



Ryders' philanthropy educated, thoughtful

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Figuring out where and how to make charitable contributions can sometimes be an overwhelming decision. Between the number of charities available and parsing through the services they provide is a lot to digest – you want to make sure your contribution is the most effective it can be.

That was something Peggy Ryder saw first-hand when serving on the Women for Women grant committee. Between learning about new organizations and reading about new initiatives from those she was familiar with, she saw how having those informed decisions can change from the first impression to reading the last word of an application.

“And sometimes what you didn’t think you would ever be interested in flies to number one,” Peggy said. “It certainly opens your eyes to the huge variety of options that exist that I had never heard of.”



Tom and Peggy Ryder

It’s not for a lack of being involved. Tom and Peggy Ryder are familiar with all sorts of nonprofits around town, having served on boards that include historic sites (Dana-Thomas House), education (Friends of Lincoln Library), the arts (Hoogland Center for the Arts), and basic needs (Washington Street Mission). But serving on the Women for Women grant committee, including as its chair, showed Peggy just how many organizations are in the area and the services they provide.

That’s part of the reason the Ryders set up a donor-advised fund through the Community Foundation. It provides them the ability to give to all kinds of organizations, including those they’re learning about for the first time.

Tom, a former State Representative, also appreciates the way they can collaborate with the Community Foundation to make the most informed decisions of where to give.

“For me, the reasons to do it – first of all, it’s an organized way of giving,” Tom said. “Second, it’s highly convenient. You can put money into the fund when you have the money, and then you can grant the money when the need arises.

“And it’s intentional. We have decided to be, and in the future continue to be, more intentional about our giving so it makes a difference.”

Intentionality is how the Ryders made their way to Springfield from Jerseyville. After Tom’s time serving in the state legislature, the Ryders moved to the capital city partly because of the opportunities to get involved. There were connections, like the one Tom made with Karen Hasara in the state legislature, that led to Peggy’s involvement with Women for Women – an organization within the Community Foundation that former Mayor Hasara helped create.

That willingness to get involved and give back comes from a variety of places.

“I think part of it comes from being a first-born; responsibility is my middle name,” Peggy said. “(Tom and I are) both straight-arrow people. It’s partly birth-order, partly Midwestern roots that teach us to give back. It’s part of the upbringing my parents instilled in me.”

And that philanthropic spirit is something the Ryders are passing down to their children as well. Perhaps most creative of all, Peggy is drawing on her experience from the Women for Women grant committee to create a blueprint of her own. She’s hoping to have their children and spouses present their case on behalf of an organization wishing to receive a grant, helping instill a mindset of thoughtful, informed philanthropy.

“Our children are generous to their churches and other ways as well,” Tom said. “This will be an additional avenue. We’re fortunate with what we have and what we can contribute, so we look forward to seeing our children continue that pattern.”

To learn more about donor-advised funds or Women for Women, please contact the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431 or visit us at CFL.org.