

keith county foundation fund

Looking Forward by Giving Back

In this issue...

	Page
Editorial: Why Should We.....	2
Editorial: Paxton Fire Dept.....	3
New Library Opens Its Doors .	3
Homework Gap Grant.....	4
Youth Philanthropy Project ...	5
Brule Community Hall	6
Scholarship Winners	6
Memorials & Gifts	7
Collister Park Splash Pad.....	7

KCFF Advisory Committee

- Pam Abboff..... Chair
- Angie Kolste Vice Chair
- Sue Schilz..... Secretary
- Teri Elmshaeuser... Treasurer
- Lorena Beckius
- Craig Draucker
- Eric Duhachek
- Ron Hollman
- Jon Holzfaster
- Jacob Hovendick
- Angie Kolste
- Mark Perlinger
- Mike Peiko
- Ken Snyder



info@keithcountyfoundation.org

President's Message

Hello from Keith County!



After four years as Chair of our local Fund Advisory Committee, I will be stepping down this summer. Pam Abbott will assume the duties of Chairperson, with Angie Kolste stepping in as Vice Chair. I will remain on the Fund Advisory Committee and take on various Committee roles starting this fall.

The last four years have been transformative for our Fund. In 2017, we were selected for the Sherwood Challenge, which was a matching grant opportunity to greatly increase the amount of our Endowment. Our Fund raised over \$500,000, which will be matched at \$250,000, bringing our Legacy Endowment to nearly \$2,000,000. Separately from that, in 2019, we received an anonymous gift of over \$8,000,000, which has significantly impacted our ability to make a difference in Keith County. Our total endowed funds are now over \$10,000,000!

With the help of the Nebraska Community Foundation, we have spent considerable time learning about the demographics in Keith County, and how our Fund can have the biggest impact in our communities. We have shared the demographic information through community outreach meetings, where we discussed the information and learned what it means for Keith County. Seeing people come together and share their vision has been a rewarding experience. We find ourselves playing the role of facilitator, where we present the demographic information, start the discussion, and then sit back and listen to the community's input.

I hope everyone has been coping well with the impact of the pandemic. We hope to get back to normal soon. Stay safe!

Thank you,
Eric Duhachek, Chair
Keith County Foundation Fund



K.C. Belitz: Why Should We Just “Recover” When We Might “Discover” Instead?



“Seven in 10 teachers assign homework that requires access to broadband, but one in three households do not subscribe to broadband service. Where those numbers overlap is a new digital divide – call it the ‘homework gap.’” That quote is from Jessica Rosenworcel of the Federal Communications Commission in 2016, and that’s where the phrase “homework gap” comes from. If you hadn’t heard the phrase before this spring, it’s likely you’ve heard it now. The closing of school buildings has dramatically highlighted the difficulty students experience completing homework remotely. Maybe it’s lack of access or the cost of high-speed internet, lack of a device, or simply a learner that doesn’t engage as easily while remote. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor and the Alice DeVoe Donor-Advised Fund, an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation, NCF has awarded grants to be matched with local philanthropic dollars to narrow the homework gap in Nebraska hometowns. A statewide committee of educators selected these “Bridging the Homework Gap” grants to local NCF affiliated funds who will, in turn, support 31 school districts. Among those, I’m pleased to share that local school districts being supported

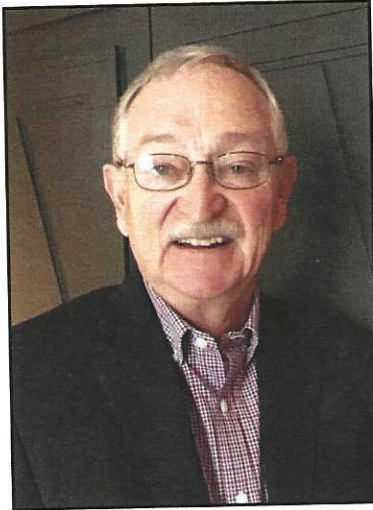
include Columbus Public Schools, Lakeview, David City Public, Boone Central, Riverside, St. Michael’s, St. Edward, and Newman Grove! You should be proud of how innovative and committed these local school districts have been through this crisis, as was indicated by the projects they are going to use these funds to accomplish. While there are still many unknowns, I wanted to share a couple examples of how local schools are using this opportunity to do something really positive for students. Columbus Public Schools will use a portion of their grant funds to provide training to CPS teachers to address the emotional health of students as they return to school in the fall. The selection committee appreciated CPS recognizing the emotional needs of students, as this will be a real factor in students being able to learn. Whether the fall semester starts in-person, remote, or a combination of both, there are going to be social and emotional health issues that teachers will have to address with their students.

Lakeview is using some of this funding to help them be adaptable to improve outcomes for summer school students. As their staff prepares multiple scenarios, this commitment allows them to think about investments to engage more students in-person in ways they couldn’t otherwise. Now that’s a great example of innovative thinking, a few dollars, and commitment from the school leading to better potential educational outcomes! Newman Grove is using the funds to provide personal support for students and families who have had tech challenges. As more and more schoolwork, especially homework, has moved online in the past five years, the educational discrepancy between students with technology at their fingertips at home and those who lack access has grown dramatically. Importantly, this problem existed long before we found ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic. Since mid-March, every public-school student in Nebraska moved to remote learning. Students learned via platforms like Zoom and YouTube. Communication with teachers went virtual. COVID-19 has widened the homework gap into a whole new realm of complexity and challenge. For each of these issues, there are a variety of solutions and those are reflected in these “Bridging the Homework Gap” grants. Based on the experiences of Nebraska Community Foundation over the past 25 years, we believe this community-centric philanthropic approach could lead to numerous innovative local solutions which help not only in a crisis but, in fact, improve learning for the long-term. And we are optimistic this approach will help to mobilize local leadership to take on and solve this issue with more information, confidence and courage.

Congrats to the local schools who are putting these dollars to work! It’s another great example of the power of the network of NCF, local affiliated funds, and other local assets coming together to improve things in greater Nebraska.

— K.C. Belitz is the Chief Operating Officer of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

Ken Snyder: Paxton Fire Department Needs Our Help



The Paxton Fire Department needs the community's help in procuring a new power assisted stretcher!

Millions of Americans across the country are beginning to receive their Economic Impact Payments, just one element of Congress' expansive Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, better known as the CARES Act.

This one-time direct cash payment will provide \$1,200 to those making \$75,000 a year or less. Married couples will receive up to \$2,400, and those with children will receive an additional \$500 per child (up to age 17).

For business owners struggling to stay afloat, those who have been furloughed or laid off, or have contracted or are caring for family members with coronavirus, these checks will help alleviate the many stresses compounding on American families as we navigate these uncharted waters.

But for the luckiest among us — those who are comfortably retired, still employed, still healthy (people like myself) — I urge you to consider reinvesting that money, or a portion of it, into the charitable causes and communities closest to you. My wife and I are electing to support a couple of local charitable causes with our stimulus check, among them the Paxton

Fire Department, the Keith County Community Foundation Fund Unrestricted Endowment, the Women's Resource Center and The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

In Nebraska, the past couple of years have been punctuated by crises and disasters we could not have anticipated. Last spring, it was catastrophic floods impacting dozens of communities, thousands of homes, small businesses, farms, ranches, schools, healthcare facilities, and more.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has us all feeling uncertain about the future.

But one certainty we can always count on? Change.

Importantly, donating your stimulus check isn't just beneficial to your community — it benefits you, the individual making the gift. Within the CARES Act, there are several charitable tax provisions that incentivize charitable giving. They include:

1. A new deduction for charitable donors who do not itemize when filing their tax returns. If you do not itemize but make a gift to charity, you will be allowed to take a special tax deduction, up to \$300, to reduce your tax liability.
2. An increase in the deduction limit up to 100% of a donor's annual income for cash gifts (previously the deduction was capped at 60% of annual income). If you make a gift you will be able to deduct more this year.

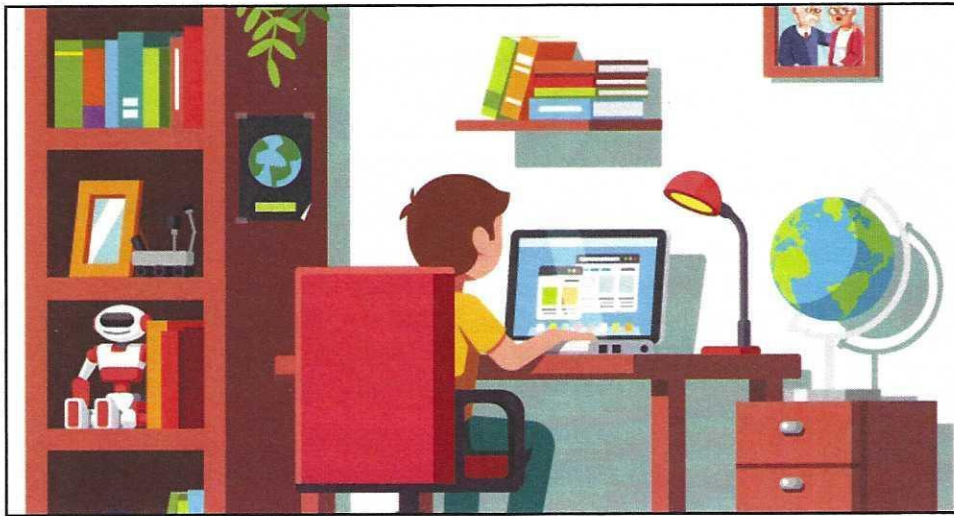
Even in the age of physical distancing, the power of community will get us through. If you need your stimulus check to make ends meet, by all means, that was the intended purpose. But for the fortunate ones among us, think of this as an opportunity to do your part in building a stronger, more resilient community, better prepared for the next unanticipated event the future inevitably holds. Please strongly consider paying it forward and sharing all or a portion of your economic impact payment with your community. Join us in helping our community!

New Kathleen Lute Public Library Opens Its Doors

The new Kathleen Lute Public Library opened its doors with restricted hours and services July 13. Librarian Kendra Caskey says, "We are so excited to be able to welcome the public to this beautiful new facility. Some things are still a work in progress and we'll have new shelving arriving in the fall, but it's great to be able to offer in-person service. We can't thank our donors enough. Your support has gotten us to the finish line with this project." The library will be open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and they will also continue to offer curbside pick-up, the virtual summer reading program for children and adults, and other virtual learning opportunities.



KCFF Receives Homework Gap Grant



The Keith County Foundation Fund and Perkins County Community Foundation Fund both received grants from the Nebraska Community Foundation to help decrease the homework gap.

Thirty-one Greater Nebraska schools are receiving grants totaling more than \$263,000 through affiliated funds of Nebraska Community Foundation, thanks to an anonymous donor and the Alice DeVoe Donor-Advised Fund, an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation.

The opportunity for funding was made available exclusively to affiliated funds in the NCF network and required a one-to-one local funding match.

The Keith County Community Fund will receive \$10,000 to purchase Chromebooks and other devices.

The \$10,000 grant will be matched by the local foundation and other community partners, according to KCFF Vice Chair Pam Abbott. The anticipated \$20,000 will purchase 66 Chromebooks and necessary software for early elementary learners, Abbott said. "Currently, we have received \$6,500 toward our match and our goal is to complete it by the end of July."

"Based on the homework gap, we realize that innovative educational opportunities must not be sacrificed when and where we have the means to support them," Abbott said. "We hope this support will position our school and students well in the present online learning scenario, but will also help in the post COVID-19 environment."

Our neighboring area foundation, the Perkins County Community Foundation, also received \$5,000 to purchase hard-drives, laptops and internet hotspots.

"The homework gap has long existed, but COVID-19 has exacerbated the divide between Nebraska students," Nebraska Community Foundation President and CEO Jeff Yost said. "These grants support a wide range of methods to bridge the homework gap, including computer equipment and software, internet access, staffing for summer school, individualized instruction for at-risk and special education students, transportation, and professional development for trauma-informed practice."

Of the 23 applications received, all were granted full funding by a volunteer Fund Advisory Committee whose members have vast experience in education and represent communities of all sizes across the state.

"We are so grateful to the anonymous donor and the Alice DeVoe Donor-Advised Fund for their generosity and vision," Yost said. "This is going to make a tremendous difference in the lives of many, many Greater Nebraskans."

Headquartered at Lincoln, the Nebraska Community Foundation serves communities, donors and organizations by providing financial management, strategic development, education and training to a statewide network of 1,500 volunteers serving 260 communities. In the last five years, 44,476 contributions have been made to Nebraska Community Foundation and its affiliated funds. Since 1994, Nebraska Community Foundation has reinvested \$355 million in Nebraska's people and places.

Youth Philanthropy Project

Project Coordinators: Barb Jeffres & Mary Jensen

By Mary Jensen

Barb and I have been in education for many years. What made it fun and engaging was the creative aspect, taking the sometimes-mundane curriculum and turning it into a vibrant learning experience through plays, field trips, and projects. We did not stay within the confines of the building, but extended opportunities throughout the community and beyond. Thankfully, we had administrators who supported our ideas.

Raising trout from egg to fry with the help of the Nebraska Game and Parks taught the students the fragility of our water and the effects of warming and pollution. What started as an economics lesson, the Progress Valentine Shop, raised enough money through the years for the kids to paint a huge US map on the playground, add larger than life-size figures in the gym, and purchase benches for the playground. The Get In Shape and Vote project took the kids into the community to encourage employers to allow their employees to leave work and vote. They also decorated the handibus that picked up eligible High School students, escorting them to the polls. Taking a Social Studies lesson and turning it into a play to perform for parents and other classes brought history alive. Barb and I have seen and experienced time and again the 'can do' exuberance of students when involved in learning by helping others.

After leaving our respective careers in education we became aware of a student driven philanthropy project via board member, Ken Snyder. The project challenges kids, grade 3-12, to develop a plan that will have a positive impact on the citizens of Keith County. Up to 10 contest winners could receive \$1000 each for needed expenditures to complete their project. Through this project youth can use their creativity, compassion, and love of community to make a difference. The Youth Philanthropy Contest will kick off this fall, culminating the following fall in 2021. At that time, the students will have an opportunity to showcase their philanthropic projects and report on their success and the impact their project had. We anticipate a smaller group this year, but as teachers and students learn of the opportunity, we believe it will grow.

Capitalizing on the natural confidence and enthusiasm students have, we think this will be a great opportunity for our students, instilling a 'giving back' behavior.



Youth Philanthropy Contest

For the love of the community

Brule Community Hall Improvements

The community of Brule is working toward the completion of a major renovation of the Brule Community Hall. Thanks to an \$18,000 grant from the Keith County Foundation Fund and other contributions from the Brule Lions and Brule Villagers Clubs, the renovation is expected to be complete by June 1. Workers will finish up a complete renovation of the main hall, which will feature all new lighting, walls, and flooring. The door to the facility was changed to incorporate a window, in order that those manning the door could see out to help those who might not be able to open it on their own.

The kitchen in the facility received two new stoves, a new ceiling and venting above the cooking area. A spokesman for the project said the remodeling effort should be complete by June 1, and pending directed health measures regarding the coronavirus, community members plan to host some type of an event in order that the public can see, in-person, the completed facility renovation.

Scholarships Awarded

Berryman Scholarship

The Berryman Scholarship provides scholarships for post-secondary education. Applicants must reside in Keith County, be either a non-traditional student pursuing post-secondary education following a break in his/her education or a traditional student continuing directly from high school or post-secondary education, and he/she must use the scholarship to attend a public accredited community college or an accredited degree-granting college or university to pursue a continuing education course, a degree, or a certificated program.

This year's recipients are: Samantha Byrd, Debra Cleveland and Dominic Mayer



Samantha Byrd



Debra Cleveland



Dominic Mayer

Hermance Scholarship

The Hermance Scholarship provides students in Keith County scholarships for post-secondary education.

This year's recipient is: Cora Lowery



Cora Lowery



Charitable Giving does not Require Great Wealth

It requires generosity of spirit – the desire to share what you have for the benefit of others. So many of us have a desire to help in other ways – the challenge is how to best realize it.

To Make Your Legacy Contribution!
 Make check payable to:
 KCFF
 PO Box 104
 Ogallala, NE 69153

Memorials & Gifts To Our Legacy

Memorials, Honors & Contributions received since October 1, 2019

In Memory of

In Memory of Gerry & Rosemary Giesert
 John & Kay Gamet, Ogallala

In Memory of
 Bart & Angela Kolste, Ogallala

In Memory of Geraldine Mears
 Kathryn Elliot, Denver, CO
 (correction from previous newsletter)

Legacy Endowment

Rebecca Plate, Ogallala
 Michael & Shelly McQuillan, Ogallala
 Clark & Pamela Morrow Trust, Los Angeles, CA

Unity Project: Collister Park Splash Pad

By Lore Beckius



We are so excited for what the future holds! Now that everything is getting better, we are ready to get back in the game and make this happen. We are thankful for the support of the community, amazing donors, and various organizations that are helping us with this project. We would like to push it a little harder to make sure we can raise all the money to make sure everything is ready for the summer of 2021. We thought it was important to support our community during COVID and postpone our activities until things improve. Therefore, our fundraiser was placed on hold and we canceled the golf tournament we had set up for July. As of right now at the bank, we have \$163,010.47, and in pledges for this year we have \$83,300. We still need to raise \$145,689.53, and we will be applying for more grants, we will be adding collection boxes around town, do an online silent auction, see when we can have the golf tournament with Eric Crouch and more is in the works.

If you would like to help with the Colister Park renovation that consists of new playground equipment and the addition of a splash pad where all the kids in the area could go have fun and develop social and emotional skills, please send a check to: Keith County

Foundation Fund, with Splash Pad on the memo line. Mail to P.O. Box 104, Ogallala, NE 69153.


Please help us to make this project possible. Follow us on Facebook for more information and pictures about the project: www.facebook.com/UnityProjectColister





Keith County Foundation Fund
P.O. Box 104 • Ogallala, NE 69153



 Like us on Facebook!
Or visit us on the web at keithcountyfoundation.org

Keith County Foundation Fund is an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation, a Section 501(c)(3) organization.

Our VISION

Enhance Keith County's ability to grow as a community where people want to live, work, learn, have fun and prosper.

Our MISSION

Provide leadership: that promotes collaboration, cooperation and partnerships within the Keith County community.

Encourage charitable giving: to build endowments and other community-focused funds.

Provide stewardship: in partnership with Nebraska Community Foundation that provides guardianship and investment of funds.

Make impactful grants: addressing community needs and opportunities through high-impact, sustainable grant-making.

KCFF Donation Form

Business/Organization/Group: _____

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to make this donation anonymously.

Optional: This gift is made: _____ In memory of _____ In honor of _____
(Name) _____



The Keith County Community Foundation Fund is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
All monetary gifts are tax deductible.
Mail to: KCFF
P.O. Box 104, Ogallala, NE 69153