



Join Young Philanthropists and Invest in our Community's Future

By Dan Pietroburgo

The number of items to weigh when putting down your roots, whether it's establishing a family, a small business, the beginning of a long career (or all of the above) can be overwhelming.

You want to make sure the right school system is nearby, that the local economy is strong, that all the many surrounding pieces that your life will touch are trending in a positive direction. You want to live somewhere that makes you happy.

Through Young Philanthropists, we're looking to help bolster that quality of life in a couple of ways. The most important part of which is creating opportunities for children in our area. Each year, Young Philanthropists members donate to the Future Fund at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, and local nonprofits are invited to apply for grant funds to support evidence-based programs that help local children.



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Last year, we awarded \$10,000 to Matheny-Withrow Elementary School to launch Camp Kindergarten, a three-week readiness initiative held in the summer for children entering kindergarten. Most students registered for kindergarten at Matheny-Withrow have no preschool experience. For children who don't have advantages and are not ready socially or physically for a seven-hour school day, haven't fulfilled the medical requirements, developed fine/gross motor skills, etc., the learning curve is incredibly steep, and they can fall behind quickly.

Camp Kindergarten aims to begin closing that gap.

We're excited about Camp Kindergarten and its potential, and it's an example of a program that very few of us could have underwritten on our own. By pooling our donations and growing the Future Fund, we've been able to award \$89,000 to local organizations and build a permanent endowment that will be here to help children forever.

Empowering local youth and children is a worthy cause in and of itself, but we also want to build camaraderie among members. Young Philanthropists hosts three events throughout the year so members can socialize, see places in the community they might not have known about before, and create new bonds and friendships with other like-minded people.

We just held our kick-off event by taking in the music of the Levitt AMP Music Series – it will run for the next eight weeks every Thursday night! – and we'll have two more events this year. We really hope you can join us. Each member makes a \$125 contribution annually, all of which goes directly into the Future Fund for grants. We've said it before, that's less than the annual price of Netflix.

Make Sangamon County a better place for our kids and our community as a whole. Join Young Philanthropists today to create an even better tomorrow.

Dan Pietroburgo is the chair of the Young Philanthropists Steering Committee chair. To join or learn more, visit CFL.org, call 217.789.4431 or email info@cfl.org