



NORTH DAKOTA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

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North Dakota Community Foundation Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Bismarck, ND - The North Dakota Community Foundation (NDCF) celebrated its 40th anniversary on April 23 with a banquet for its current and former board members, community leaders, and major donors. The organization is also planning several socials across the state for its hundreds of volunteers. The events are sponsored by the organization's investment advisors. NDCF now manages approximately \$70 million in charitable resources for communities, charities and citizens across North Dakota.

"Our mission is to improve the quality of life for North Dakota's citizens through charitable giving and promoting philanthropy," said Kevin Dvorak, President and CEO of NDCF since 1995. "We accomplish that mission primarily through the management of charitable endowment funds on behalf of communities and charities all across the state of North Dakota."

Since its inception, NDCF has awarded over 26,500 grants totaling more than \$62 million for projects and programs all across the state.

History

NDCF was incorporated in 1976 by leaders in various North Dakota communities as a mechanism to keep charitable dollars in North Dakota where they could benefit state residents. A feasibility study funded by the Otto Bremer Foundation indicated that a state-wide community foundation could be successful and the steering committee proceeded with articles of incorporation.

Former Governor William Guy served as its first Executive Director and T. A. Solheim of Minot served as the first Chairman of the Board of Directors. NDCF was one of the first state-wide community foundations. Its structure has since been replicated in South Dakota, Montana, and several other western states.

Support for the fledgling nonprofit corporation came from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Northwest Area Foundation, the Bush Foundation, FirstBank (now US Bank), Norwest Bank (now Wells Fargo), the North Dakota Bremer Banks and the Charles Steward Mott Foundation.

"That early support from other foundations was crucial to our success," said Dvorak.

Community Endowment Funds

NDCF's signature program is its community endowment fund program, where individual communities can have their own foundation under the umbrella of NDCF. The endowment funds are permanent, flexible, charitable resources for the communities. NDCF supports the work of the local affiliates and handles all the fiduciary and legal reporting requirements. Each fund has an Advisory Committee made up of local volunteers, who lead fundraising efforts and makes grant recommendations for their community's fund.

The program started in 1980 with the Carrington Community Endowment Fund and continued the next year with just a handful of funds – the Bremer Banks who encouraged their communities to start funds by offering a \$10,000 matching grant. Minot, Breckenridge/Wahpeton, Grafton, Casselton, Rugby, Minnewaukan, Park River, Richardton, and Lisbon started permanent endowment funds with NDCF in the 1980s.

The program has grown consistently over the years and NDCF currently manages 62 local community endowment funds all across the state of North Dakota.

“It’s amazing to see what happens in a community when it has an endowment fund,” says Amy Warnke, Development Director at NDCF since 1999. “Residents start to tackle bigger projects and you definitely see changes in the quality of life for the area.”

One of the best examples of the advantage of having a community endowment fund is the Clarence Johnson & Eunice Iwen Community Foundation for Arthur, ND. Established at NDCF in 2005 with a gift from their estates, this fund has assets of approximately \$6 million. It generates about \$250,000 every year in grant money for the local committee to use for projects and programs that improve the quality of life for area residents.

Included in the list of projects that have been funded with this grant money are a new \$1 million gymnasium for Northern Cass School, the renovation of the bathrooms at the local Good Samaritan home, a new multi-purpose trail between Arthur and Hunter, ND, a new vehicle for the Arthur Fire Protection District, a variety of community beautification projects and celebrations, and a scholarship fund for graduates of the school district. Arthur, North Dakota has an approximate population of 350 people.

“The fund that Clarence established with his and Eunice’s estate will continue to provide this grant money to Arthur every year, forever,” said Dvorak. “That is the incredible power of endowment.”

Scholarships

NDCF also manages over 150 scholarship funds that benefit North Dakota students. In 2015, NDCF awarded \$706,000 in scholarships to over 350 North Dakota students.

One of the most successful scholarship funds is the Rupert J. Rehberg Scholarship fund for McKenzie County students, established in 2006 with a gift in Rupert’s will. The fund has granted more than \$1.1 million in scholarships since its inception.

“Rupert never had any children,” said Dvorak, who met with Rehberg to discuss his desires for the scholarship fund many years ago. “But because of his gift, he has helped close to 200 North Dakota kids pay for college.”

NDCF also manages endowment funds for charities, donor-advised funds for individuals, and non-endowment funds that are for specific, short-term projects. The Northwood Hockey Boosters Club established a non-endowment fund at NDCF to help get their new hockey arena built. Donors to the project received a tax-deduction for their gift because NDCF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

“The People of North Dakota’s Foundation”

NDCF is guided by a 15-member Board of Directors, comprised of volunteers from across the state. 115 individuals, from 44 different North Dakota communities, have served as directors since the organization’s inception, serving three-years terms with the option of a second three-year term. They are required to leave the board after their second term.

“This is truly the people of North Dakota’s foundation,” said Dvorak. “Our governing body represents that well – our directors include both men and women living all across North Dakota, who represent various professions and different age groups.”

Along with Dvorak, there are six other full-time employees who carry out the work of the foundation, including three Development Directors who work with volunteers in the local communities to establish and grow their endowment funds. NDCF has offices in Bismarck, Grand Forks, and Dickinson.

For more information about NDCF and its programs, visit www.NDCF.net.

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Caption for attached photo: NDCF Board members review grant applications during their meeting in the fall of 1999 in Bismarck. Pictured left to right: Orlin Backes from Minot, Russell Stegman of Cavalier, Ray Hoffman of Bismarck, Frank Keogh from Williston, Linda Steve of Dickinson, and Rita Staloch of Minnewaukan.

Caption for attached photos: NDCF grants have helped fund thousands of projects in North Dakota communities over the years including theatre improvements in Park River, turnout gear for the Wing Rural Fire Department, new football uniforms in Tioga, and a Lucas CPR machine for the community ambulance in Beach, ND.