

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

## 20 YEARS OF GIVING

BY BARBARA MANTZ DRAKE



For Peoria, it really was the worst of times.

Caterpillar, Inc. was laying off long-time workers. The distillery and brewery were gone. As unemployment reached 20 percent, people walked into banks and handed over the keys to homes they could not afford to keep or to sell. Two headlines in the Journal Star pretty much said it all: “Where 27,000 jobs just disappeared” and “The ripple effect: no jobs, no sales.” The newspaper’s eight-day series was optimistically entitled “The Road Back.”

The series was published in April of 1985, eight months before another group of optimists traveled to Springfield to file incorporating papers for a charitable foundation that would hold and invest community assets, using the earnings to do community good. As their leader, Edward W. Siebert, put it in an interview 22 years later, “There was nothing that said, from a community standpoint, this gives a potential donor an opportunity to, under one roof, make a commitment to the community at large.” And there was no way – short of forming their own foundations – people with large estates could bequeath them to their community.

Since December 27, 1985, the Community Foundation of Central Illinois has pointed the way. This is its story.

## EARLY EFFORTS FAIL

Franklin Renner, retired Peoria attorney and former city councilman, recalls trying unsuccessfully in the late 1970s to sell city leaders on the idea of a community foundation. In a 2007 interview, Renner said he was aware the city had no broad pool of private money to fund worthy projects, and no natural depository for people who wanted to leave their estates to the community. Community foundations filled those roles in some 200 locales, and he believed one could here.

Renner talked to a number of local people, aroused some interest, drew up legal documents. Donna Haerr, who would become the local Foundation’s first executive director, also was involved. She recalls looking at foundations in Cleveland and Cincinnati and being “so excited about it.” Cleveland is the home of the nation’s first community foundation, established in 1914.

But worries about the effects on existing charitable organizations proved too big a hurdle, Renner said, and he gave up.

Then hard times hit. Businesses left. And Peoria-area leaders started worrying about the future, not just of charitable support but of the community itself.

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TAKES THE LEAD

In 1983 the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce asked nine business and civic leaders to form a task force that would “identify critical issues facing the community and a method for addressing them.” In early 1984 the members recommended establishing a Community Improvement Committee to implement its proposals. Among them was “a long-term plan for funding of essential social services.” How to do that would fall to a subcommittee chaired by Anne Fox, executive director of the Red Cross. Here are key paragraphs from the subcommittee’s draft, dated September 19, 1984:

“From a funding perspective, Peoria is a changed and changing community. Historically, Peoria-area firms have been a significant source of continuing and new funds for community-wide programs. However, several have been affected by changed business conditions, and others have left the area. Taking their place may be other firms with no tradition of giving and no staffs to administer contributions programs. Consequently, Caterpillar and the Heart of Illinois United Way remain the chief private-sector funding sources. Nevertheless, needs continue to grow with increasing competition for limited resources.

“The subcommittee believes what’s needed are vehicles that can attract other resources and broaden the base of giving in the Peoria area. One such vehicle is a community foundation.”

The subcommittee recommended a feasibility study to “determine the potential of a community foundation in the Peoria area.” That study was already well underway by March 27, 1985, when the Chamber issued a White Paper endorsing the subcommittee’s findings.

## THE FOUNDING YEARS

### Ed Siebert gets a mission – and help

Edward W. Siebert's employer, Caterpillar Inc., was one of the two "chief, private-sector funding sources" referred to in the Chamber report. Siebert ran the Caterpillar Foundation that was the source of much of that support. In a 2007 interview, he said, "Caterpillar more or less encouraged me to take the lead and see ... if (a community foundation) was worth pursuing.

"The idea was not to come up with some competitive fundraising thing; it was to be an endowment, a community endowment...In other words, you would start to get people who didn't have a very precise idea how they wanted to leave their estates or support their community activities... Many people already had a pretty good idea, but there were a lot of people who really didn't, and they also didn't have any opportunity of setting up a fund of their own unless they wanted to create their own foundation. So this was to provide another mechanism for people...in their own philanthropy in the community."

Siebert said it took "about a year of poking around and talking to people" before the steering committee he led decided to move ahead. That committee consisted of representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Peoria Park District, United Way, Peoria Area Arts and Sciences Council, Junior League, CILCORP, Caterpillar, Bradley University and Forest Park Foundation. He identified Lew Burger, retired LeTourneau Westinghouse president, and Bill Rutherford, executive director of the Forest Park Foundation, as most deeply involved.

"Lew was very enthusiastic about the whole idea, and so he just stands out as head and shoulders above anybody else as far as being interested," Siebert said. As for Rutherford, "He said, 'yeah, do it,' so he incorporated it for us."

Under Siebert's direction, the steering committee continued meeting through the spring of 1986, turning for advice to representatives of the Council on Foundations and two Midwestern foundations.

### THE FOUNDATION MEETS, ELECTS, TELLS THE COMMUNITY

On November 20, 1986, at Wildlife Prairie Park, Siebert convened the first official meeting of the Peoria Area Community Foundation. (The name was changed in 2002 to the Community Foundation of Central Illinois.) The intent, leaders said, was to help donors, recipients and the community.

The November 21 Journal Star quoted Lew Burger as saying, "There isn't any question that this will be a successful venture." In a next-day story, Burger said the Foundation could prevent problems such as those which occurred when a Metamora woman left her \$1.4 million

estate to her community. It took four years and a court ruling to determine who controlled the money.

At that meeting, the first Board of Directors – largely recruited by Burger "because he knew all these people very well," Siebert said – was elected. Burger was chosen president, and 30 other community leaders were named to a governing board. Start-up commitments totaling \$173,500 were announced. The money provided operating funds.

It has been previously reported that Peoria's was the third community foundation established in Illinois. That is not true. An Internet check of incorporation dates of other foundations in the state determined that at least six, and possibly more, were already in place.

### EARLY GOING IS TOUGH

Lew Burger's certainty notwithstanding, progress was difficult and success by no means certain. Siebert likened the Community Foundation to "a little baby that was going to die any minute unless you nurtured it with something." Key among the difficulties was persuading backers of other community organizations that this group would not take money away from them.

"It was not something that was a darling right at the beginning, far from it, because it was viewed as a competitor, no matter how much we talked about it," said Siebert, who succeeded Burger as president. "It was kind of an uphill battle, you know, in the early stages."

Lynn Landes was asked by Burger to join the original board because she was extensively involved in community arts programs. In a 2007 interview, Landes said she instantly grasped the Foundation's potential to help arts organizations, which got no United Way funding.

"I know what a struggle it is to support these activities and how they do it," she said. "I think that a lot of non-profit community services...have this same problem, and I think there needs to be something in place that is going to help these things survive. And in Peoria there really wasn't anything. I mean, they would have their annual fund drives, or Caterpillar certainly was a great supporter and some of the other industries. But there really wasn't an organization that a single organization could go to...I thought it was something that was very important for a community to have."

Some arts organizations embraced the Community Foundation immediately, Landes said, but others "saw us as competition for funds... They did not see it as support, but that's what it was. It was a concept that they could not manage to get for a while. I think they have it now, but it took a long time to get it."

Landes said some bankers and lawyers saw the new Community Foundation as competition for the estate-planning work they did. From them came "enormous resistance... I would say for three or four years we struggled just to be an entity at all."



John Sahn, a CILCORP vice president at the time, succeeded Siebert as Community Foundation president in 1990. He was its third leader and the first who was not among the founders. He got involved because CILCORP, which supported the Foundation, asked him to.

In a 2007 interview, Sahn agreed with Landes that there were those in the community who worried “what it could do to change the landscape that may have been very favorable to their individual charitable interests, their favorite projects.” Part of the concern stemmed from the economic turmoil of the 1980s, which had put considerable pressure on healthy businesses and individuals to be more generous. Some “felt threatened by yet the presence of another organization with its hand out,” Sahn said. Further complicating the task were objections from those who “didn’t quite see the role, didn’t see the need for an intermediary, which is what the Community Foundation is.” Sahn said he views this as something “to be expected, and I don’t believe it was detrimental to the organization.”

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT BUILDS SLOWLY

To ease these concerns, the young Foundation’s leaders put together slide presentations for civic groups. “The thing about it we kept pointing out is we’re not pioneering,” Siebert said. “Two hundred other cities (Siebert’s is an underestimate; there were more than 300 by this time) in the United States have already got this, you know. It’s not like this is a whole new idea. It had nothing untested, and some of them were huge and some were doing big things in these communities.” Siebert said he also argued that individuals with sizeable estates might bequeath them elsewhere without a readily accessible vehicle for leaving them in central Illinois.

All of this was done by volunteers, with equipment that was “begged, borrowed and stolen,” in Siebert’s words. Even the first small office in the Jefferson Bank Building was a loaner.

Sahn said Bill Rutherford’s advice to establish a large governing board, which served an advisory and public relations capacity, proved sound. Those invited to be governors were “community leaders throughout, some of the best and brightest in town.” He likened their role to “shareholders,” helping give Peorians at large a stake in the Foundation. (Having served its purpose, the governing board was dissolved in 2001.)

### ‘A PERIOD OF REFINEMENT’

#### Donna Haerr becomes first executive

A significant moment in the Foundation’s history occurred in 1988 when Donna Haerr became its first executive director. Until then, Ed Siebert described the operation as “catch-as-catch-can.” The Foundation had \$2,540.39 cash on hand.

“I think a great deal of the fact it continued to develop is Donna,” Siebert said. “She did the fund-raising, and she was smart, and she knew how to handle a lot of these things.”

“Catch-as-catch-can” is not a bad description for how things continued to work, even with Haerr in charge. In a 2007 interview, she recalled the 1989 conference she was preparing to attend at a time when the Foundation had not a penny to give out. She said board member Robert Biggs told her he didn’t want her to go to the conference with a zero balance in the endowment. “So he gave me a \$500 check; that was really the very first endowment gift... a \$500 check from Bob Biggs so I could say, yes, we have an endowment.” Later that year Caterpillar Inc. awarded the Foundation a grant 1,000 times that large. The company specified that the money endow the Community Leadership Fund, with no restrictions placed on the nature of the gifts. John Sahn recalls that with the donation came a yellow couch. “It became a symbol of Caterpillar’s commitment to the Foundation, and it sat in a very prominent place in the Community Foundation office.”

Asked to characterize these years, Sahn came up with the term “a period of refinement.... The ideas were there, and the structure was there, but it was the time to begin operating.” A committee structure had to be established, an investment program developed, furniture acquired. “It was a period of time of fairly significant engagement, because with a starting organization everything is new, everything is different. Whether it is the operating system in the office, how you keep track of stuff, sensitive communication with someone about making a gift. There was such a broad range of things; there was much going on.”

Getting enough money just to operate was not easy. Toward that end, the work of the Bielfeldt Foundation was critical. Between February 1988 and December 1999, the foundation established by the Bielfeldt family contributed \$230,000 so the Community Foundation might keep the paychecks coming and the offices open. Caterpillar Inc. donated \$60,000 for operating expenses early-on. The annual operating budget of \$50,000 was supposed to cover Donna Haerr’s salary, utilities, development of promotional materials, use of the copying machine, postage – everything. She had to be creative and resourceful.

“My first year of holidays I spent Thanksgiving Eve down there working on the accounting module that I established myself and it was pretty awful,” she recalled.



New Year's Eve was similarly celebrated. She was grateful for the computer Caterpillar donated and even more for the day Jeff Barton showed up to teach her how to use it. Soon Barton's father, Glen, would become Cat board chairman, and his mother, Pat, would found the Women's Fund and direct the For the Family Initiative.

Jeff Barton wasn't the only volunteer. "Ann Allen used to come in once or twice a week and put mailings together, stuff envelopes, she was faithful," Haerr said. "She would come in at 9 o'clock and she would stay until noon.... She was the best 'employee'. And she still (in 2007) gives time now and then."

According to Haerr, much of her time was spent getting "the word out to the community just what a community foundation was." People were not going to give to something they didn't know or understand.

"First I went to attorneys because they are the ones that meet with people when they make out their wills and whatever, so that is a good starting point.... We had an event at the Country Club; we had events at other places; this needs assessment that we did brought in people, all sorts of people, and it introduced the Community Foundation." The Women's Fund, established in 1993, attracted a new kind of donor.

Nothing was easy. Needing more space, the Foundation moved in 1991 to larger quarters in the same building. But the office was on the mezzanine, accessible by a stairway but not an elevator. Some potential donors couldn't climb the stairs to stop in.

### GOOD NEWS AND BAD

While the Foundation eventually gained widespread community support, its bank accounts did not grow as rapidly as the early leaders had anticipated. Minutes of meetings held in 1990, 1991 and 1992 report serious concerns about the slow pace of endowment growth. This affected the Community Foundation in two ways: It had less money to distribute, and it was chronically short of operating funds, which were supposed to be covered, to a large extent, by management fees assessed on endowments.

In 1990, the Foundation learned it would receive \$20,000 a year for three years (later extended to five years) from the Mott Foundation to sustain operations. That was the good news. The bad news was that it had to raise \$80,000 a year to get the funds. That wasn't easy. Minutes from the December 3, 1992, meeting show the board engaged in role-playing rehearsals for approaching potential donors. Haerr played the role of the prospective donor, Sahn her legal adviser, and retired bank executive David Connor the board member asking for money.

### THE FIRST GRANTS

By 1989 the Community Foundation had enough money to start giving some away. The board agreed grants

would be given in the fields of health, education, arts, humanities, human services and community services. Altogether, \$49,840 was distributed. Caregivers of aging family members got some help, as did a Carver Community Center program to encourage high school students to avoid pregnancy. PARC was given money to buy a vending cart to train mentally disabled individuals for employment. Breast-cancer education benefited from a fund established by the Junior League to hold Race for the Cure proceeds. These first grants were linked to another first – the first house Habitat for Humanity bought in Peoria for renovation.

No one doubted the need. In 1991 then-president John Sahn and Betty Vonachen, chair of the needs assessment committee, told the Downtown Rotary Club that between October 1989 and April 1991 the Foundation had received requests for grants totaling \$795,339 – and been able to give out just \$55,895.

### FIRST, COMES THE FAMILY

In 1991, some 100 community leaders met through the summer and fall to discuss community needs and how the Foundation could meet them. Sahn said the idea was to make the foundation "more proactive" as it awarded grants. The "Needs 2000" Task Force identified those needs as: restoring the family and working to eliminate family dysfunction; encouraging a common agenda, a "shared vision" of the community's future; and developing leadership.

Perhaps the most important endeavor to come out of the study was the "For the Family Initiative." As part of the initiative, the Community Foundation cooperated with WEEK-TV on a series of broadcasts called "Teenagers and Tough Decisions." The Foundation further pledged to establish a "For the Family Fund" that would support efforts to "meet the changing needs of the family."

The woman who chaired the initiative and put her own money into a fund to support it was Pat Barton. Interviewed in 2007, Barton said, "As we see, the deterioration of the family is playing such a huge role in the dysfunction of our society. There are no fathers around, there are mothers who are children even when they're having children, there are people without parenting skills.... I just wanted to see something started to serve families in need, no matter what that was."

### A SURPRISING LOOK AT HOMELESS YOUTHS

Another pioneering Foundation endeavor came in 1992, with the decision to help fund a study to learn how many homeless youths there were in Peoria. That study both alerted the community to a problem many did not know existed (640 youths had no homes) and inspired the creation of two new funds at the Foundation. The sources were individuals so moved by the study that they wanted to help.

Paul Dudiak, facilitator of the planning process for the homeless study, and his wife Sandy gave \$5,000 in seed money to establish the Homeless Youth Endowment Fund. The proceeds were intended to help homeless kids buy toiletries, clothes and other things most children take for granted. The Brenda Epley Homeless Children's Fund was established by a local realtor who'd worked on the study and, like Dudiak, was profoundly affected. Epley donated a percentage of her commissions to the fund. The study also led to receipt of a \$25,000 state grant to provide housing and other assistance.

"These young children were coming to school, and they weren't coming from home; they were coming from cars and places like that," recalled Donna Haerr. "I was involved in it, and I had a notebook (about it), and one day I walked into the car wash, and there was a girl behind the counter. She looked at it, and she said, 'Oh, are you involved in this?' And I said yes, and she said, 'I want you to know you made a difference in my life. I am here because I got help from this.'"

Haerr cited this as evidence that "the Foundation can step forward and take hold of some of the things that aren't being addressed."

## NO TO FOREST PARK, YES TO ACORNS AND LEGACIES

In 1993 Peoria philanthropist Bill Rutherford, one of the Community Foundation's incorporators, sought its merger with the Forest Park Foundation he headed. Rutherford argued that the larger organization would be more powerful and have more resources. Board members feared loss of control and said no.

The board did agree in 1993 to establish the Acorn Society, a repository local non-profits could use for their endowments. The Community Foundation invested the money, trained agency staff and volunteers, supplied marketing materials and conducted informational seminars. In 1993, the Acorn Society managed the funds of 14 non-profits.

Over the years, the Acorn Society was phased out, as was the broad assistance provided non-profits. However, the Community Foundation still extends fund-management services to non-profits who want the help – 46 in 2007.

## DONNA HAERR RETIRES

When Haerr retired in February 1995, the Foundation's endowment stood at \$1.6 million. It managed 34 funds and had distributed more than \$738,000. Still she expressed disappointment over the failure to hit the \$5 million endowment target.

"I wish I could have left it with \$10 million, that's my disappointment," she said in a 2007 interview. She attributed the slow growth to the lack of understanding of the Foundation's purposes. Furthermore, the opposition

encountered in the early years had not yet vanished. Reflecting upon that opposition, Haerr also said that when she retired, she was "very thankful that (the Foundation) existed" at all. "There were times I didn't know if it was going to exist, I will be very honest."

Haerr's own generosity, and that of other like-minded individuals, is one of the reasons it has survived. Two Community Foundation funds -- the Alvin and Donna Haerr Performing Arts Fund and the Alvin and Donna Haerr Fine Arts Scholarship Fund -- owe their existence to the first executive. She is not the only Community Foundation employee to take her job to heart. In 1996 bookkeeper Mary Kella and her husband Bill promised a \$10,000 gift if the Foundation raised \$30,000. As of 2007, all three executive directors (Haerr, George Kreiss and Jim Sullivan) and their spouses were Legacy Society members.

## 'A PLACE AT THE TABLE'

### George Kreiss takes over

George Kreiss came out of retirement in 1994 to become the Community Foundation's Development Director. A year later he replaced Donna Haerr in the executive's chair.

Asked in a 2007 interview to assess the Foundation's position at the time, Kreiss said, "I think it was, I don't want to say fighting, but trying to get a place at the table in this community. There were all kinds of not-for-profits ... that could raise money and do anything they want and the Community Foundation at the time I was there was fighting for a place at the table." Much like his predecessor, he used his persuasive skills and his contacts to get that seat.

Kreiss was fond of telling potential donors that the United Way "is the checkbook for the community (and) the Community Foundation is the savings account for the community." He said "it wasn't a real sophisticated concept," but it was one people found easy to understand.

The Legacy Society, consisting of individuals who give \$5,000 to the Foundation or include it in their estate plans, was a 1995 Kreiss creation. He said it was both a public-awareness and a fund-raising tool. It was "a very specific, manageable approach to attracting donors," he said. There were 35 charter members of the Legacy Society. By the end of fiscal 2007, Legacy Society membership totaled 126, with more than 200 individuals represented.

## STORIES FROM THE 'TURNIP TRUCK'

Keeping donors happy was part of the job. Kreiss recalls the day the Foundation closed the office for an official luncheon, posting a sign that staff would return at 1 o'clock. When they returned 45 minutes late, they found George Schaefer, the retired Caterpillar chairman and a generous supporter of the Foundation, waiting at the door. "Man, oh, man, did we jump!" Kreiss said. "He was as gracious as he

could be, but I remember seeing him standing out there.”

The Foundation may have passed the begging-and-borrowing stage by the late 1990s, but Chris Schultz Hardine, program officer from 1994 to 2000, said those were years of “trying to figure out what we were doing and how we would do it and who we could do it with.” The agency was so small one staffer was expected to do everything. In a 2007 interview, she recalled going to Caterpillar headquarters to pick up donated stock certificates, walking across the street to sell them at Dean Witter Reynolds, then returning to Foundation offices to mail out letters telling the donors how much they’d given. She said she was naïve about the work she was doing and the people she was dealing with.

“One day Pete Donis (then-Caterpillar president) comes in and hands over a very large share of stock. I was right off the turnip truck, and I was just in shock.” Another day she opened “a huge box” shipped to the office and found a piece of artwork inside. “That was the day George and I looked at ourselves and said, ‘What did we get ourselves into?’” Eventually they sold the art for \$75,000 to an art dealer and opened an unrestricted fund with the proceeds. Grants are still being made from the Louis and Selma Neumiller Fund.

### **MORE MONEY, MORE DEMANDS**

The year 1997 saw the launch of a creative fundraiser – the Corporate Spelling Bee. Teams representing local businesses spelled off against each other; if they didn’t like a word they got, spellers could pay \$25 and buy a new one. The Spelling Bee was one of two major sources of money for the Foundation’s Literacy Fund. Among other things, money went to a “First Book” program run by WTVP-TV, the public television station.

Kreiss and Hardine both said the 1998 Bolshoi Ballet benefit performances in Peoria were critical in building public awareness. The visibility the ballet brought, said Kreiss, made the sales job easier.

The year 1998 was significant for other reasons. The Blackie Foundation Fund, established the previous year in memory of another former Caterpillar chairman, William Blackie, distributed \$429,620. Most of the money went for school and neighborhood-development efforts. The new William E. Mosher Foundation Fund gave out \$10,900, mostly to public health departments. Assets topped \$6 million, Legacy Society membership stood at 57, and there were 103 funds altogether.

Still, Hardine said demand for help generally exceeded available funding by a multiple of four. Distribution committee meetings sometimes lasted five hours. “They (members) deserved an hourly wage, but we never could have afforded it.” Committee members became skilled at going beyond Foundation funds to find money to help applicants. “I always thought of the Community Foundation as the board that would put the puzzle pieces together,” she said.

Sometimes the Foundation’s own Depository proved helpful. “I would see these really cool applications, and I would call people with Depository (accounts),” she said. Describing an unfunded application to the account-holder, Hardine would ask if he or she wanted to come in and look at it. “Nine out of 10 times they’d say ‘No, we trust you.’” And the applicant would get his money in a round-about way. “That’s what’s so neat about the Community Foundation. It can connect donors with needs they would never know about.”

### **REWARDS**

The work was rewarding, Hardine said. She recalled an early grant that helped pay for mammograms and the note of appreciation she opened from a woman who’d had one. Her test had led to a diagnosis of breast cancer – hardly a reason to be grateful – but in the early stages. Her prognosis was good. Without the Community Foundation, she would not have had a mammogram, the woman said, and her cancer might have been discovered past the point of optimism.

George Kreiss said when he began at the Community Foundation, few local potential donors really “got it” – his way of saying few instinctively understood the concept. By the time he left in 1999, “you could go to a board meeting or a Legacy Society meeting, and there’s 100 people that get it.... Said another way, if you do this right, you can get your phone calls returned.”

## **‘EXPANDED GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION’ The Jim Sullivan Years**

When Jim Sullivan took the Community Foundation’s helm in December of 1999, he set three goals: to make the foundation “the organization of choice for family bequests and community-based endowment giving,” to jump-start promotional efforts, and to educate financial advisors and the general public about its mission. At the time the endowment stood at \$8 million. There were approximately 70 Legacy Society members and 136 separate funds. By the end of 2007, when he announced his retirement plans, the endowment had more than doubled and the number of funds more than quadrupled. As fiscal 2007 drew to a close, the Community Foundation managed 616 funds – 270 in the Foundation itself and 346 in the Depository.

In an October 31, 2007, interview, Sullivan characterized his years as a time of “expanded growth and development.” The focus on development is reflected in the minutes of the August 23, 2000, meeting showing that he’d given 68 presentations in the previous seven months. Some were formal and before groups; others occurred in offices throughout the community.



## LOOKING TO THE OUT YEARS

“When I started, we weren’t getting into the right places to be able to get the large expectancies, the estate gifts that will still be coming way out into the future,” he said. To attract them he knew he had to target attorneys, CPAs, trust officers and others who counseled clients about their estates. Sullivan reasoned that even in a community Peoria’s size, it is impossible to know all of those with money to give. That’s where the advisers come in.

“The real benefit comes from when you just pick up the phone and say, ‘Mr. Attorney, can I buy you lunch next Thursday and just share with you a little bit about the Community Foundation?’ ... So I spent, probably for the first three years, three lunches a week doing that... It was very targeted to be able to do that.”

Sullivan said the reaction was a profound contrast to what early Community Foundation leaders got from financial advisers, who saw the organization as competition for their own estate management services. Where concerns remained, largely among trust officers at financial institutions, he worked to find a way neither side would lose, such as setting up a fund that would belong to the Community Foundation but remain under institutional management. “I understand how they make a living, and we need to find a way to be able to work together and still achieve good things for the donor and good things for the community,” he said.

Sullivan cited the Jean Brown gift – the retired nurse left nearly \$1.5 million to the Community Foundation on the advice of her attorney – as evidence of the importance of the strategy. But the real proof is years away. This is because it’s impossible to know how many people have named the Foundation in their wills until they die. By its very nature, estate planning ensures that the growth of newer community foundations will be greater in the out years.

## 2001 – A DIFFICULT YEAR

In early 2001, the Community Foundation faced a financial crisis that threatened to undo some of its progress. Assets held in the Depository, the sister corporation established for donors to manage their charitable giving in a tax-friendly manner, were dropping precipitously. Minutes of several spring and summer meetings reflect concerns about losses the Depository was incurring through high-yielding, junk-bond mutual funds. Sullivan said a new financial adviser had recommended the more aggressive strategy, partly to increase the Foundation’s operating revenue, some of which comes from Depository income. The losses meant the opposite occurred; not only did the operating fund take a substantial hit, the Foundation had to grant itself \$17,000 from its endowment in order to make Depository accounts whole. As a result, the board voted in November of 2002 to solicit the community for operating revenue.

No time is a good one for losses of this nature, but

the market plunge that followed the 9-11 attacks made things worse. The October 4, 2001, minutes report that the Foundation’s endowment fell from \$8,072,144 to \$6,818,889 in one year. The November 1, 2002, minutes report that the Depository’s fund balance was under \$1.5 million, a \$600,000 drop in less than three years.

While emphasizing that there never was a cash-flow problem, “it really wrenched us internally in managing and the board on how do we prevent this,” Sullivan said. The Foundation’s response was to redesign investment policies, particularly those that apply to highly liquid funds such as the Depository. Depository accounts henceforth would be invested where there was minimal market risk. Dave Bomberger, president of Preferred Mutual Fund Family, volunteered to monitor the investments.

## THE MARKET RECOVERS, AND SO DOES THE FOUNDATION

By August of 2003, the Foundation’s resources had more than turned around, partly with the benefit of soaring Caterpillar stock. Some 10,000 shares were gifted between May and August. On October 2, the endowment stood at \$10 million and the Depository at \$2.4 million, the highest ever.

Fiscal 2004 also proved a high-growth year. Depository grants were up nearly 7 percent, giving grew by 52 percent, and the average balance in individual accounts rose 23 percent. Almost \$3 million was distributed from the Depository and another \$1.15 million from endowments. Altogether, 2,730 grants were awarded.

Difficulties aside, the early part of the 21st century saw rapid growth in the number of funds managed by the agency, and a broadening of interests. For example, donors concerned about jobs in the knowledge era established two funds in fiscal 2001 intended to encourage biomedical research in the Peoria area. The same year two funds were established to finance and maintain an Audubon Sanctuary. In fiscal 2005 friends and family members of tennis aficionado Jack Sweney established a fund in his memory. Its target is low-income children who want to play tennis.

## MOVING OUT AND REACHING OUT

The years 2001 and 2002 produced two changes of symbolic, as well as practical, value.

On April 12, 2001, the board agreed to move the agency to a new and larger site in Civic Center Plaza. For the first time in a decade, disabled individuals could come in.

On August 2, 2001, after several months of discussion, the board agreed to change the organization’s name from the Peoria Area Community Foundation to the Community Foundation of Central Illinois. What would appear to be a minor matter proved major to some.

Sullivan said he’d concluded the name should be changed after making numerous presentations outside the city of Peoria to underscore the point that the Foundation

served these communities' needs. Its gifts, after all, were bequeathed in a 50-mile radius, and about 30 percent were awarded outside the city. But a significant share of his audience didn't buy the argument – in their view, the name Peoria indicated otherwise.

When he proposed the name change, some of the organization's leadership had the opposite reaction -- Peoria was a proud name, and a beloved name, and should be kept, Sullivan said. One donor was so upset he threatened never to use the Community Foundation again. The name was changed anyway, and eventually the donor changed his mind.

Fiscal 2005 introduced the concept of affiliates, another effort to reach beyond Peoria. These are small, separate foundations endowed by other communities but managed by Community Foundation staff. As of 2007, the Morton and Forman Valley foundations had affiliated with the Community Foundation. Other suburban areas targeted by special endowments are Metamora, Abingdon, Germantown Hills and East Peoria.

In 2001 and again in 2005, the Community Foundation reached well beyond central Illinois. In 2001 it served as a collection point for the community's 9-11 relief efforts. In 2005 it did the same for victims of the December tsunami in South Asia.

### WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HELP?

Hired to grow the organization, Sullivan said he spent much of the last half of his tenure working on the giving end – “How do you give it away in the best, most efficient, most impactful way?”

The genesis was a grant from the Grand Victoria Foundation. The Foundation promised \$210,000 a year over five years for operating expenses plus \$250,000 to build an endowment that would provide grants in three targeted areas: workforce initiatives, land use and protection, and child care. A \$225,000 local match is required. By design, Grand Victoria's targeted choices will cause some redirection, and a greater focusing, of local Community Foundation spending.

A rationale for rethinking the giving process came from two other sources. In fiscal 2005 the Community Foundation, with the Heart of Illinois United Way, co-funded a Community Assessment Initiative. The six-county study of poverty, schools, housing, workforce and population growth was billed as providing a springboard that would allow both agencies to “support and fund initiatives in a more thoughtful and careful manner.”

A 2006 report from consultant Helen Monroe (she first consulted with the Foundation's planners in 1988) also advocated a more targeted approach. She criticized the Foundation's emphasis on small grants – the average size is \$2,500 – saying that larger grants would have greater

visibility as well as greater impact. She said the small-grant approach was one of the reasons the Community Foundation had not grown as rapidly as its founders had hoped.

In the 2007 interview, Sullivan acknowledged the argument for larger grants that would have a bigger effect, but said it's important not to overlook the impact of small gifts. “While most people on (the board and distribution committee) believe it is appropriate to start moving in that direction, there is a real strong sentiment that still says ‘you know what, we have been the only place for some of these grass-root organizations to go to get money.’ Maybe it's a small amount of money, but it's sort of a huge purpose” for some groups. Sometimes the funds are the difference between staying open and shutting down.

Even small gifts can have a big impact, according to Sullivan. He cited a \$2,800 grant to LifeLine Pilots, an organization which provides free private plane rides to people who need distant medical care, but can't afford a ticket or are too ill to fly commercially. The money helped leverage a much larger grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The LifeLine Pilots Legacy Endowed Fund remained part of the Community Foundation in 2007.

Nonetheless, Sullivan raised the issue of larger grants in the December 12, 2006, meeting of the Distribution Committee. The committee approved a resolution urging “more proactive, larger and multi-year grants.” On May 3, 2007, the full board approved steps intended to encourage larger grants, with a \$15,000 ceiling. As of this writing, it was too early to assess the impact.

### SULLIVAN'S TENURE COMES TO A CLOSE

In the 2007 interview, Sullivan was reminded of the goals he'd set when he was hired (more endowment giving, promotion and education of financial advisers) and asked to grade himself. He got a 'B'. At the time, the Foundation's endowment stood at \$22,368,133.

“I certainly didn't achieve near as much as I would have liked to have done, yet at the same time I really feel good about the growth that we've had, the number of people that continue to contact us and want to use us in every way.”

The next day he announced his retirement. With giving as the measurement, his last full year was a good one. The Community Foundation and its Depository gave away more than \$6.7 million – a record.

### BIGGER WOULD BE BETTER

All three executive directors, Ed Siebert and other early leaders interviewed for this history expressed some degree of disappointment that the Foundation had not grown more rapidly. John Sahn, president in 1990 and 1991, said part of the explanation comes from aggressive fund-raising in the community and a “scarcity of resources to

support all the worthy causes.” Both he and Lynn Landes, one of the first board members, said it’s important not to overlook the role of the multi-million-dollar donor when a community foundation enjoys explosive growth.

“I look to other communities that have excelled in developing community foundations. It is often a result of one, two or three big donations. Somebody ... got the message or had reason to do this,” Sahn said. “And there are those cases where a corporation went out of existence and had assets to dispose of, and the community foundation became the repository.”

That said, there are seemingly endless stories of concerts that wouldn’t have been held, organizations that wouldn’t exist, sculptures that wouldn’t have been bought, children who wouldn’t have been helped, cancer that wouldn’t have been detected, young people who wouldn’t have been educated, adults who wouldn’t have gotten jobs, resources that wouldn’t have been protected but for the Community Foundation of Central Illinois. Many of those stories are told in the section of this history entitled “Recipients.”

And there is little doubt, as Ed Siebert said, that fortunes which would have gone elsewhere stayed in central Illinois because of decisions local leaders made more than two decades ago. The role of estate planning makes it reasonable to assume that the biggest gifts, with the largest impact, are yet to come.

## ADDENDUM

By the end of 2007, nearly 800 community foundations existed in the United States. They held endowments totaling \$50 billion, a number that has increased nearly 50-fold in 32 years. Community foundations are one of the fastest growing segments of the non-profit community, said Ken Strmiska, managing director for Community Foundation Services of the Council on Foundations. They make up one percent of foundations nationwide but ten percent of all giving.

“I think communities are coming to the realization that communities that have vibrant community foundations are those that are going to have healthy, more robust communities and amenities that everybody wants,” he said.

“People see the power of what they can do for their community,” particularly in the knowledge age, when business locations are less likely to be tied to manufacturing plants, Strmiska said. Community foundation grants can go for greenways, for example, or recreational opportunities or after-school programs – the sorts of things that will help attract “knowledge workers.”

The best example, according to Strmiska, comes from Kalamazoo, Mich., where an anonymous donor left \$200 million to fund four-year scholarships for graduates of city schools.

“His spokesman said it wasn’t about charity, it was about making people want to move back to the community and bring their families with them,” Strmiska said. “Brilliant!” An executive who locates his business in Kalamazoo can say, “I’ve just given my employees a free benefit worth \$40,000. This is the way people are looking at philanthropy and community foundations.”

Strmiska said he is often asked about timing – specifically, when a locality should create a community foundation. “I say ‘100 years ago.’”

To prove his point, he cited a cathedral in Krakow, Poland, that took 350 years to build. Family members laid the cornerstone knowing they wouldn’t live to see the work completed, and the community took up the task. “Think of the vision and the love those people had for their community.

“Establishing a community foundation is a gift of love and vision.”

*This history is dedicated to all those visionaries who loved the Peoria area enough to create and endow the Community Foundation of Central Illinois.*

## CRITICAL LEADERS

### THE FOUNDERS

#### EDWARD W. SIEBERT

No one was more instrumental in the development of the Community Foundation than Edward W. Siebert, the Caterpillar, Inc., vice president the company tapped in 1984 to find out whether such an endeavor was worth pursuing. And no story better reveals the character of Ed Siebert than one told by Donna Haerr, the first executive director.

“We were in the office of the old Jefferson Bank Building, where our first office was, and we were talking, and there was a little grasshopper or a bug there. And he came in and looked at it, and he picked it up, put it in his hand. We took the elevator downstairs so he could put it outside.”

Siebert came to Peoria in 1966 from Aurora. Though his background was in community relations and personnel, it wasn’t long before he found himself engaged in managing – and reactivating – the Caterpillar Foundation. So he was both experienced in and committed to the work of foundations when he chaired the task force that decided a community-based foundation would be a good thing for Peoria. Siebert was its registered agent when the Foundation was incorporated in 1985, its first vice president and its second president.

Ed Siebert retired from Caterpillar in 1992 and was living in Peoria when he was interviewed.



**LEWIS J. BURGER**

Lew Burger was president of LeTourneau-Westinghouse, another Peoria-based heavy equipment manufacturer and a Caterpillar competitor. When American Standard bought LeTourneau's parent company, he became its group executive.

But in Peoria, Burger was known for his civic involvement. He chaired Bradley University's Board of Trustees, the opera board and the Proctor Hospital Board, and was a charter member of The Salvation Army's National Advisory Board. As the first chairman of the Peoria Civic Center Authority, he is credited with roughing out the changes that brought the building in within budget without sacrificing venues or aesthetics. He was a member of the 1984 Chamber Community Improvement Committee that endorsed a community foundation.

In a 2007 interview, Siebert said he asked Lew Burger to be part of the founding group because "Lew was in the middle of everything in terms of fundraising and activities." He "was very much the asset" because of his enthusiasm and his ability to pull others in. In 1986 Burger became the Community Foundation's first president.

He died in 2000.

**WILLIAM L. RUTHERFORD**

William Rutherford was a once-in-a-century sort of man – an innovative philanthropist and environmentalist who believed every citizen had a responsibility to his community and to future generations. Rutherford used his wife's family fortune to create the Forest Park Foundation, which in turn created Wildlife Prairie Park, the Forest Park Nature Center, Sommer Park and the first part of the Rock Island Trail. Altogether his foundation donated more than 25,000 acres of open space to the community. In addition, Rutherford founded an airport, pioneered rehabilitative services in Peoria, introduced the idea of transportation and zoning planning to the area, and briefly served as the state's Director of Conservation.

In an interview shortly before his death in 2006, Rutherford expressed his frustration with those who would build mansions for themselves when they could build something of lasting effect for others. He said he couldn't understand why. In a Journal Star interview 31 years earlier, he said all people had an obligation to "spend (their resources) and get rid of it for something (they) believe in."

It is no surprise, then, that Rutherford responded readily when Siebert asked him to come on board the effort to establish a community foundation. An attorney, Rutherford drew up the by-laws and filed the incorporating papers.

**THE OTHER INCORPORATORS**

**PHILIP L. CARLSON** was president of the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce.

**MARYANN S. MORRISON** was community and corporate support representative at Caterpillar Inc., with primary focus on the company's community initiatives. In 2007, she was still with the company, serving as administrator of the Caterpillar Foundation.

**PATRICE W. SHAHEEN** was a schoolteacher and community volunteer. She subsequently became executive director of Goodwill Industries in Peoria.

**IAN T. STURROCK** was vice president for development at Bradley University and a fund-raising expert.

**THE FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Edward W. Siebert

Lewis J. Burger

William L. Rutherford

David Connor, former chairman of Midwest Financial Group

Lynn Landes, Peoria Symphony Orchestra board member and arts leader

Mary Sharp, Peoria Civic Opera Co. board member

William Vogelsang, president and CEO of CILCORP Inc.

Warren Webber, retired financial officer of Commercial National Bank of Peoria

James Wogsland, ex-Caterpillar vice president

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

**DONNA HAERR'S** path to the Community Foundation was not typical. Having lived all over the state by the time she graduated from the University of Illinois, she set her degree in biochemistry aside to pursue her dream of becoming an "artistic manager for the stars" in Chicago. Problem was, she didn't like big-city living. So she moved to Peoria, where her parents were living by then, to pursue a degree in medical technology. Over the years she worked at a hospital; married; raised a family; and volunteered in leadership roles, including a failed early effort to start a community foundation. She was working as development director at WCBU, the public radio station, when the fledgling Foundation's leaders asked her to consider becoming its first executive director.

When she took the job in 1988, the Foundation had no endowment and had never awarded a grant. When she left in 1995, it had a \$1.6 million endowment and had distributed \$738,127 to the community. The Foundation was repository for 34 funds.

**GEORGE KREISS** had a year's experience as the Community Foundation's first development director before moving into the top position when Donna Haerr retired in 1995. Kreiss remained with the foundation through 1999.

Born and raised in Neenah, Wis., Kreiss came to Peoria to work for Procter & Gamble. In a 2007 interview, he said he liked the community so much he didn't want to go anywhere else. So he went to work for a locally based food distribution company, then started his own. He came to the Community Foundation after selling that business.

"The five years I was there really were some of the most interesting, different, productive kinds of things I could have gotten into," he said. "As far as any job satisfaction, I would say the Community Foundation years were for me just the best... because the concept was so right."

By the time George Kreiss left the Community Foundation, it had a \$6 million endowment, 103 separate funds and a 57-member Legacy Society.

**JIM SULLIVAN** was born and raised in Peoria, on the city's East Bluff. His father owned a gas station in the working-class neighborhood, but he learned to be careful about saying that.

"I was 13 years old pumping gas at his gas station, but he'd be mad when he heard me refer to it as a gas station. It was a service station back then. And the greatest benefit from him is that he didn't train me to be a mechanic. He trained me in sales. You know, you check the wiper blades, you check the fan belts, you check the tires. People need to have people tell them if they need new products and services, and that's how I make a living," he said in a 2007 interview.

Sullivan's father, Leo, was more than a good salesman; he was a community leader. The father's commitment to the community – he spent a quarter-century on the District 150 School Board – rubbed off on the son.

So did his attitude toward wealth. "He was not a wealthy person, but he wasn't intimidated by wealth," said Jim of his father. The rich "needed to have good service too... You just get where you're comfortable with people regardless of status." It's one of the reasons he is "never afraid to knock on anyone's door or call anyone, whether they would be the CEO at Caterpillar or at a local bank or just a retiree."

Jim Sullivan graduated from Bradley University with a degree in elementary education but taught just one year because he couldn't make a decent living, he said. Responding to an ad, he got a job as a management trainee at Security Savings and Loan Association. Sullivan was president and CEO at Security Savings when the industry imploded. In 1989, the Resolution Trust Corporation took over Security Savings, and a year later Sullivan left. He spent most of the next decade working in sales at

Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Co. before coming to the Community Foundation in December of 1999.

In November of 2007, Sullivan announced his intention to retire in May of 2008. At the time the Community Foundation held nearly 750 different funds and a \$16.2 million endowment. Total assets, including the Depository, approached \$22 million.

## CATERPILLAR'S ROLE

Without Caterpillar Inc.'s investments of money, talent and moral support, there would be no Community Foundation of Central Illinois. But it was the company's assignment of Ed Siebert to steer the early efforts that proved most critical.

George Schaefer was Caterpillar board chairman at the time. In a 2007 interview, Schaefer said Siebert came to him, not the other way around. "I think it was Ed who was the prime mover in getting it started. I knew Ed very well, and I had a lot of respect for his judgment, so I said, 'OK, let's do it'.... I thought it was just a good vehicle for people to have a tax-effective way to support the charities of their choice."

Caterpillar's \$60,000 donation accounted for more than one-third of the initial operating funds. Its seeding of the Community Leadership Fund with a \$500,000 contribution in 1989 made it possible to distribute money for the first time. Interviewed 18 years later, Siebert said that gift "was a major commitment at a time when business conditions were not that great. I was proud of the company then and still am."

Maryann Morrison, administrator for the Caterpillar Foundation in 2007, said Caterpillar got involved "because we felt it was a way to retain (in the community) moneys that might have been lost otherwise and to help people who want to give find a focus for their giving."

"We keep supporting it because, having been instrumental in its founding, we want it to continue to be viable." Also, many Cat retirees and employees welcome a vehicle to which they can contribute appreciated assets and pool their funds for the greatest benefit.

"It helps the community as a whole. It helps provide a larger base of contributors for local organizations than what they would otherwise have," she said.

As of mid-2007, Caterpillar had given just under \$1 million to the organization while encouraging its employees and retirees to give as well.

## DONORS

Jean Brown cared about nurses. Gene and Harriett Swager liked public art and hoped to encourage others to support it. Gordon Peters wanted to honor his father and his mother, both of whom were fond of the performing arts. Jerry Stephens wanted his company's contributions to go to the best possible community use. Scott Heimdal's family appreciated the "love and compassion" shown them after Scott was kidnapped in Ecuador. Sue Schliepsiek, whose son and daughter-in-law were brutally murdered, wanted to make sure "their names aren't forgotten."

They are among those who have established endowments at the Community Foundation since the Caterpillar Foundation seeded the first one in 1989. By fiscal 2006, donors could contribute to more than 250 separate endowments -- or establish one of their own.

The funders and their goals are as varied as central Illinoisans are. Some have a cause they believe in. Some have a passion for the community. Some want to ensure that something remains behind when they are no longer here. Some are reaching out to others while trying to recover from their own unspeakable tragedies.

Here are a few of their stories.

### RLI INSURANCE COMPANY

RLI Insurance Co. became one of the first corporate supporters of the Community Foundation when it established the RLI Corporate Fund in 1991.

"It sounded like a very good idea for us because we didn't want to devote the manpower to the necessary work to make contributions," board chairman Jerry Stephens said in a 2007 interview. Beyond that, "we didn't feel at the time that we had the expertise they do to put the money to the best community use." He figured the foundation's experts knew the area's needs better than he did and gave them wide latitude in awarding grants.

Since then RLI has supported this initial grant program annually, and the relationship between the business and the foundation has grown substantially. A matching gifts fund encourages employees to make charitable donations the company will match up to \$3,000 per year. A scholarship fund helps send students to Bradley University, Illinois State University and Illinois Central College. The death of James Steeves, a key RLI executive, provided the impetus; a scholarship to Bradley is awarded in his name. The most recent initiative is the RLI non-endowed fund, established in 2006. It allows the company to contribute to specific community causes its executives and other employees want to support -- United Way, Race for the Cure, Children's Home, South Side Mission, St. Jude Run, etc. An employee-management committee recommends where the money should go.

The expansion "demonstrates the responsiveness of the Community Foundation to create funds and programs that help us to be an active part of the community in a variety of ways," said Gregory J. Tiemeier, who works in administrative services for the company. "The Foundation supports RLI's efforts to be flexible and innovative with our approaches to community involvement."

Stephens said RLI has been "very pleased" with the Foundation's efforts. "For all the charitable things going on in Peoria, they've proved to be very much a help."

By 2007, RLI had given away \$1.7 million through the Community Foundation. The company uses it for the bulk of its charitable giving.

### THE RUSSELL F. & ELEANOR SIKES PETERS PERFORMING ARTS FUND

Gordon Peters said he and Donna Haerr, then executive director, had been talking about the Community Foundation's potential when his father died in 1989. The conversation turned naturally to setting up something in his parents' names as a way to honor them. When the fund was announced in 1990, his mother was present. Six months later, she too was dead.

Peters said the Community Foundation was ideal for what he and his wife, Jean, wanted to do. It was easy, there were tax advantages, they were permitted to designate a field of interest (performing arts) for awarding gifts, and he trusted the money would go to the right places.

"If you are fortunate enough to have funds that you are willing to contribute to make things better, it's an enormous responsibility to know which causes are worthwhile," he said in a 2007 interview. "But the foundation does." For example, Foundation officials once advised the couple that Illinois Central College needed a new grand piano and didn't have the money. "That was something we never would have known ourselves," Gordon Peters said. The Foundation "is much more on top of what's happening in the community and the groups that need help."

The Peters Fund has been used over the years to support ballet, opera, Peoria Players and other cultural organizations. A few years ago when the ballet was preparing to perform the Nutcracker, someone proposed pairing the show with a symphony performance. That seemed unlikely, since the cost went well beyond either organization's budget. So the Peters Fund helped seed what became a community tradition.

In addition to the Performing Arts Fund, Gordon and Jean Peters established a Depository account they use for all their charitable giving. The Gateway Fountain, the proposed Riverfront museum and the Sister City clock at City Hall have been beneficiaries. Gordon Peters said he particularly likes to seed "good ideas," pilot projects that need a boost for two or three years before they get firmly established.



The Peters Fund was launched with an initial gift of \$100,000, has given away more than that, and was worth \$125,000 in 2007.

### THE YEOMANS FUND

Murray and Rena Yeomans fell in love in Peoria, raised their kids in Peoria, lived most of their lives in Peoria. He built his business here. The Yeomans say much of what they have and are they owe to Peoria. So why, they ask, would they forsake Peoria just because they're spending their retirement years soaking up California sun?

That question – which Murray began contemplating seriously after serving on the Community Foundation's Board of Directors – prompted the couple to endow the Foundation's only million-dollar donor-advised fund. Twenty percent of the proceeds go for charitable work in and around Carmel, Calif., the Yeomans' adopted home since 2000. But 80 percent is earmarked for the needs of central Illinois.

"I was active on the board and became more aware than I had been before of how many people earn their money in Peoria and then go to Naples or Tucson or wherever and make a big splash there and abandon Peoria. We made up our mind that we wouldn't do that," Murray said.

Call it "commitment or obligation or dedication – whatever you want to call it. We felt we owed it to Peoria. We have very, very fond memories of Peoria."

One of those memories is the business his father started – Yeomans Distributing – and Murray built into a major television, air-conditioning and household appliance distributor before selling it to his employees upon retirement. Another is of the 14-year-old girl who moved in across the street when he was but 16. Murray and Rena celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in June of 2008.

The Yeomans Fund is donor-advised, with an emphasis on assisting the Peoria Public School system, but always open to other recommendations, Murray said. About \$39,000 has gone to enable teachers to pay for special projects, and about \$9,000 to help students with emergency needs – a coat in the winter or a place to sleep when there's no home to go to. The Yeomans have given \$170,000 to good causes in the Peoria area since establishing their fund in 1998.

### THE EUGENE AND HARRIET SWAGER FUND FOR PUBLIC ART

Good thing for the community that Eugene Swager is willing to listen to Harriett. Good thing he is capable of changing his mind.

Swager admitted being among the skeptics when the Community Foundation was established. "I said this is just going to steal money away from these other funds," he said in a 2007 interview. Then his wife joined the board of directors and was put on the committee overseeing funds

distribution. She helped persuade him that the Foundation is another way to help the community.

The Swagers decided to provide that assistance in the form of a fund that would purchase art for public places. "We just believed that the community needed more public art," Gene said. Harriett said they'd visited Columbus, Ind., where public art is abundant, and loved what they'd seen.

The Swagers gave \$25,000 to establish the Public Art Fund in 1991 and hoped others would be inspired not just to contribute to the cause but to move art from their private collections into the public sphere. That hasn't happened as much as they wish. "It's done some good things, but in Peoria public art hasn't really taken hold," Harriett said. Still, by 2007 the Public Art Fund had grown to twice the size of the initial gift. It helped make possible the "Seven Generations" sculpture in the Peoria Civic Center Theater and will help bring to the Civic Center a Preston Jackson sculpture paying tribute to the anti-slavery movement in Peoria.

By 2007, the Swagers had established three designated funds at the Foundation and were using the Depository for their routine charitable giving.

### THE SCOTT HEIMDAL FUND

When Ecuadorian guerillas kidnapped young Scott Heimdal in 1990 and held him for ransom, they did not get the wealthy American they thought they had. But they did get a community willing to help the working-class parents get their son back; Peoria-area residents contributed \$119,952.06 to a ransom and rescue fund. John Sahn, Community Foundation board chairman at the time, recalls vacationing with his family in Colorado and hearing about the fund-raising efforts going on in Peoria – most memorably, children carrying in their piggy banks and dumping out the pennies.

After Scott was freed, his family placed the \$25,971.37 that remained from the ransom money in an unrestricted fund at the Community Foundation.

"The money will remain in Peoria to help those needing it," the Heimdals wrote in a thank-you letter to contributors. "We feel the love and compassion that came with it will extend to other Peoria families."

### JEAN M. BROWN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Jean M. Brown was passionate about nursing and about Caterpillar Inc., and the pair pretty much consumed her life. She worked in industrial nursing at Caterpillar for 43 years before retiring in 1984. At one point Brown ran the first-aid medical office at the East Peoria plant, where she supervised 23 nurses.

When the childless woman died in 2000, she left \$1.47 million to the Community Foundation, directing the money be used for nursing scholarships. Seven years later, this remained the largest single gift the Foundation had

received from anyone, corporation or individual.

Beyond that, the gift proved a lesson in how important it is to work with attorneys, financial advisers, accountants and others who influence those who are trying to decide what to leave their community.

Jim Sullivan, executive director at the time, said he'd never heard of Jean Brown when he first learned of a potential gift. Fortunately, Jerold Horn, a former Foundation board member, had. He was the woman's attorney.

"I remember running into (Horn) in the lobby of what was then the Jefferson Bank," Sullivan recalled in a 2007 interview. "And he goes, 'hey, I've been meaning to call you. You're going to be receiving some money from an estate of a client of mine.'" Sullivan said he had no reason to think the gift would be substantial.

Much later, Horn called and said, "I've got a check for you," Sullivan recalled. "And it wasn't until I went to his office and he handed me the check that I had any idea as to what the size of it was."

Since Brown had given nothing to the Community Foundation previously, Sullivan said he asked Horn to tell him how this came about. "And that's when he told me about her being a client and her expressing her desire" to give half of her money to Bradley University and half to nursing students, but not to just one school. "And Jerry said, 'Well, I know how to do that. And you can do that through the Community Foundation.'"

Sullivan said when he carried the check away, he was thinking, "We don't have any nursing scholarships, and we don't necessarily know what to do with a nursing scholarship." So the Foundation contacted nursing schools in the area, along with Caterpillar's head nurse, and asked them to design a scholarship program. They continue to provide representatives to sit on the committee that decides who gets the grants. By the end of fiscal 2007, 180 aspiring nurses had benefited from Jean Brown's gift. The fund's balance was \$1.62 million.

### CAN DO 4:13 SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Here is what Jennifer Wilfong hopes readers will take away from the story about her "Can Do" scholarship fund. "I'm not rich. I'm not from a rich philanthropic family. But you don't have to be to make a difference."

What you have to do is have an idea – and the will to follow through. Make a phone call. Talk to somebody with know-how and power.

Wilfong, Caterpillar Inc.'s brand manager, says her idea came in the summer of 2002 after two years of thinking about what she could do to be a part of something larger than herself. "It just came to me one night that I ought to be giving scholarships to fourth graders. The next day I started on my journey." A phone call and a visit later, and Wilfong had promised to spend \$30,000 on Irving School

fourth graders. Beginning with the 2002-3 school year, every one who wanted to go to college would get \$1,000 to help pay the bills.

Why fourth graders? Because, Wilfong said in a 2007 interview, research suggests the importance of reaching inner-city youth before they get to fifth grade. Why Irving School? Because its children needed the help, and its administrators were eager to work with her. Why children at all, considering that Wilfong doesn't have any? Partly, she says, for reasons of faith. The name of the fund comes from Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me." Why \$30,000? Because that's what she got from her grandmother when she died. "I thought instead of buying a car, I'll do this." Part of the money remains invested privately, part with the Community Foundation.

By 2007, the program had grown from a scholarship promise to a commitment involving some 30 volunteers who work on art projects with the children – they sell some of the artwork – and otherwise try to help. And it's outgrowing Peoria. Springfield has adopted the model and applied it to sixth graders. A Kuwaiti man Wilfong met in a class at Harvard University has said he will endow 30 scholarships in the Philippines, Morocco and Ukraine.

What Wilfong says bears repeating.

"I'm not rich. I'm not from a rich philanthropic family. But you don't have to be to make a difference."

## OUT OF TRAGEDY

You can't get past the fact that so much of the good the Community Foundation does is made possible as much by tragedy – bright lives, dimmed too soon – as by generosity. Those who established these funds may use different words to explain their reasons, but it usually comes down to these three: honor, help, memories.

### WHITNEY GROTTTS

Whitney Grotts was an ambitious, athletic honor student at Brimfield High School. The 16-year-old junior seemed the all-American girl. Her friends described her as the peacemaker, the one they sought out when they had problems. So everyone who knew Whitney was stunned when she took her own life on March 15, 2004.

Her grieving and baffled parents started the Whitney Grotts Non-Endowed Fund with proceeds from a fundraiser "partly to remember her and partly to help people avoid a tragedy like this," her mother, Karen Grotts, said in a 2007 interview.

Mrs. Grotts said she and her husband turned to the Community Foundation when the first Whitney's Walk honoring her daughter's memory raised \$30,000. "We had no idea that much money would come in," she said. "I wanted everyone to know the money was being handled

correctly. I had no idea how to hand this out. I want it to do the most good, and who am I to know that?"

At first the Grotts family set up a committee to screen distributions from the fund. But it was still "hard to know the best use of the money," because all of the applicants looked good, said Mrs. Grotts. So the family decided to turn the screening job over to impartial people who wouldn't be involved emotionally and who would know where the money could be most effective. That's where the Community Foundation's distribution committees, made up of citizen volunteers, come in.

In the three years hence, the Whitney Grotts fund helped bring suicide prevention programs to several area schools.

### DAVID S. IZARD

David S. Izard was diagnosed with epilepsy when he was three years old. The disease killed him when he was 27. In the intervening years he played football, basketball, track and golf; graduated from college; and began a management career at Wal-Mart.

His death in 1992 prompted his parents, Bob and Gloria Izard, to establish the Epilepsy Foundation Scholarship Fund, which provides college scholarships for area students with epilepsy. The Izards told the Community Foundation they hoped to help people understand that those who have epilepsy can lead normal lives.

### JAMIE EPSTEIN

Jamie Epstein, an Indiana University freshman on spring break, was heading out to New York with two girlfriends in March of 2001. Jamie loved singing and theater, and in her exuberant personality one could see that she pretty much loved everything and everybody. Somewhere in Pennsylvania, the car in which she was riding went out of control and rolled through the median, throwing her out. The beautiful life of this beautiful girl ended at age 18.

Her father, Shelley Epstein, said the Jamie Epstein Memorial Scholarship Fund reflects his and his wife Marianne's desire to "keep Jamie's memory alive" and to "do something positive for other kids." They chose the Community Foundation for that task because they were aware of "its good works and its fine reputation in the community." The Epsteins specified that the scholarships go to graduates of Richwoods High School, Jamie's alma mater.

"It has been a great experience, even though it is always cloaked in sadness," Shelley Epstein said in a 2007 interview. "But the kids who have gotten the scholarship so far have been outstanding. Each one takes with them much more than the scholarship money. On some level, I believe they accept – maybe embrace – a responsibility to carry on Jamie's memory.... We think we've created a worthwhile legacy in her honor."

Three years after Jamie's death, Shelley Epstein became a board member of the Community Foundation.

### ANDY AND JAMIE (BIELENBERG) SCHLIEPSIEK

On the Fourth of July weekend in 2004, Senior Airman Andy Schliepsiek and his wife, Jamie, were brutally murdered in their home at Robins (Georgia) Air Force Base. The handsome young couple were Richwoods High School graduates and native Peorians. Andy had only recently returned from serving in Iraq.

In a 2007 interview, Sue Schliepsiek, Andy's mother, also used the term "legacy." "Their names aren't forgotten," she said. "Even if people don't know who they are, they will hear their names." The Andy and Jamie Schliepsiek Memorial Scholarship Fund "will go on for a very long time and for a good cause."

Mrs. Schliepsiek said the idea for a memorial scholarship came up while the two families were planning their children's funeral. It took hold instantly. "Education was always very important to our family, and we wanted to do something good," she said.

At the funeral, investor Gary Bielfeldt advised the Schliepsieks to be careful as they proceeded – taxes could be an issue – and offered to arrange a meeting with executive director Sullivan, Sue Schliepsiek said. She said they liked the idea that how to use the money would be up to the families (for Richwoods High School graduating seniors, they decided), while the administrative details would be up to the Foundation.

Mrs. Schliepsiek said going to her first reception for scholarship underwriters and winners was an "incredible" experience. "I met the young man who got the scholarship. It was very nicely done."

Sullivan said he believes the scholarship fund has been "a little bit of an outlet" for the Schliepsiek and Bielenberg families "with all their pain and frustration that they had to be able to say, 'OK, we're going to remember these two beautiful kids, and it's continuing to grow and still does.' It's better than flowers. It lasts longer than flowers."

While the Community Foundation does not exist to help families work through tragedies, Sullivan considers it a valuable tool for doing just that. "If we can be able to assist families to do good from that tragedy and to be able to have a place for people to express their love for a family and for an individual and to know that there is permanence with what they're trying to do, then I think it's very fortunate that we're able to do that."

"And look at the people that are able to say that they went to school because of the scholarship that they received. It's, I think, just a beautiful way to remember people and to show appreciation."



## A SAMPLING OF OTHER FUNDS

The Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall Fund provides health and educational benefits to children of veterans of Vietnam and later conflicts. The proceeds were left over from community fund-raisers that brought the Moving Wall Exhibit to Peoria.

The Peoria Audubon Society placed its Sanctuary Fund at the Community Foundation. The money is to be used to acquire a sanctuary to preserve habitat for breeding and migratory birds.

Manual High School, Washington Gifted School, the Peoria Municipal Band and efforts to combat Alzheimer's Disease are regular beneficiaries of designated funds. There are funds that provide help for homeless youth, wildlife, literacy, Lakeview Wilds and riverfront development.

## RECIPIENTS

Anyone who has walked along the downtown riverfront, checked out the nation's largest model solar system, used the historical photo collection at the Peoria Public Library, appreciated the twinkle of the lights on the Murray Baker Bridge, heard the Heritage Ensemble, gone to the Bach Festival, or been pleased that his child has learned about clean water has the Community Foundation of Central Illinois to thank.

In short, that's most of those who live in the Peoria area.

The first grants, given out in 1989, were small and few. Board minutes from the December 7 meeting reflect that 33 proposals seeking \$179,802 were received for the year's second round of grant-making, but there was just \$20,000 to distribute. In fiscal 2007, by contrast, the Community Foundation of Central Illinois and its donors poured some \$6.7 million into community causes.

Small gifts – the majority under \$2,500 – were the Foundation's forte during the early years. That is changing. A 2006 report from consultant Helen Monroe urged the Foundation to focus on larger gifts that would have greater impact and visibility. On May 3, 2007, the board approved steps intended to lead to larger grants, with an award ceiling of \$15,000.

Even small gifts have the potential to change lives. Small gifts allow an agency to try out a new idea that scares off establishment donors and make the case for more permanent, extensive funding. Small gifts attract matching dollars. Small gifts in the right hands have the potential to transform how things are done.

In a November 22, 1986, Journal Star story reporting on the Foundation's establishment, co-founder Ed Siebert was quoted as saying, "The main incentive is to try to provide seed money for new and innovative programs

that have no funding." Often the Foundation's gift is part of a package of grants that enables something to happen. But sometimes it's the critical funding source or the only one. On occasion, recipients have been able to say that something the Peoria area takes for granted would not have happened but for the Community Foundation's input.

Here are some examples.

### THE HERITAGE ENSEMBLE

Sharon Reed, founder and director, says the Heritage Ensemble was "an investment" for the Community Foundation. "I think we would be one of the shining examples of reaching out.... They decided to take a risk, and the rest is history."

The Foundation and Reed have been together since 1993, when Delta Sigma Theta, Peoria Alumnae Chapter, received a \$3,700 grant to help put on a concert version of "Porgy & Bess." "We sought the grant because as a leader in the arts community, I saw a real cultural void in the community," she said. She noticed the void when she moved to Peoria in 1972 and by the 1990s had grown "really frustrated." Through her sorority, Reed proposed the start of a solution – a performance that would "provide real cultural opportunities" to those who had been largely missed in the local arts scene.

Six years later, Opera Illinois decided to stage a production of "Porgy and Bess" and asked Reed to be chorus master. She brought along some of those who'd sung with her in 1993. As the rehearsals played out, the opera's director asked Reed pointedly when she was going to formalize the group. It didn't take long. The Heritage Ensemble's first concert was in 1999.

Since then, the Ensemble has performed at important community occasions, such as the Lincoln Day banquet, the mayor's swearing-in ceremonies and the 9-11 commemorative services. The Ensemble has sung at Carnegie Hall and for Katrina victims. It's adopted a school (Roosevelt). This is in addition to two major performances a year, one near Martin Luther King's birthday and the other in celebration of Juneteenth. Its purpose remains to "celebrate African-American history and culture through music."

Not only has the Heritage Ensemble expanded the community's cultural offerings, it has helped "to tear down walls and build bridges between all people," according to Reed. The Community Foundation continues to contribute. A \$2,500 gift helped make possible the Ensemble's June 2007 concert, billed as a Musical Tribute to African-American Stage and Screen.

### DRESS FOR SUCCESS

In 1996, a New York University law student spent her \$5,000 inheritance to launch Dress for Success, the now international program that gives clothing away to women

who can't afford to outfit themselves for job interviews. Three years later the Community Foundation's Women's Fund seeded the new Peoria chapter with a \$7,200 gift to Friendship House, the local parent.

"It gave us a sense of identity because it was clearly a program for women," said Barbara Hartnett, Women's Fund president at the time. "It was a good match. I don't think Friendship House would have launched it if it weren't for the grant."

Two years later, Hartnett became executive director of Friendship House, which in 2007 still operated Dress for Success. Women whose interviews lead to jobs get a full week's wardrobe and the opportunity to take part in a professional group that Hartnett says helps them stay employed. A Career Corner, which she describes as an "open lab" where women can improve skills and consult resource materials, is part of that effort. A Community Foundation gift in 2006 bought materials, software and a laptop computer for the lab.

Between 1999 and 2007, Dress for Success supplied more than 2,000 outfits to more than 500 women. In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2007, some 160 women were "dressed." Sixty percent got the jobs they sought, Hartnett said.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Katie Jones, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley, says Community Foundation assistance proved "transforming" for mental health efforts focused on suicide prevention, particularly among teens. Before 2004, the association's suicide prevention efforts were pretty much limited to a Call for Help hotline, and the grants to pay for that had dried up.

Since 2004, the Foundation has seeded several pilot projects. Brimfield High School became the first in the state to offer Teen Screen, which looks for teens with mental health problems that might cause them to be suicidal. Yellow Ribbon training, which Jones likens to a "first-aid" program for mental health, had been provided to 2,000 people by mid-2007. More than 1,100 teachers, parents and medical personnel had been involved in QPR, a community-wide approach to suicide prevention. Jones believes the effects of these efforts have been multiplied because they "turned up the volume" on the problem and the existence of solutions.

"We needed somebody who believed in us to do an innovative program, show good outcomes and expand it," Jones said in a 2007 interview. "The Community Foundation really, definitely, without qualification helped us transform suicide prevention in central Illinois. That's just my blanket statement."

Instrumental in the Community Foundation's giving is the fund established by the family of Whitney Grotts, the Brimfield student leader who took her own life at the age

of 16 in 2004. As of 2007, her family and friends had raised \$150,000 to be used for suicide prevention.

## CHILDREN'S SUMMER PROGRAMS

Grants over three consecutive years paid for guest artists to work with children in three Peoria Park District summer camps. In 2007, Dennis Stroughmatt brought along his Creole Stories, complete with French Cajun folk songs and river history lessons. He also brought his wife, who taught dance and helped with art projects displayed at the Ya Ya Gumbo festival at Glen Oak Park. The previous year a Bloomington artist, Danell Dvorak, helped children design, paint, glaze and fire two Islamic tile murals for Proctor Center's auditorium. About 40 children a year are involved. Linda Huff, the Park District's fine arts coordinator, says the grants (\$4,200 in 2007, \$4,190 in 2006 and \$1,500 in 2005) paid all the costs and the programs would not have been possible otherwise.

In 2004 the Park District was able to re-establish its Great Expectations Show Chorus, a teen performance venue popular in the 1960s and 1970s but subsequently abandoned. The one-time \$1,000 gift launched a chorus that in 2007 was growing and self-supporting; performance fees paid the bills.

Here are other examples of the Community Foundation's efforts in central Illinois.

## OUR RIVER, OUR BRIDGE, OUR HISTORY, OUR SOLAR SYSTEM

The Peoria area really is the center of the universe; the Guinness Book of World Records says so. Or used to. For a number of years Guinness said the *Community Solar System*, centered by a 36-foot sun at Lakeview Museum and stretching to one-inch Pluto in Kewanee, was the nation's largest scale model. Besides the sun and planets, there are asteroids in 30 schools and comets in museums across the country.

The project was funded through a \$13,750 challenge grant in 1991, the largest the Community Foundation had given at the time. In addition to stirring interest in astronomy, the scale models are the inspiration for the annual Interplanetary Bike Ride that attracts riders from other cities and states.

The *Murray Baker Bridge* brightens the night in Peoria and East Peoria, thanks to a \$150,000 fund-raising campaign assisted by the Community Foundation. Credit goes to Leonard Marshall, the banker who brought his dreams for riverfront redevelopment to Peoria from Louisville, and D. James Jumer, who owned the Boatworks in the city's downtown.

Then-executive director Donna Haerr said Marshall was looking for visibility for the fledgling Community Foundation – the year was 1989 – as well as for the bridge. While Jumer led the fund-raising effort, the Community

Foundation served as a repository for tax-deductible gifts. This limited but necessary role for financing specific projects was one the founders had in mind. The bridge lights twinkled for the first time on July 4, 1991.

Again at Marshall's urging, the Community Foundation helped underwrite a development plan for the deteriorated riverfront. The Downtown Revitalization Council used the Foundation to receive nearly \$150,000 in donations to finish the *Riverfront Promenade Project* between Liberty Park and Jumer's Boatworks.

The Peoria Public Library was the first public library in the state to begin converting its collection of *historical photos*, many old and irreplaceable, to compact discs. The work began in 1995 with an \$8,000 grant from the Community Foundation. Approximately 2,000 pictures had been put on disc as of 2007.

## THE ARTS

The Community Foundation has played a critical role in bringing top-quality entertainment to Peoria, while at the same time raising funds for the local ballet, symphony, civic chorale and opera.

In 1998 the Foundation was a key supporter of the effort to bring the *Bolshoi Ballet* to the Civic Center. Tickets sold so quickly that a second performance was added. In 2001, violinist *Itzhak Perlman* and pianist *Andre Watts* were the major attractions in what was billed as a World-Class Weekend for the Arts. It raised \$75,000 for local arts organizations.

Martin Dicke, co-founder of Peoria's *Bach Festival*, said he is unaware of any similarly sized city that hosts an annual musical tribute to the composer, let alone such an ambitious one. Peoria's festival began in 2002 with limited concerts and a \$1,800 budget. In 2007 it featured two major concerts, a Sunday cantata, a chamber concert, two noon performances and a children's program over the course of a week.

Dicke said Community Foundation support (\$4,600 in fiscal 2007) enabled organizers to bring in internationally known Bach performers to do St. John's Passion, a major and difficult work. The money also helped keep the festival, which grew to a \$38,000 budget, in the black.

A Foundation grant enabled the *Central Illinois Youth Symphony* to establish a brass ensemble in 2006 as a means of attracting more brass players. A year later, the number had grown from 13 to 22. Foundation funds made it possible to broadcast a concert on WCBU and offer a master class for higher-level performers.

The Sun Foundation is a Washburn-based not-for-profit agency that works to strengthen arts and environmental sciences through programs directed largely at children. One of its main efforts is the *Clean Water Day Celebration*, which has attracted 25,000 schoolchildren over 15 years. The event uses science and art to teach

the importance of safe and adequate water supplies and the value of conservation. In 2007 Foundation assistance largely covered the costs of a playwright to write a play that was performed at the celebration.

"We would not have been able to do it (the arts portion of the event) without the Community Foundation," said Joan Erickson, co-founder and development director for the Sun Foundation. The Sun Foundation placed its own endowment with the Community Foundation because "we knew it would be reputable and offer a long-term benefit to us and the community."

## CHILDREN

A \$1,000 gift enabled 1,000 low-income children to see the *Dinosaurs Alive* exhibit at Lakeview Museum in 1990. Among them were children from the inner-city, migrant workers' kids and disabled youngsters.

A 2005 grant of \$1,912 launched a "*Writing for Life*" storytelling program that paired Pekin grandmothers and granddaughters. The pairs learned to tell their own stories and listen to those from a different generation.

The *Lincoln Middle School Art Club* used a \$100 grant to make pictures and clay sculptures for nursing home residents. A description of the project submitted by the students said "the best part ... was going to the nursing home and ... seeing their faces as we hung the pictures we made on their walls." The children said people "cried when we gave the pictures to them." The Lincoln money was part of an effort to promote community service work among schoolchildren, called OTHER\$. A dearth of applications from teachers brought a regrettable end to the program.

A 1990 survey funded partly by the Foundation determined that Peoria County children aged 12 to 17 were using *alcohol* at nearly twice the rate of youths nationwide. Six Tazewell County schools got *school health centers* with Community Foundation assistance. Placed at the Community Foundation, the William Blackie Fund provided the start-up money to launch the *Edison program* at Franklin Elementary School and otherwise assist the neighborhood. A dozen Sterling School eighth graders created two *TV commercials* designed to discourage their peers from smoking. The commercials were broadcast on a children's television show.

## AND STILL MORE

The Peoria area has some new cooks, and low-income people have some new jobs, thanks to a program the South Side Mission launched in 2006 with the help of a Community Foundation \$2,500 grant. The money was among \$100,000 raised to establish and equip a *Culinary Arts School* designed to help the unemployed or underemployed train for a job that pays a living wage. The school has trained homeless women living in shelters, high school dropouts and ex-cons. In a 2007 interview,



Phil Newton, the Mission's executive director, said the most recent valedictorian had become a chef at the Père Marquette Hotel.

Culinary arts students also fix meals for the Mission's Lighthouse Diner soup kitchen. In 2007 members of the first graduating class got a standing ovation when they prepared the hors d'oeuvres for the Community Foundation's Legacy Society Reception.

In 1990, after white supremacists and Ku Klux Klan members made repeated visits to Pekin, the *Pekin Coalition for Racial Equality* applied for a grant to begin a public education and exchange series to combat racism. It received \$2,229.

When a Peoria police officer nicknamed "Officer Smiley" was shot and killed in 2001, city councilwomen Marcella Teplitz and Gale Thetford collaborated with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to create a fund to raise money to buy *bulletproof vests* costing \$800 apiece. They called it Home for the Holidays and based it at the Community Foundation. As of 2007, \$94,000 had been paid out.

A grant enabled SeniorStrength to start a support group for *abused elderly women*. Grants over several years helped equip a Senior Center at *Pearce Community Center* in Chillicothe with fitness and kitchen equipment. Foundation grants have encouraged *volunteerism and community leadership*.

A Community Foundation fund helped maintain the *Duryea* in Peoria. America's first successful gasoline-powered automobile, the Duryea was produced in Peoria Heights. Only three remain.

In 2007, the Foundation assisted WTVP public television station as it broadcast the stories of local World War II veterans in connection with the Ken Burns series.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Among all who have received scholarships from the Community Foundation, retired executive director George Kreiss said his favorite was the young man who worked in a menial job in an auto shop when he was given money to go to Illinois Central College. He wrote the Foundation a letter expressing his pride in moving up to the grease rack and subsequently to full-fledged auto mechanic.

Asked to speak at an annual meeting, the young man arrived in his work clothes to address those wearing business suits, recalled Chris Schultz Hardine, the Foundation's program officer from 1994 to 2000. "When he spoke, he was truly inspirational."

The Foundation has custody of 44 scholarship endowments. In the 2007 fiscal year, more than \$100,000 was distributed from these funds.

## SPECIAL MOMENTS

### THE BOLSHOI BALLET

There is no name in ballet quite like the Bolshoi, and it was a real coup when the Russian dancers put Peoria on their 22-city U.S. tour in 1998. The Journal Star's reviewer called the performance "magnificent" and declared, "Dancing of this magnitude doesn't often come to central Illinois." The Community Foundation partnered with the Civic Center to bring the dancers in to teach classes and to give one performance – which became two when tickets quickly sold out. The second event sold out as well. Altogether, more than 3,500 people saw the ballet in Peoria.

In Community Foundation lore, the Bolshoi story looms large.

George Kreiss, then executive director, recalls getting a call at the office saying the entire troupe was at the airport, wanting to know "where do you want us, and where do we go?" Somehow the bus that was to take them to their hotel had failed to arrive. Few of the dancers spoke English.

Civic Center officials scrambled to pick them up and deliver them to the Hotel Père Marquette, but the rooms weren't ready. Chris Schultz Hardine, the Foundation's program officer, rushed to the hotel to help out – and discovered dancers everywhere. "I remember looking in amid all these people kind of doing pliés, all surrounded by luggage. People were complaining left and right." When the hotel opened its restaurant to feed the ballerinas, things calmed down.

But Hardine had a lingering worry: The troupe's producer had promised to sign posters for big underwriters. "I kept asking, 'Is this a good time to sign the posters?' and he'd say, 'No, it's not a good time,'" she recalled in a 2007 interview. She said she feared the producer would break his promise because "this guy's still mad at me" for the airport mix-up. Sunday morning, as the dancers were leaving, she asked again, "Is this a good time?" It was.

The event raised \$54,000 for four local arts organizations.

### WORLD CLASS WEEKEND OF THE ARTS

Most people can tell stories of being handed a lemon and turning it into lemonade. It takes some wizardry to watch your lemonade become a lemon and find a way to make it sweet again.

That's the story behind the World Class Weekend of the Arts, touted as a "giant, gala weekend ... expected to draw music lovers from throughout the state" to hear pianist Andre Watts perform on Friday, September 22, 2001, and violinist Itzhak Perlman on Saturday, September 23, at the Civic Center (Civic Center executive Deb Ritschel, as paraphrased in the March 24, 2001, Journal Star).

It was as successful as Ritschel predicted, raising \$75,000 for the Peoria Symphony Orchestra, the Peoria Ballet, Opera Illinois, the Peoria Area Civic Chorale and a new performing arts fund at the Community Foundation. But it could have been a disaster.

In a 2007 interview, Jim Sullivan, executive director at the time, said he had approached Ritschel about bringing in artistic talent on the caliber of the Bolshoi, doing it cooperatively and using the event to raise funds. He said Ritschel proposed partnering to invite Perlman, who was available on a day the Civic Center theater was free.

"It turns out the Symphony had already contracted for Andre Watts to come in and be their key (performer) for the year on the day before that... When the Symphony found out that we were bringing Perlman in, Deb Ritschel's phone, and my phone, began ringing off the hook. They were very upset. They needed to go out and raise sponsorship money for Watts" and worried ("rightfully," Sullivan said) that patrons and patronage would suffer.

Meeting with Ritschel and Judy Furniss, the Symphony's executive director, Sullivan said he proposed working together on fund-raising. "I don't know who to give the credit to, it certainly isn't me, but one of them said, 'Why don't we make this a weekend of the arts – a world-class weekend?'"

Memories differ somewhat on this.

Ritschel said the date chosen for Perlman was the only available one that worked with the theater schedule. She said it was she who proposed combining the events "since it would work to benefit the Peoria Symphony Orchestra" as well as other arts organizations. She said Furniss and her board quickly bought in.

In any case, promoting the concerts as a package "made so much sense," Sullivan said, but also required so much funding. It helped that the Civic Center would waive expenses, but sponsors still were needed. A Community Foundation leader agreed to approach philanthropist Ellen Foster first. She "just fell in love with it," Sullivan said. "She loved the fact that we were collaborating and doing it together. She said, 'How much do you need'? She said 'we'll take care of it.'" All of it.

There was one more problem. Perlman, crippled by childhood polio, could not fly on a commercial airliner. Beyond that, he was on a tight schedule. The Kress Family, owners of a heavy equipment manufacturing business in Brimfield, agreed to provide a private jet.

"It turned out to be the perfect way for it to happen, but it started out with two organizations taking shots at each other because both organizations wanted to do something special," said Sullivan. "And we both could have gone on and done them independently, and it wouldn't have been nearly as successful as what it was by having come together."

## THE \$5 MILLION MARK

Everyone agreed on the goal – endowments totaling \$5 million were necessary for the Community Foundation to establish what former executive director George Kreiss called "critical mass," meaning that "it could take care of itself.... We would be able to chug along," income covering operating expenses. The task force that created the Foundation set fiscal 1992 as the year to reach \$5 million; a long-range plan subsequently adopted said 1993 would do. Not until spring of 1998 was the Foundation able to say it had \$5 million in endowment funds.

"We got there just about the time I discovered that \$5 million wasn't critical mass anymore; it was ten," Kreiss said in a 2007 interview. "I remember going to a board meeting and saying, 'I've got good news and bad news. The good news is we have \$5 million; the bad news is the critical mass number is now \$10 million.' It just struck me as sort of ironic."

## THE DEPOSITORY

The Community Foundation was established to hold long-term endowments and use income from them to help the community. The Depository was established on February 7, 1991, to enable individuals to use the Foundation to handle their routine charitable giving. It holds deposits for as long as directed and distributes both income and principal when directed.

The Depository's major appeal is that it enables a donor to take a tax deduction when he wants or needs it. This is particularly important when capital gains taxes are involved. John Sahn was general counsel to CILCORP as well as Community Foundation board president when the Depository was created in 1991. When CILCORP was sold in 1999, the highly appreciated stock that had been distributed to local investors "resulted in a very substantial amount of donations to the Community Foundation," he recalled in a 2007 interview.

Similarly, many who held Caterpillar stock as its value soared to \$60 a share, and higher, chose to donate shares to the Foundation to take advantage of "a very controlled and organized distribution – and yet still be able to take the deduction of a charitable contribution." Between May 15, 2003, and August 21, the Depository received 10,000 shares of Cat stock. The donations helped the fund recover from investment losses in 2001 and 2002. In October of 2003, Depository assets stood at \$2.4 million, nearly \$1 million more than a year earlier.

Even for those without appreciated stock, or considerable sums to donate, the Depository has important advantages. It's easy and efficient, since donors can give the Foundation a list of intended recipients and let the staff write the checks. In terms of services rendered donors, Sahn said the Depository "is probably as prominent" as

anything is. The Community Foundation benefits because it uses interest from the deposits to help fund operations. Most importantly, the community benefits from the donations.

Ed Siebert, a Community Foundation founder, recalls making a trip to Louisville, Ky., to talk to the man who'd dreamed up Depositories and coming home convinced one would work in Peoria. Local attorney Jerold Horn put the legal pieces together. At the time, Horn said in a 2007 interview, "I don't think anybody had any idea how popular it would be or how important it would become or even exactly how it would work." He said he's been surprised by the impact.

Asked in 2007 to reflect upon the most important decisions the young organization's leaders made, Siebert quickly responded, "The Depository... It has been a very good tool, and it's added ... to the community. It opened up a lot of people to use the Community Foundation that would not have otherwise."

At the end of fiscal 2007, nearly 350 Depository accounts held \$4.7 million.

## THE WOMEN'S FUND

Pat Barton said the Women's Fund changes people. It changes those who get the money and those who give it. It empowers both.

Barton, a civic leader and philanthropist, was a Community Foundation Board member when the idea of a special fund devoted to meeting the needs of women, directed and largely supported by women, first arose. In a 2007 interview, she said Donna Haerr, then-executive director, brought it up. "I pushed it through the board, but it was her idea."

Also interviewed in 2007, Haerr said the idea was Barton's. Other important role players included Deb Ritschel, then-marketing director for the Peoria Civic Center, and promoter Jay Goldberg. Ritschel and Goldberg wanted to give some proceeds from the Women's Lifestyle Show to organizations that dealt with women's issues. In 1993, they partnered with the Community Foundation to create the fund, endowed by a \$2,000 donation from the show.

Barton said a fund devoted to women's needs was a response to the fact that "a lot of the power structure is with men. They sometimes don't think about women's issues, that what to them would be a small thing can be a monumental obstacle to a woman." For example, "when you have a single mother, how is she going to leave her one-year-old child at home while she's taking an education class?" Generally speaking, women understand that something like this can get in the way of other noble efforts, while men don't, said Barton. And the Community Foundation Board at the time was dominated by men.

"Power does come from money, and women do control much of the money in this country," Haerr told the Journal Star when the Women's Fund was announced.

"They've never learned they can effect change."

That's where a fund managed and largely supported by women could play a role, Barton said. "It was very, very important for women to see themselves as philanthropists." Women who don't have large sums of money to give "often think philanthropy is not for them." But you don't have to have deep pockets to be a philanthropist. "You can make a real difference by bonding together with other people." A good example of how this works is the fund's "Thousand for a Million Campaign." Its goal is to raise \$1 million by getting \$1,000 each from 1,000 women. By the end of fiscal 2007, nearly 100 women had bought in.

The Women's Fund has sponsored an all-female crew to build a Habitat for Humanity house; funded breast cancer and lupus research (women suffer disproportionately from the diseases); assisted the Girl Scouts, the YWCA and domestic violence-prevention efforts. Creative fund-raising events included "A Tour of 10 Lofts," the renovated warehouse condos at 401 Water, and a Peoria appearance by Saffire -- The Uppity Blues Women.

By the end of fiscal 2007, the fund had given away \$146,000. Its endowment totaled \$280,000.

## BASEBALL, TRAINS AND BEACHFRONT PROPERTY

The Community Foundation became part owners of the Peoria Chiefs in August of 2001, when Don and Sylvia Fites and Jim DeSpain, all retired Caterpillar executives, handed over their interests in the baseball team. Major League Baseball rules required background checks on all shareholders, including the Community Foundation -- "an interesting process," said Sullivan, executive director at the time. There was no market for the stock.

"So we just put it in our safe deposit box and sat on it... Whenever there was an ownership meeting, we were invited, so I always attended so all the other owners knew that we owned that stock and knew that we wanted to sell it at some point," Sullivan said in a 2007 interview. Construction of the Downtown stadium brought renewed interest in the Chiefs and a purchase offer. The nine shares sold in 2004 for \$6,000 each.

In June of 2002, the Foundation got a railroad -- a Lionel train collection that had belonged to another retired Caterpillar executive, Jim Baldwin. Baldwin instructed that the proceeds be placed in his Depository account to aid the proposed Downtown museum. Jim Sullivan says it took more than two years to sell the trains, still in their boxes, never opened.

In 2004 Sullivan said he got a call from a central Illinois woman he didn't know. "She says, 'I want to give you a lot to sell and I want to establish a fund with the money.'"

"Great, OK," was his response.

"Well, it's in North Carolina," she said.

"And I said, 'Pardon me?'"



“She says, ‘It’s just a lot, but you don’t know what lots are in Bald Head, North Carolina.’ And she said, ‘but you’ve got to commit to me we can have this done before year-end for the tax deduction.’”

It was November.

The lot sold for \$492,000. The proceeds remain in a fund with the Community Foundation.

This “non-traditional” gift, and questions raised by the earlier two, prompted the board to adopt a Gift Acceptance Policy. Gifts would be accepted if they posed no risk to the foundation, were easily convertible to assets, served a charitable purpose and could be administered in accordance with the donors’ wishes.

## COMMUNITYWORKS

When the Grand Victoria Casino got its license to operate in Elgin, it promised the state it would set up a charitable foundation to help its community. As resources grew, its leaders decided to use them to assist foundations in other communities, specifically young ones. In 2003, the Community Foundation of Central Illinois was one of 18 statewide chosen to receive Communityworks grants designed to do three things: (1) Provide guidance on fund-raising, growth, leadership, approaches to philanthropy and other procedures important to success, (2) Raise endowment funds that would be spent on three targeted issues -- child care, workforce development, and land use and protection, (3) Provide a boost in operating funds to give the new foundations some breathing room as they devoted resources to the above.

Grand Victoria’s award to Peoria consisted of \$210,000 in operating funds, to be spent over five years, and \$250,000 in endowment dollars, to fund projects in the area of child care, workforce development, and land use and protection. The endowment grant is contingent upon raising \$225,000 from central Illinois contributors, for a total endowment of \$475,000. As of the end of 2007, approximately \$80,000 remained to be raised.

According to the terms of the Communityworks grant, the Community Foundation must grant at least \$50,000 by May of 2008 to the targeted programs. As of November 2007, one program in child care and one in land use had been tentatively identified – both with a workforce development component. The intent of the child-care program would be to improve the quality of care given by improving the education and training of caregivers, according to Sullivan. It would be located in the Manual High School attendance area.

Plans for the land-use program are less developed, but Sullivan hoped to set up a demonstration rainwater runoff program and to prepare low-income people for careers in landscaping and the environment. Sullivan was concerned that even a \$475,000 endowment would be insufficient to underwrite the programs. A fund drive was under consideration.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### INTERVIEWS WITH:

- Linda Aylward, Peoria Public Library historian
- Pat Barton, civic leader, philanthropist, former board member, leader in establishment of The Women's Fund, founder of For the Family fund
- Fran Donahue, board president, Central Illinois Youth Symphony
- Shelley Epstein, the Jamie Epstein Memorial Scholarship Fund and a board member
- Martin Dicke, co-founder, Peoria's Bach Festival
- Joan Erickson, co-founder and development director, Sun Foundation
- Karen Grotts, The Whitney Grotts Fund
- Donna Haerr, executive director, 1988-1995
- Chris Schultz Hardine, former program officer
- Barbara Hartnett, executive director, Friendship House, former Women's Fund board member
- Jerold Horn, Peoria attorney and former board member
- Linda Huff, fine arts coordinator, Peoria Park District
- Katie Jones, executive director, Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley
- George Kreiss, executive director, 1995-1999
- Lynn Landes, initial board member and arts leader
- Maryann Morrison, administrator, Caterpillar Foundation, and member of the first board
- Gordon Peters, Russell F. & Eleanor Sikes Peters Performing Arts Fund
- Phil Newton, executive director, South Side Mission
- Sharon Reed, founder and director, Heritage Ensemble
- Franklin Renner, retired Peoria attorney and early promoter of a community foundation for Peoria
- Deb Ritschel, manager, Peoria Civic Center
- John Sahn, third Community Foundation president
- George Schaefer, retired Caterpillar Inc. board chairman
- Sue Schliepsiek, Andy and Jamie Schliepsiek Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Edward Siebert, chairman of the task force that recommended forming a community foundation, registered agent for incorporation, second president
- Jerry Stephens, RLI Insurance Co. board chairman, RLI Insurance Co. funds
- Ken Strmiska, managing director, Community Foundation Services, Council on Foundations
- Jim Sullivan, executive director, 1999-2008
- Eugene and Harriett Swager, Eugene and Harriett Swager Fund for Public Art
- Gregory J. Tiemeier, RLI Insurance Co. administrative services, RLI funds
- Kathy Trowbridge, executive director, Very Special Arts
- Helen Young, RLI Insurance Co. administrative secretary, RLI funds
- Jennifer Wilfong, "Can Do" scholarship fund
- Murray Yeomans, former owner Yeomans Distributing, former board member, and (with wife Rena) founder of The Yeomans Fund

### ANNUAL REPORTS: 1988-2007

### MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS: 1989 through 2007

Community Foundation newsletters and miscellaneous records

Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce records

Articles of Incorporation, Peoria Area Community Foundation

The Journal Star

Inter-Business Issues, "An interview with George Kreiss," undated

"Peoria Area Community Foundation Today" Speech by John Sahn and Betty Vonachen, Peoria Downtown Rotary Club, February 15, 1991

### VARIOUS SCRAPBOOKS:

Donna Haerr  
Community Foundation



# Community foundation plans will benefit future generations



*Donna M. Haerr*  
Executive Director

## Community foundation plans will benefit future generations

By BETH GEHRT  
of the Observer

"THE BEST THING ONE GENERATION CAN DO FOR THE NEXT IS TO LAY DOWN A FEW STEPPING STONES," it says on the front of the informational pamphlet describing the newly-formed Peoria Area Community Foundation.

And that is exactly what executive director Donna Haerr hopes to do.

Scholarships to area students, aid to new projects, grants or loans to charitable groups and the administration of endowment funds for other organizations are just a few of the services that could be available to the Peoria area soon.

The foundation is the result of a Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce task force and although the office just opened in June, the concept is an old one.

Designed to remedy special needs in the community that otherwise might be missed, the foundation is a sort of philanthropic pool, large enough to be visible, yet allowing charitable gifts, both great and small, to be administered professionally and "according to the wishes of each donor."

"There are things in our community that fall between the cracks when it comes to giving and this is what the community foundation will be funding," said Haerr.

"It will be those projects and organizations that are newly formed or, if it's an older organization, those with a new direction or project."

"Capital campaigns certainly fall with that area. Say the museum were to put a new addition on... that would be the type of thing," she explained.



**OPENING SHOP:** Executive director Donna Haerr holds up the sign for the Peoria Area Community Foundation office which recently opened in the Jefferson Bank Building. The foundation is a community endowment designed to provide grants and service to educational, cultural and social problems that might otherwise "fall through the cracks." (Photo by Julie Andersen)

"There are a number of human services and health-related services that we would want to be involved with. And community development would be the other thing — like maybe along the waterfront. It's not just social services."

## Firm foundation

*Vehicle to promote community strength keeps steady growth*

By DEBBIE HANSON  
of the Observer

Donna Haerr is planning for Peoria's future. As executive director of the Peoria Area Community Foundation (PACF), she, along with bookkeeper Mary Kella, 17 members of the board of directors and a 75-member governing board, is concerning herself with Peoria's needs.

The idea of the foundation was born in 1983 when a group of concerned citizens in collaboration with the Peoria Chamber of Commerce formed a task force to accommodate the changing needs of Peoria.

The Peoria Area Community Foundation was incorporated in 1986, and the office at 124 SW Adams Street, Suite 530, opened in 1988 with donations from community businesses.

The suite is compliments of Jefferson Bank. The conference table was donated by the Peoria Greater Airport Authority and refurnished by Limestone School students. And the yellow couch has seen many a day in a Caterpillar Inc. ladies' room.

The PACF is one of more than 300 professionally-administered community foundations in the United States. Haerr was one of the original governing board members.

"We were a group of concerned citizens looking for something that would

emigration was at its peak. She and others like her came together in hopes of having some impact as the city's needs increase.

"We are trying to find ways to provide a permanent source of capital for Peoria. Our needs are constantly changing. When Caterpillar went on strike, a lot of people left the community," Haerr said.

"Part of those who left were the innovators making Peoria work. We're trying to have a backup means should that, or any other major change, ever happen again."

With the foundation, there will always be leaders interested in the good of the community, according to Haerr. She said the community will always come first because the governing body and board of directors consist of volunteers and current local leaders who can serve no more than six years.

"Our board member terms are 3-6 years. The first board had nine members and now we have 18 seats."

"The board is about to name a person the board who will replace someone relocated for his company."

"Right now our most current project is the financial backing for the bridge she said stretching to look at the pier through her office window. Lights are installed on the Murray Baker Bridge."

The foundation's primary purpose is making grants, but it also supports



## Cat gives \$500,000 to foundation

Caterpillar Inc. has donated \$500,000 to the Peoria Area Community Foundation to help fund a "community leadership" grant program, foundation officials announced recently.

PACF hopes to raise \$5 million for its Community Leadership Fund by 1993, officials said. Interest earned by the endowment fund will be used for grants to area non-profit organizations working in the fields of education, health, arts and humanities, community and social services.

"There are some other national and local organizations we have contacted that we hope will contribute," said foundation President Edward Siebert. "We are hoping Caterpillar's donation will act as something of a 'jump start' for the foundation."

Siebert said the 3-year-old tax-exempt organization will award \$22,000 in grants in late September.

PACF also has received a "technical assistance grant" from the Council on Foundations in Washington D.C.



Community leaders say ...

# Peoria's prospects promising in 1989

OBSERVER, Wednesday, December 28, 1988



## Breast cancer target of new area grants

□ Nearly \$19,000 given to groups expected to reach 3,000 women

By JOANNE HONG  
of the Journal Star

Five Peoria-area organizations this week received grants totaling nearly \$19,000 to promote awareness and help educate women in Central Illinois about breast cancer.

In a press conference Wednesday morning, Linda Maricle, president of the Junior League of Peoria; and John Sahn, president of the Peoria Area Community Foundation, announced that the five recipients were: the American Cancer Society with a \$2,000 grant; Susan G. Komen Breast Center with a \$5,810 grant; Peoria City/County Health Department Extension; Woodford County Cooperative Extension; and Tazewell County Health Department with a \$3,784 grant.

These organizations will reach out to help more than 3,000 women, said Donna Haerr, executive director of the Community Foundation.

She said the Junior League raised the funds for the annual Race for the Cure, described as the largest all-woman foot race in the nation.

The Community Foundation, which will disburse the proceeds in spring and fall, seeks applications from organizations within a 50-mile radius of Peoria.

All of these organizations will use the grants to support programs on breast health education.

"The work that they (the organizations) are doing is extremely important," Sahn said.

For example, the Woodford County Cooperative Extension Service would use the grant to fund a cancer awareness program targeted for women. Woodford County, representative Ellen Butcher, said. Volunteer instructors will receive in-depth training about risk factors and early detection techniques to teach these to groups of women in their communities.

Sahn said the Community Foundation is accepting preliminary applications for the fall disbursement.

To raise the proceeds, the sixth annual Race for the Cure is scheduled for May 11 at the Metro Center at the intersection of University Street and Grand Avenue.

The Junior League is planning to participate in this race.

The April 20 deadline to enter the race has been extended to April 30 to allow more time for those people interested to get their applications in, Maricle said.

There is a \$14 entry fee.

For further information about the race, contact the Junior League at 685-9312. For further information about the grant applications, contact the Community Foundation at 674-5730.



Proceeds from the 1990 Junior League "Race for the Cure" were recently distributed to beneficiaries by Donna Haerr, right, executive director of the Peoria Area Community Foundation. Accepting a check in the amount of \$2,833 on behalf of the Susan G. Komen Breast Center was its director, Judy Osborne. The Breast Center will use its share of the race funds to produce a video tape on breast self-examination targeted toward minority women.

## Grants awarded for breast cancer education

The Peoria Area Community Foundation awarded \$13,890 in grants to eight groups in the area that are working to promote breast cancer awareness and education.

The Women's Health Awareness Fund, established in February, is a project of the Junior League of Peoria and was funded by proceeds generated from the 1989 Race For The Cure.

"We wanted to reach out into areas of the community that were untouched by breast cancer awareness," Junior League president Helen Young said last week.

Young said the league wanted to expand geographically, with its education efforts, looking beyond

traditional grant recipients such as area hospitals and the American Cancer Society.

PACF received \$23,000 in grant requests.

Young said preliminary applications are now being accepted for grants from the 1990 Race For The Cure.

The following organizations received grants from the Junior League and PACF:

- Bradley University, department of nursing, \$1,500 to teach students to act as educators in cancer self-examination clinics.

- Eureka Community Center, \$1,540 to set up two breast

awareness stations.

- Planned Parenthood Association of Greater Peoria, \$3,000 to teach women self-examination techniques and to purchase teaching aids.

- Tazewell/Woodford counties, Head Start, \$350 to develop an informational program on prevention, early detection and treatment of breast cancer for 210 low-income women.

- YWCA of Peoria, \$2,500 to assist post-breast cancer surgery patients with emotional and psychological

and other materials to help teach the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

- Peoria County Extension Service-Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, \$2,000 to aid in awareness among low-income women in Peoria County.

- Peoria County Extension Service-Rural Area, \$1,500 to develop a pilot program to increase the number of women who receive mammogram screenings in rural Peoria County. The project will be in cooperation with the Methodist

## Foundation awards \$17,500 to human services groups

A \$4,000 grant from Peoria Area Community Foundation may help finance a new program designed to keep low-income teen-age girls in school.

The grant is one example of how the PACF will help human services organizations. The foundation awarded \$17,500 in grants at a press

conference last week to help finance the first homes for renovation and sale to low-income families.

- Tri-County WomenStrength; \$2,500 for renovation of their building's lower level to provide space for a children's playground.

- Heart of Illinois United Way; \$2,000 to help pay for a human services needs assessment of central Illinois.

- Northside Planning Task Force; \$1,000 to supplement funds for a Bradley University assessment of current housing conditions on the Near North Side.

The community foundation chose these recipients from 52 groups that sought \$300,000, said David Connor, foundation distribution committee chairman.

"We did not want to put all our money into one grant, but we didn't want to go the other way and give everyone \$38," Connor said. "We wanted to make them significant enough to make a difference."

"The range of these recipients is pretty typical of the kinds of things we want to do."

PACF Chairman Edward Siebert said the foundation plans to distribute more funds in the future.

The five-year goal of PACF is to amass \$5 million to distribute to human services organizations in the Peoria area. Caterpillar Inc. already has donated \$500,000 to the group.

## Grants help fund local human services projects

□ Community foundation awards \$17,500 to 6 groups

A \$4,000 grant from the Peoria Area Community Foundation may help finance a new program designed to keep low-income teen-age girls in school.

The grant is one example of how PACF is helping human services organizations. The foundation awarded \$17,500 in grants at a press conference Monday.

Carver Center executive director Erma Davis said the center's grant "is designed to motivate young girls with college potential who may not have the finances to go to college."

The center's program is scheduled to start the second week of November.

Other grant recipients, the amount they received and the

projects the grant will help finance include:

- Peoria Public Schools District 150; \$4,000 to provide tuition for teachers to attend seminars on efficacy, a program designed to raise minority students' achievement levels by changing their attitudes.

- Habitat for Humanity; \$4,000 to assist in the purchase of the organization's first homes for renovation and sale to low-income families.

- Tri-County WomenStrength; \$2,500 for renovation of its building's lower level to provide space for a children's playground.

- Heart of Illinois United Way; \$2,000 to help pay for a human services needs assessment of central Illinois.

- Northside Planning Task Force; \$1,000 to supplement funds for a Bradley University assessment of current housing conditions on the Near North Side.

PACF is a tax-exempt organization that acts as a channel for donors' gifts. The community foundation chose these recipients from 52 groups that sought \$300,000, said David Connor, foundation distribution committee chairman.

"The range of these recipients is pretty typical of the kinds of things we want to do," Connor said. "We did not want to put all our money into one grant, but we didn't want to go the other way and give everyone \$38. We wanted to make (the grants) significant enough to make a difference."

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# 44 groups apply for \$22,000 in grants





## Foundation names director

**George H. Kreiss** has been named director of development and planned giving for the **Peoria Area Community Foundation**. The foundation helps donors establish and grow charitable endowments to provide financial assistance for community projects now and in the future.



## NEW DIRECTOR COMMITS TO BUILD FOUNDATION AWARENESS

On December 1, 1999, the Peoria Area Community Foundation welcomed Peoria native Jim Sullivan as its new executive director. Jim brings more than 30 years of financial experience and community involvement to the position—plus enthusiasm and a commitment to building awareness of the Foundation and the benefits it can provide to the community.

"The mission of the Foundation is absolutely wonderful. My father taught me the importance of paying back the community that's been so wonderful to our family, and it's a true blessing to me that I'm able to do that full-time," Jim says. "However, when I told people I was coming to work here, they asked 'what's that?' We're a great secret. People need to know there's this wonderful organization called the Peoria Area Community Foundation whose only purpose is to help the community and make a difference in people's lives."



Thomas and Lynn Landes Fund  
For Performing Arts  
Lakeview Museum  
*Musicians in the Museum Project*





# Recipients of RLI grants named

**PEORIA** — The Peoria Area Community Foundation recently disbursed \$14,525 from the RLI Corp. Fund to the following programs:

■ ArtsPartners of Central Illinois Inc. received a grant of \$2,500. The organization acts as the regranting agency for the Illinois Arts Council.

■ Children's Home Family Service Center received \$1,206 for screening, assessment and support services to children.

■ The Contemporary Arts Center received \$2,026 for class scholarships and supplies.

■ Franklin School Neighborhood Senior Program received \$2,600 to help a program assisting senior citizens in the area.

■ The Kickapoo Council for Girl Scouts' LEAD program received \$1,000 to provide scouting programs in Peoria's inner city.

■ The Arts in Education Spring Celebration received \$3,000 so more than 18,000 students can perform, exhibit and demonstrate their talents in the fine arts and applied arts.

■ Roosevelt Magnet

School received \$1,428 for a small-scale television production studio.

■ Tazewell County Resource Center received \$765 for its custodial program, which employs adults with disabilities.

The RLI addresses issues in education, and the foundation of intent more in the Peoria Foundation

## Nurse comes to aid of students after death

Ex-Caterpillar nursing supervisor sets up scholarships

By SCOTT HILYARD  
of the Journal Star

**PEORIA** — Throughout her 43-year career as a nursing supervisor at Caterpillar Inc., Jean Brown made it a priority to help her fellow nurses in any way she could. Then she retired. Then she died. Then she started helping them again.



Jean Brown

"Jean stood by her nurses," said Chris Stalker, another Caterpillar nurse who worked for Brown for 25 years. "She wasn't bashful."

take anybody on if she felt someone was being mistreated. I'll tell you one thing, you always felt supported." And now, thanks to an uncommon combination of foresight, loyalty and generosity, a whole new generation of nurses will feel that same support.

Page B-10, OBSERVER, Wednesday, November 7, 1990  
Community Foundation Annual Meeting



## Swagers present gift to foundation

Gene and Harriett Swager have presented a gift to the Peoria Community Foundation that will form the basis of a fund to finance public display of sculpture and other art works in the community.

The foundation hopes to raise \$100,000 by the end of 1992, and foundation Executive Director Donna Haerr said \$20,000 has been raised to date.

"The Swagers wanted to stimulate an ongoing interest in the beautification of our community through the display of appealing and colorful sculptures, paintings and commemorative art in public buildings, parks, roadsides, industrial sites and neighborhood centers," she said.

Donors who contribute \$10,000 or more will be listed permanently as Founders. Additional information is available from the foundation at 674-8730.

Peoria Community Foundation had its fifth annual meeting Nov. 1 at Wildlife On hand to announce the formation of the Russell F. and Eleanor Sikes Permanent Arts Fund was Eleanor Sikes Peters, middle, accompanied by her son-in-law, Gordon and Jean Peters. The fund was established with a gift of \$25,000 from the permanent endowment fund of the community foundation. Mr. Peters was a contributor to Bradley University's Dingeldine Music Center and its Eleanor Sikes Hall. He was active in the community including Peoria Historical Society, Peoria Opera Guild, Amateur Musical Club, Peoria Symphony Orchestra, Peoria Corn Stock Theatre and Broadway Theatre League.



Russell F. and Eleanor Sikes Peters



Roy Heimdal, second from left, Marge Heimdal, and their son, Scott, give \$25,971 to the Peoria Area Community Foundation Wednesday. The

money will add to an endowment fund that benefits non-profit Peoria-area charitable groups. Foundation President John Sahn sits at left.

## Heimdals give \$25,000 to foundation