included Faith Regional hospital staff and community volunteers.

Giving in Greater Nebraska

| 2013 | 2018 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Community Focused Unrestricted Endowments | |
| \$39.4 million | \$72.4 million |
| Affiliated Funds Building Endowments | |
| 99 | 129 |
| Total NCF Assets | |
| \$85.3 million | \$147.4 million |
| Amount Reinvested in Nebraska Within the Previous 5 Years | |
| \$97.3 million | \$128.6 million |

Based on comparisons at March 31 of each year

Giving: A Community Invitation

Community-led fundraising achieves more than just purchasing power; working together toward a goal empowers people. That's why Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) community-based affiliated funds are turning to new ways—and returning to old-school ways—of reaching out for broader community participation. The more people involved, the more powerful the impact.

Over the past year, at least six NCF communities sponsored “Big Gives”—community-wide events to raise awareness and funds for area nonprofits. More than \$554,000 was contributed to a record number of local charities by a record number of donors.

Those familiar with NCF may be aware that 25 community-based funds have been actively involved for several years in endowment-building challenge grants funded by The Sherwood Foundation.

O'Neill Community Foundation Fund was at the 98 percent mark in reaching its \$200,000 goal to receive its final matching funds from The Sherwood Foundation. In May, they collaborated with O'Neill Public School's Eagle Eye broadcasting class and hosted an old-fashioned telethon to invite everyone to be part of their successful effort in crossing the finish line.

Recently, instead of wishing and waiting for help from the outside, at least seven communities have launched or completed grassroots campaigns sponsored by local donor challenge grants. Noting the success their neighbors were having in Brown County and Rock County, the Keya Paha County Foundation Fund Advisory Committee pooled their own resources (totaling \$50,000) and will soon challenge the community to raise a 2-to-1 match resulting in \$150,000 for the Fund's unrestricted endowment!

NCF's volunteer Fund Advisory Committees (FACs) are dynamic groups with new members coming on board and longtime members moving into mentor roles. To pass along skills to newer members in Nebraska City, three “old guard” FAC members have created a new twist by challenging others to “raise donors” in addition to dollars, by meeting with their friends and neighbors, one-on-one, and asking them to give back. Every new annual donor's contribution will be matched 1-to-1, up to \$15,000, by these three individuals in each of the next three years.

At Nebraska Community Foundation, we keep hearing the phrase, “It's about much more than money!” and we're seeing what it means, as the number of people actively involved in community philanthropy keeps growing in Greater Nebraska. ■

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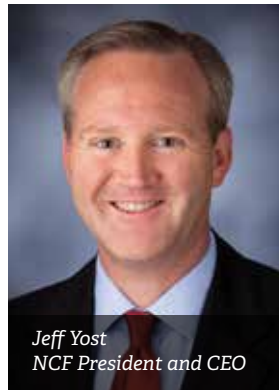
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We *unleash* abundant local assets,
inspire charitable giving,
 and *connect* ambitious people
 to build stronger communities and a *Greater Nebraska.*

Unleash. Inspire. Connect.



Jeff Yost
 NCF President and CEO

For the better part of a year, Nebraska Community Foundation board and staff (along with the invaluable help of mentors and volunteers

across our statewide network) have been hard at work developing a new Strategic Framework that will guide NCF’s work and priorities over the next five years.

Rewriting NCF’s mission and vision statements was central to that process. I am thrilled with the final product as it not only captures the optimism and results oriented attitude of this robust network, it is a true illustration of the evolution we have experienced over the past two decades, and more importantly, where we are headed as we look to the future.

“Nebraska is a place where our hometowns are achieving their dreams” stands as NCF’s new vision statement. As

we often tell members of the NCF network as they embark on the Action Planning process and craft vision and mission statements for their own communities, a strong vision isn’t just ambitious, it paints a picture of what you want the world to look like—something I truly feel this vision statement accomplishes.

We look forward to devoting some time to NCF’s Strategic Framework at this year’s Annual Celebration in Norfolk on November 8. Our hope is to involve more members of the NCF network to co-produce and co-own the Strategic Framework and discover together how it can be leveraged to further unleash, inspire and connect the abundant assets and extraordinary people that are driving this unstoppable movement to build a Greater Nebraska. ■

NEBRASKA

is a place where our hometowns are

achieving their dreams.

Good Living NCF is proud to serve as the presenting sponsor for this year’s Good Living Tour, a statewide event that highlights homegrown musical talent and is giving Nebraskans of all ages another reason to love their hometown. Community-based affiliated funds have been central to both local funding and planning for the fun, family-friendly and free event. ■



PHOTO: LAUREN FARRIS | RABBLEMILL.ORG

Welcome to Our Team!

We are excited to welcome three new members to our growing team of community advocates serving Greater Nebraska!



Dena Beck has been hired as the new affiliated fund development coordinator for the south-central part of the state. A “returner” to Greater Nebraska, Dena

works from her home office north of Minden, providing technical assistance to Nebraska Community Foundation's affiliated funds and donors. She works with volunteer leaders to build community awareness, raise funds and increase community impact through grantmaking and citizen engagement.

Dena, her husband and two daughters live on a “ranchette” where they raise Great Pyrenees dogs, cats, goats, chickens, llamas, and 4-H hogs.



Kara Weander-Gaster also joins NCF's statewide team of affiliated fund development coordinators, but for northeast Nebraska! A native of Wayne, Kara

has served as the Norfolk Arts Center's Executive Director since 2004. As the Executive Director, Kara brought the organization to a new level of artistic excellence and community engagement with programs and services embraced by the community and strongly supported by area businesses. Kara's involvement with the NCF network predates her employment, however, as she has both served on the Norfolk Area Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee and attended a number of NCF training events as a volunteer, including the Annual Celebration.



NCF is proud to announce the hiring of Kira Geiger as creative specialist, a new position for the Foundation. As creative specialist, Kira will craft

compelling messaging and design concepts that translate into dynamic marketing, education and training materials to further NCF's mission to build stronger communities and a Greater Nebraska, as well as support the work and needs of 219 affiliated funds and 250 communities across the state.

Originally from Seward, Kira lives in Lincoln with her husband and three children. In her free-time she enjoys spending time with family and friends and honing her photography skills.

We are thrilled to add Dena, Kara and Kira's impressive skills to our growing team! ■

Congratulations on 20 Years!

This summer NCF accountant Amy Fey celebrates her 20th anniversary as an NCF employee. Amy handles accounts payable and receivable, payroll, disbursement services for donor-advised funds, and provides ongoing guidance and assistance to affiliated fund volunteers. Amy answers frequent questions about sales tax requirements and IRS rules for charitable giving, as well as internal NCF procedures that ensure the highest standards of professional financial management.

Amy noted that she and three of her accounting colleagues have more



than 60 years of experience with NCF. “That’s huge for both staff and volunteers. Our longevity and institutional knowledge is a large part of the

high level of professionalism and just keeps on improving,” Amy said.

Amy admits that the number of transactions she processes each week has at least doubled over the past 20

years. “But I love talking to the people in the communities,” she said. “It is just amazing what communities are doing to excel. And it is happening all across the state.”

Amy grew up in Milligan, and now lives in Crete with her husband, Craig. She has two adult stepdaughters, Jessica and Ashley, who is married and has a young daughter. Amy and Craig have two school-aged children, Gracie and Colton. Send your congrats to Amy at amyfey@nebcommfound.org. ■

AFFILIATED FUND UPDATES



Families in Butler County complete surveys to help organizers of a family resource event determine local needs. One key area reported is the availability of childcare.

Butler County Area Foundation Fund

partnered in April with area schools to create a community event for families to gather information on the many services available, from healthcare and childcare, to options for college preparations. "We want to create a one-stop shop where parents can ask questions and take home materials. The goal is to improve the local climate for all families to succeed," said Amy Slama, an event organizer. ■

Columbus Philanthropy Council

awarded four \$1,000 project grants through its annual Youth Philanthropy Contest. Activities range from helping kids with special needs to helping the environment. This summer Rachel Ocegüera and her brother, Amos Zelasney, are planting a public pollinator garden to attract bees and butterflies. In addition to creating habitat for pollinators, she hopes to create public awareness about the importance of pollinators to our ag economy and food security. ■



Youth Philanthropy Contest winner Rachel Ocegüera of Columbus is enlisting the help of her younger brother, Amos, and other community volunteers to plant and maintain a pollinator garden for bees and butterflies.



Sixth grader Stella Ippensen uses a 3D pen to transform her TinkerCad drawing into a three-dimensional object at Shickley's STEAM summer camp.

Shickley Community Foundation Fund

provided matching funds for an eight-day camp this summer focused on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) activities. Separate sessions were offered to students in third to fifth grade and sixth to eighth grade. Kids enjoyed learning about computer coding, electricity, 3D printing, and more. On the final day, students took a field trip to UNL Innovation Campus. The school system receives significant support from Shickley Community Foundation Fund each year. ■

Imperial Community Foundation Fund

did its part to make a dream come true for a group of ambitious area youngsters. Two years ago, nine-year-old Trevin Moreno determined his hometown needed a skatepark. He told his mom, the city administrator, and the city council. Other kids joined him in raising money by selling lemonade, bracelets, burritos, and engravable bricks. Local efforts increased and larger donations started rolling in. The most significant came from the foundation of skateboard pioneer Tony Hawk. To date, nearly \$200,000 has been raised and the skatepark opened in June. One inscribed brick reads, "It takes a village." Lucky for Trevin, he lives in that kind of village. ■



Young skateboarders in Imperial are thrilled that the new skatepark is finally open! Local youth played a major role in fundraising by selling everything from lemonade to engravable bricks.



Stratton elementary school students Ethan Latta, Noah Chaddick and Jessalynne Stringer dissect a trout as part of their Trout in the Classroom project.

Stratton Community Fund

provided everything needed for raising more than 100 trout over the spring semester in Anita Marin's third and fourth grade classroom. "It was huge," Ms. Marin said, referring to the grant that purchased the equipment, fish eggs and curriculum through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Students learned how to test the aquarium water

and stabilize its condition. They recorded their daily observations on their iPads as the fish grew to about three inches long. At that point they returned the fish to the Commission to be released in a state park pond. They also dissected trout, but not the ones they raised! A supply of frozen trout arrived for that particular lesson. ■

Stuart Community Foundation Fund

joined in a community-wide effort to bring yet another amenity to this progressive hometown. The new splashpad started with a vision Katie Kaup shared with her husband and brother-in-law. The village and the park gave the go-ahead and the fundraising ramped up. People donated money, materials and labor, and late in May, the ribbon was cut and the fun began. One of the best parts—it's free. "This town is full of forward thinkers," Katie said. "There's not another splashpad in Holt County, and parents love it. One mother told me the park shelter is her new summer home, where she can relax and read a book without worrying." ■



Isabella Hipke and Vanessa Fahrenholz are among the hundreds of kids (and a lot of parents) in north-central Nebraska who are enjoying the new splashpad in Stuart.

Two new affiliated funds have joined the NCF network! **Kearney County Health Services Fund** was recently established as a community-led effort to use charitable contributions to improve area health and support a hospital in Minden.

Chappell Community Fund has a committee of 13 eager volunteers who are committed to building a permanent endowment for their hometown and surrounding area located in the southern Panhandle. Welcome to our new volunteers! ■



SAVE THE DATE TO CELEBRATE!

Affiliated Fund Training, Expo & Banquet

Thursday, November 8, 2018
Divots Conference Center
Norfolk, Nebraska

Share ideas, plan for action, break bread and celebrate success with hundreds of passionate volunteers and supporters across NCF's statewide network.

Visit our Website and Support Your Hometown!

Like all NCF affiliated funds, each of those who have stories in this newsletter has its own web page on our site. Learn more about the communities and organizations you care about—then donate to that fund online. It's simple and secure.



Go to **nebcommfund.org** and click "Give to a Fund."

Lunch & Learn

NCF's Lunch & Learn series is offered on the second Wednesday of the month. Log in and join your peers in exploring topics important to the work you are doing in your community. Each 30-minute session is designed to give you a powerful idea to ponder and act upon.

For more information and to register, visit **nebcommfund.org/events**

Miles of Smiles Brings Quality Care into the Classroom

Access and affordability stand as two of the biggest barriers between rural Americans and quality healthcare. Dental care has long been the focus of the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD), and a recent partnership with Nebraska Community Foundation is providing area children with high quality, consistent care.

Miles of Smiles, one of NCDHD's primary programs, is sending Public Health Authorized Registered Dental Hygienists into area schools to conduct oral screening examinations and apply a fluoride varnish, which decreases cavity development by as much as 38%. Beyond that, hygienists are gaining invaluable face time with young Nebraskans to educate them about the importance of good dental hygiene.

For years, Rock County has boasted some of the highest student participation



Student Avalon Quick receives an oral exam and fluoride treatment from hygienist Diane Alden in a Rock County Public Schools classroom in Basset.

rates in the region. This is largely thanks to retired school secretary Jean Fuhrman, whose passion for the program stems from her own childhood experiences with intermittent access to dental care.

While a \$15 donation is requested for children, there is no fee to participate in the program and children are never denied services.

Recently, NCF connected the Brown County Foundation Fund with representatives from Miles of Smiles. As a result, the Fund has committed \$2,500 to the program for the next five years. Perhaps more importantly, Miles of Smiles now has the support and advocacy of a group of dedicated and vocal leaders with their eyes to the future. ■

Ag Gifts a Tax-Wise Option

More farmers and ranchers are considering ag commodities as a preferred method of giving, especially during an environment of changing tax implications. Pam and Mike Abbott,



Pam and Mike Abbott support the Keith County Foundation Fund with gifts of livestock. The couple is pictured at the 2015 Aksarben celebration in Omaha.

who raise cattle in Keith County, recently made this type of gift. Pam is vice chair of the Keith County Foundation Fund (KCFF).

"We welcome anything that will help our dollars go farther. Late last year, as the new tax law was being rolled out, the idea of charitable gifts of ag products peaked our interest. Using this method to both make a charitable gift and avoid taxable income is a no-brainer," Pam said.

She said NCF helped make the transfer of livestock to be sold for the benefit of KCFF simple. "Basically, all we did was sign a piece of paper, and the sale barn also found the process very easy."

KCFF is currently conducting a campaign to raise matching funds for a major challenge grant to its unrestricted endowment. "Mike and I wanted to make a larger gift than we would normally

make on an annual basis. So, the timing was perfect to participate by making a gift of our beef cattle."

Pam would advise people who are considering aspects of the new tax law to keep in mind the different charitable giving tools available. "I would encourage other producers to think about gifts of ag products. The hardest thing is to understand all the different charitable giving tools that are available and what's right for your particular situation. At Nebraska Community Foundation, they know and can review these with you," said Pam.

For information on gifts of ag commodities or other ways to give back to your hometown, contact Jim Gustafson, jgustafson@nebcommfound.org or (402) 323-7349. ■

Thanks to These Generous Donors Who Support Our Work

GIFTS RECEIVED JULY 1, 2017–JUNE 30, 2018

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

BACK TO OUR HOMETOWNS

NCF reserves the back page of our newsletter to share stories and insights from NCF volunteers who have chosen to move back to their hometown.



Left to right, Jami O'Neal, Michelle Schardt and Julie Deepe are among a growing number of people returning to their hometowns as adults.



Michelle Schardt is a Fund Advisory Committee member of the Deshler Community Fund. After graduating from UNL, she taught school before returning home to work with her husband and raise their children on the family farm. This summer her high school class of '93 celebrated its 25th anniversary. Michelle can count 11 individuals from her senior class of 25 who have moved back to the Deshler area. Why are so many young adults moving back to Deshler?

Julie Deepe, chair of the Deshler Community Fund, thinks it is because of the great school system and the safe and secure neighborhoods where children

can bike to the swimming pool on their own. The many summer sports programs and the new Jennifer Reinke Library are also a part of the quality of life that is drawing people back to Deshler (pop. 747) in south-central Nebraska.

Shortly after graduating from Joseph's School of Cosmetology, Julie built a new building on Main Street and operated her own hair styling business there for 10 years. Today the building is a medical clinic, and Julie is a customer service representative at Midwest Bank.

Julie values being close to her family and the trusting relationships she has with people in the community.

"When you're a teenager, you may feel that you need to get away. But as I grew up, I knew that this is where I needed to be," Julie said. "It is so important to give back to the community that has given you so much. They have educated you, given you your first job, and supported you. At some point you need to give back. Thankfully,

through our Deshler Community Fund, we now have the perfect avenue to keep our community strong."

Deshler Community Fund vice chair **Jami O'Neal** moved back to take a coveted teaching job in her hometown. But beyond that, she says she wanted to give her children the same chance she had to participate in so many opportunities, whether it be music, sports or drama. "In a larger school, you usually have to choose only one or two activities," she said.

These women are among a growing cohort of Nebraskans who left home to attend college or pursue a career, but never left behind the feeling of belonging. In 53 very rural Nebraska counties, the number of people in their 30s and 40s is growing. More and more, people are feeling at home in Greater Nebraska. ■