



Community Foundation: Here for Good

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By Roseanne Stone

Connecting people who care with causes that matter.

That's the short version of what the Community Foundation does. When I first started reading about the Foundation's work in newsletters and by word-of-mouth, my impression was they were primarily involved with scholarships, sprinkling in a couple of other interests. Now entering my seventh year on the board of directors and first as board chair, oh, how that impression has changed!

As I learned more it surprised me just how many areas, projects and issues in our community the Community Foundation is involved with. I was also surprised by the number of people impacted by the Foundation and the work being done.

Now with more than 235 charitable funds and almost two decades of working side-by-side with citizens and organizations here in town, we've been able to band the community together in more ways than ever to empower some wonderful programs and projects.

You may have seen our name pop up in the news recently. In the last few months, two donors who established funds at the Community Foundation recognized a need in the community to improve our collective approach to homelessness. After engaging with key stakeholders across the city, the Community Foundation and City of Springfield combined resources to establish and fund a full-time coordinator for the Heartland Continuum of Care. This position will be responsible for facilitating and coordinating the local system of shelters, services and housing that help people exit homelessness.

This particular endeavor perfectly encapsulates our mission -- Connecting people who care with causes that matter. We're not only looking to connect concerned citizens with individual issues they care about. We're here to identify critical community issues, assemble data around those issues, and convene people to drive impactful solutions. This is a group effort, all the way around.

Through my first six years on the board, I've taken great pride in the thoughtfulness and care the Community Foundation brings when addressing an issue. Whether it's improving kindergarten readiness for preschool children, preserving historic structures in Central Illinois, or ensuring a higher quality of life for senior citizens, establishing that bridge between needs and resources is done deliberately.



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What I'm most proud of over recent years is the increased scope of our work, along with the validation, trust and encouragement of our community. I feel people used to think of us as an organization that just gave away money. Now, I believe they also view us as an important community asset that can bring about positive change in our area. Such is the case with Innovate Springfield. After years of cultivating the right blend to help build a lasting building block for the future of Springfield, it's exciting to imagine what lies ahead with the University of Illinois Springfield.

In 2019, the Community Foundation's grantmaking topped \$2.8 million and total assets climbed to over \$40 million – a record-breaking year.

This is a responsibility we do not take lightly, as it is built on the shoulders of local people who want to make a difference. I am so proud to be a part of this organization. Our generous donors, dedicated staff and board of directors are truly a group of people passionate about the future of our community.

If your interest is piqued, if you are compelled to help make a difference locally, I encourage you to learn more about your Community Foundation and how you might get involved.

Roseanne Stone serves as chairperson of the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln's board of directors. Learn more about the Community Foundation at CFL.org.