Sioux Falls Thrive prepares to seat board and launch its first action team

Just over a year ago, leaders from Sioux Falls business, education, and philanthropic sectors took the first steps toward forming a cradle to career coalition. Now, with infrastructure coming together, the results of a pilot project in hand, and funding in place, founding organizations are getting ready for action.

The name of the coalition is Sioux Falls Thrive, and Thrive is all about improving the ecosystem around K-12 education. To that end, cradle to career initiatives begin by identifying situations that have a negative impact on a child’s ability to come to school ready to learn and bringing groups together to engage in complex, cross-sector problem-solving.

The root of many of these problems is the growing numbers of children living at or below the poverty level. Between 2008 and 2014, the number of children in Sioux Falls grew by 16%, but the number living in poverty grew by 30%. Kids are unlikely to succeed academically when their families struggle to provide a safe home and adequate nutrition or don’t have the ability to help with their studies.

Whether one’s concern is motivated by compassion or by the long-term effect on the community’s workforce and its future economic vitality, “It’s in everyone’s best interest to make sure all the children in the Sioux Falls area have the means to achieve their highest educational and career potential,” says Dr. David Kapaska, who chairs the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Candy Hanson, Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation’s Senior Advisor, was tasked with developing the infrastructure for Thrive, which will coordinate collective impact initiatives. With more than 150 communities in the U.S. using similar efforts, there were a lot of models to research. “We’re borrowing Thrive’s action team model from Alignment Nashville, which, over 10 years, increased high school graduation rates from 62% to 82%,” Hanson says.

Thrive’s founding sponsors are poised to appoint Thrive’s board of directors. The new board’s first order of business will be to review the results of Thrive’s pilot project — “Sioux Falls Affordable Housing Needs Assessment 2016” — which was conducted by Suzanne Smith, Director, Augustana Research Institute, with support from Dr. Pam Homan, Executive Director of the Augustana University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

“Augustana’s research clearly validates the need for a collective impact approach to meeting affordable housing needs,” says Andy Patterson, SFACF CIO. “There are many nonprofits able to help families find housing, but there isn’t a system that links these resources. We’re program rich and nonprofit, and faith sectors in removing roadblocks to student success. Sioux Falls Thrive will create action teams that unite business, government, nonprofit, and faith sectors in removing roadblocks to student success.”

As did for the pilot project, Augustana University will match the cost of research expense dollar-for-dollar in the coming year. Other costs will be covered by grants and in-kind support from the Community Foundation, a contribution from Forward Sioux Falls — a joint venture of the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Sioux Falls Development Foundation — and Sioux Empire United Way, which will consider additional financial support through its current allocation structure.

A grant from the Bush Foundation, St. Paul, rounds our first-year support. “We’re proud to be one of several funders in the start-up phase of Sioux Falls Thrive. It’s exciting to see this unique collaboration between the business and philanthropic communities in Sioux Falls and to know what it will mean for kids in the area,” says Jennifer Ford Reedy, President of the Bush Foundation.

In addition to prepping for a new board, the release of the affordable housing study, and Thrive’s first action team, Hanson, Homan, and Augustana Associate Professor Dr. Ryan Seogogad are working with a cross-sector workforce data user group that’s helping to design the wireframe that lays the foundation for the Augustana Data Warehouse — the neutral data hub that will house Thrive’s research information. The Workforce Data User Group is scheduled to wrap up data-sharing agreements this month. “We’re doing a lot behind the scenes, and we’re all eager for a launch in the New Year,” says Hanson.

Meanwhile, groups that want a preview of how Thrive will operate before it’s fully public can call Hanson at 336-7055, ext. 12 to schedule a presentation. “Do call,” Hanson urges. “Thrive is going to be one of the great things that keeps Sioux Falls going. The trick is to get our community engaged and pulling in the same direction.”
"If you live here, you give here,“ was the insightful directive given by Jerry Sweetman to the crowd that gathered this October for the Community Foundation’s annual Donor Reception. Jerry, along with his wife Mary Pat, were the very deserving recipients of this year’s Friend of the Foundation award. Both shared words of inspiration — aimed especially at the next generation — but Jerry’s phrase distilled their personal philanthropy into a clear call to action we can all take to heart.

That phrase — if you live here, you give here — really makes sense. While there are any number of worthy national and international causes, directing your charitable dollars to local organizations doing great things right here at home comes with added benefits that long-distance giving simply doesn’t have.

First and foremost, for many donors, their gifts to organizations doing important work in their own backyard go far beyond dollars. Often they volunteer their time, form lasting connections with staff members and fellow volunteers, and, in some cases, even meet the families and individuals who benefit from the services their dollars are supporting. That up close and personal view of an organization’s needs, makes donors’ giving that much more effective. And, there’s much much peace of mind in personally knowing the reach of your charitable giving and the stewards you’ve entrusted it to.

Putting local organizations at the top of your charitable giving list is also just the right thing to do — plain and simple. Few would argue that the Sioux Falls Area isn’t a great place to live, work, and play. That’s due in large part to the generosity of those who came before us and believed that things like parks and schools and food banks were imperative to a healthy community. We must continue to follow their example in even bigger and better ways.

There are a lot of great organizations doing great work right here at home. If you want to learn more about them, or if you want ideas on local causes to support, or an introduction to a nonprofit, the Community Foundation is available to help.

I seriously thought about having a t-shirt made with Jerry’s quote — and may still do it — but for now I’m keeping it at the front of my mind. I’d encourage you to do the same — when considering your own giving remember the place you live.
Giving a heartfelt and personal tribute, Tom McDowell presented the 2016 Friends of the Foundation award to Jerry and Mary Pat Sweetman. Apparently he struck a chord with attendees — generous and enthusiastic applause filled the room as he presented the honor to them.

The thoughtful words didn’t end there, either. The large crowd at the SFACF annual reception for donors was treated to remarkable and genuine observations by the honorees, which hushed the attentive room.

In his comments, Jerry Sweetman expressed his appreciation for the 2016 honor and advocated for local giving. In her remarks, Mary Pat Sweetman encouraged the next generation of community members to find ways to be involved, to give wholeheartedly, and to engage with the Community Foundation.

The eloquence was one more demonstration of the commitment they have brought to their volunteer work and support of SFACF. The Friends of the Foundation award goes each year to an individual, family, or business that has — through personal or corporate philanthropy or by encouraging the philanthropic giving of others — served as a leader in responding to the needs of the Sioux Falls area. Individually and together, the Sweetmans have connected people to important causes that have furthered progress in Sioux Falls. Following the examples of their parents, they hope to inspire activism and generosity in their children, grandchildren, and others in Sioux Falls.

As he presented the award, SFACF Chair Tom McDowell observed that “Together, Jerry and Mary Pat are ‘all about Sioux Falls.’ They live their values in their volunteer work and in their giving and we are grateful for all they have done, and continue to do, to encourage philanthropy.”

A S H L E Y  M E T Z

advocate for local giving

2016 Friends of the Foundation

recognize donors

Begins Community

Levitt at the Falls

Associate

new Development

Community Foundation.

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together friends and families. Celebrating L-R: Sarah Richardson

Larson, Larry Ritz, Anne Hajek, and Colleen Hildebrand.

Ashley’s passion for service and giving back began in middle school with a youth group mission’s trip to Memphis, Tennessee. That enthusiasm grew throughout high school and college with additional trips and serving opportunities, which led her to pursue a career in the nonprofit field. Ashley has a degree in Business with emphases in Nonprofit Management and Human Resources from Trinity International University in the northern Chicago suburbs. She spent the last seven years working for a social and recreational center that serves individuals with disabilities. Her experience in administration, development, programming, volunteer coordination, and staff training brings additional depth to the Community Foundation staff. She sees her work here as a way to blend her passion for the value of the nonprofit while building on her knowledge, skills, and desire to learn about Sioux Falls. “The Community Foundation connects donors in a unique way to the nonprofits serving their local community. I am excited to be a part of this process,” she says.

Ashley was born and raised in Danvers, a small farming community in central Illinois. While Chicago offered a lot of big-city activities, she is excited to be living in a city with a strong sense of community and its own variety of amenities. She and Gregg enjoy watching and attending sporting events — both local and national (Minnesota Vikings, Chicago Cubs) and greatly enjoy the outdoor activities Sioux Falls offers including long bike rides, running on the trail, or hiking at Good Earth State Park.

One of Sioux Fall’s newest residents, Ashley Metz, joined the Community Foundation staff on July 1st as a Development Associate. Ashley comes to us from Chicago where she lived for the past 10 years. A newlywed, Ashley made the big move to join husband, Gregg, an accounting manager at Citi.

Levitt at the Falls kicked off its Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Community Appeals approved campaign on November 1, 2016. This $1.06 million capital campaign, which runs through March 2017, will raise funds to build an outdoor concert venue at Falls Park West.

When it opens in 2019, Levitt at the Falls will join a fantastic network of outdoor performance venues that offer 50 free concerts every summer. The venue will be located at the northern tip of Falls Park West.

This effort is made possible because of an agreement between the City of Sioux Falls, the local Friends of Levitt organization, and the national Levitt Foundation. Each group plays a unique role in creating, maintaining, and supporting Levitt at the Falls in the short- and long-term.

Levitt at the Falls will foster social interactions amongst people of all ages and backgrounds, and ensure access to the performing arts for everyone. These concerts will enhance downtown’s economic vitality, embrace Sioux Falls’ increasingly diverse population and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Levitt at the Falls aligns with the visions and many of the goals in:

• Sioux Falls’ 2025 Downtown Plan
• Sioux Falls Tomorrow Stakeholders’ Report 2014
• Greenway and Riverfront Master Plan
• Sioux Falls Arts Council’s “Sioux Falls Imagined” Plan

For more information or to make a gift today visit www.levittsiouxfalls.org or contact the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation.

Print a copy of this newsletter at www.sfacf.org

It was a special moment for Mary Pat Sweetman, Tom McDowell, and Jerry Sweetman when the Friends of the Foundation award was presented.

“Together, Jerry and Mary Pat are ‘all about Sioux Falls.’ They live their values in their volunteer work and in their giving and we are grateful for all they have done, and continue to do, to encourage philanthropy.”

SFACF welcomes
new Development
Associate

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Gifts July – September 2016

Jay and Allison Rasmussen Memorial Golf Tournament

Proceeds from Jimmie Fjerestad

Brandon Mercado

Marv’s Sanitary Service, Inc.

Michael and Jeanne Lens

John Jensen

J F Ventures

Lyle and Carol Dressen

Component Manufacturing Company

City of Brandon

Richard and Bridget Briggs

Avera, Benefactor

Norman and Melanie Bliss Family Fund

The Banquet Endowment

Christi and John Wegh

Dennis and Mary Treiber

Greg and Vivian Schumacher

John Satter

Jim and Kelli O’Connor Family

Many Friends and Family Members

William and Connie Larsen

Mark and Cindy Knudsen

Hydroclean Equipment, Inc.

Ronald and Luella Holthe

Janis Frid

Darlene Crawford

Robert and Carrie Campbell

American Pressure Inc.

Alliance Communications

Boyce Law Firm, L.L.P.

Reid and Ruth Christopherson Family

St. Mary’s Scholarship Fund

Two Hawk/Lambere Community Enhancement Foundation - Financial Assistance

Reid and Judith Christopherson Endowment

Community Indoor Tennis Center

Brookside Golf Club, L.L.P.

Citi

Vade Motors, Inc.

Tylen Johnson

Lakeview Charitable Fund

Jay Goodliff Memorial Fund

Feeding South Dakota Endowment

Pepo Vilke

Friends of the Levitt Shell Sioux Falls Special Project

Tom and Melissa Larsen

Hartford Community Foundation

South Dakota Trust Company

Showplace Wood Products, Inc.

Tony Ratchford Group

Alcester Scholarship Fund - In Memory of David Langner

Charles and Charlene Rokusek

Niobrara Youth Fund

Niobrara Community Foundation

Congregation and Ministry Funds

Kendall and Freeda Burns Family

Brandon Valley High School Class of

In Memory of Robert Johnson

Bob and Diane Young

Jason Woidyla and Melissa

Lisa and Tom Vande Voort

Desiree and Darleen Voss

Edward Wright

Katie Graf

In Honor of Luu Nan’s Birthday

Larry and Ann Nan

In Memory of Gene Johnson

Wendy and Betty Ames

Jim and Jane Anderson

Binah Anderson

Jim and Kelli O’Connor Family

Many Friends and Family Members

Many Friends and Family Members

Harry and Carolyn Lowe

Kent and Dove Laverty

Many Friends and Family Members

Landy and Lisa Mores

Bruce and Wendy Hasche Family

In Memory of Mary Kathryn Hovda

Flahor

Bob and Diane Young

Brendan O’Connor and Bev Bird

Jason T. and Melissa Howes Fund

Kevin Stephens through Esurance

Curt and Ann Louise Kuehn

Sharon and David Boltjes

Helen Hazard

In Memory of Marilyn "Mim" Haschak

Bruce and Wendy Hasche

In Memory of Jean Weelborg

In Memory of Josephine "Joj" Haschak

In Memory of Joan Weelborg

In Memory of Lou Haschak

In Memory of Harry Haschak

In Memory of Mildred Haschak

In Memory of Carol Haschak

In Memory of Marilyn Haschak

In Memory of Robert Haschak

In Memory of Dave Haschak

In Memory of David Prunty

Many Friends and Family Members

Charitable Fund

Grand Living at Lorraine

Tom and Melissa Larsen

Judy Jeanerich Charitable Trust

Joe and Jennifer Kirby

Fund

In Memory of John Rasmussen

Richard and Mary Hall

Casino & Gaming Funds

Steve and Betty Crim Family Endowment

Steve and Betty Crim

Fund

Brendan O’Connor and Bev Bird

Candy Hanson

Steve and Betty Crim Family Endowment

Mary and Les Leidig

In Memory of Bob Lewin

In Memory of Bob Lewin

In Memory of Joyce Leidig

In Memory of David Leidig

In Memory of Joanne Leidig

In Memory of John Leidig

In Memory of William Leidig

In Memory of Mary Leidig

In Memory of Donald Leidig

In Memory of Leona Leidig

In Memory of Leon Leidig

In Memory of David Leidig

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A very competitive process, the Excellence in Education initiative, now in its 25th year, has funded hundreds of programs and activities created by classroom teachers from all grade levels who are employed by schools in Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, and Turner counties. We extend congratulations to our most recent class of winning educators:

Amanda Brinkman
Pre-K
Tea Sprouts Preschool
"STEMStars" Scholarship

Kristi Desaulniers
Fourth grade
Legacy Elementary
"Top Guy Educational Escapes"

Casey Elder
Fourth grade
Elementary Immersion Center
"citizens for 21st Century Learners"

Alissa Hugelman
Seventh grade
Tea Area Middle School
"Creation Station"

Jamie Ihnen
 Fifth and sixth grades
Tea Area Middle School
"Programming and Robotics"

DaNann Kistler
Sixth through twelfth grades
West Central School District
"Whistle Cool!"

Laura Lunder
Pre-K
Holy Spirit School
"STEM Last Line for Pre-schoolders"

Jodi Neughebauer
Second grade
Garrison Elementary
"Making Engines through Makerspace"

Erin Radway
Kindergarten through fifth grade
Lowell Elementary
"Brookside Fun Learning"

Kelby Robinson
Kindergarten through twelfth grade
Garrison School District
"Movement and Rhythm through Folk Dance"

Sarah Weber
Kindergarten through fifth grade
Hartford Elementary
"Elementary Makerspace"

Melanie Zeman
Fourth and fifth grade
Discovery Elementary
"5th Grade Book Club"

Summer Scholarship Awards

Each year SFACF honors more than 100 students with awards from more than 90 scholarship funds. Most students receive their awards in May, but a few winners are selected during the summer. SFACF congratulates the following recipients who were selected between May and September 2016.

ASHLEY ELEANOR EVANS MEDICAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP
Caleb Heilberger
Drane Olland Scholarship
Samuel Van Voors
HELEN M. ANDERSON SCHOLARSHIP
Payton Larsen
HOWLAND SCHOLARSHIP
Krista Hovland
Hannah Noreen

KNOWS CLUB OF SIOUX FALLS COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP
Abigail Grinager
Tanner McCarron
Shelby Zomermaand
ROBERT AND DR. HUD NISSEN SCHOLARSHIP
Bethlehem Bekele
Krystal Trull

SPIRIT OF SIOUX FALLS SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD
Cameron Burgard
Andrea Carstensen
Britt Jacobsen
Payton Larsen
WANDA DRAKE MILLER EDISON NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP
Yaroslav Kolosov

Great Grants

The Compass Center — $2,200
Survivors of sexual and domestic violence feel safer at The Compass Center after a strike plate and video monitoring system were installed allowing staff to communicate with and see visitors before they are allowed to enter the facility.

East River Legal Services — $1,750
East River Legal Services provides free legal assistance to low-income individuals in eastern South Dakota, primarily from the Sioux Falls area. A combination of federal budget cuts and an increase in vulnerable populations needing legal services has triggered ERLS to complete strategic planning to prioritize service areas.

Emo ‘M’ Bembe M’Bondo USA — $2,000
New Americans learn about credit and borrowing, laws and regulation, small business tips, and strategic planning during weekend training sessions.

Family Connection — $1,425
Women on parole or probation have a safe and secure residence as they re-enter society after incarceration. Family Connection’s Hope House is a five-bedroom house that enables women to work toward self-sufficiency and achieve positive change. This grant purchases microwaves and dressers for the bedrooms.

Feeding South Dakota — $1,715
After school, children from Anne Sullivan Elementary walk over to Oak View Library to read, construct crafts, play games, and use computers until it’s time to go home. Many of the parents work late shifts and are not able to pick up their children until later in the evening. This grant provides nutritious snacks for the youngsters.

Great Plains Zoo & Delbridge Museum — $5,000
Elementary and middle school-aged children develop solutions to “real” problems and explore animal and nature-inspired topics through the new ZooSTEM pilot program. Approximately 180 students are expected to participate in the free classes.

Ground Works Midwest — $2,250
Residents of the All Saints Neighborhood, Ground Works Midwest, and DakotAbilities partner to create a community garden at the newly refurbished Longfellow Center. Minnehaha Master Gardeners also assist in the creation of the garden that will provide healthy food and grow new neighborhood friendships.

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota — $2,000
Parents, students, counselors, law enforcement, teachers, juvenile justice professionals, attorneys, and human service professionals gather to learn from national and local speakers about racial disparities in the juvenile justice system, and to explore existing and potential resources for youth and families of color in an effort to reduce the number of minority youth in the juvenile justice system.

Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls — $2,500
The Community youth Mosaic Wall, which represents diversity, located in downtown Sioux Falls was designed by area youth in 2008. The wall has fallen into disrepair and this grant helps correct structural damages and restore it to showcase its artistry and meaning.

Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls — $500
Resident enjoy food, dancing, music, and educational opportunities at the annual Wacipi held at the historic Coliseum of Sioux Falls on October 18.

The Salvation Army — $500
Elderly and disabled people in Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties receive free fans to help them cope with summer heat.

Sinte Gleska University — $2,500
Sioux Falls residents and visitors gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Native American culture at the Northern Plains Indian Art Market held in Sioux Falls. The four-day event features performing, visual, and film presentations.

Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation — $5,000
Students are better prepared to enter the world of business and industry thanks to this grant that supports the Sioux Falls Workforce Development program of Forward Sioux Falls, a joint venture of the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce and the Sioux Falls Development Foundation. (This grant was made possible by a grant from the Gannett Foundation).

Terry Redlin Education — $1,500
Each week during the school year, students who haven’t missed a day of class are entered into a drawing to receive a gift card through the new Strive for Five program. With support from a Community Foundation grant, the Strive for Five program aims to improve attendance, giving students a better chance to learn and develop social-emotional skills.

Donors to the unrestricted COMMUNITY FUND make it possible for the SFACF Grants Committee to make awards to a variety of organizations including Terry Redlin Elementary School. Students in the School’s Strive for Five program were rewarded with a tour of Fire Station 5.

All Saints Neighborhood Association — $1,030
The All Saints Neighborhood Association works to create a safe, happy, and beautiful neighborhood in central Sioux Falls for nearly 3,000 residents. This grant supports fees associated with filing for 501(c)(3) status.

Association of Fundraising Professionals – SD Chapter — $1,000
Area nonprofit fundraisers receive top-notch training at National Philanthropy Day, the association’s annual conference held this year in Sioux Falls.

Avera Health — $2,500
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Transforming Leadership inspires achievement

“Inspire. Engage. Achieve!” was the focus for SFACF’s 2016 Transforming Leadership workshop this past September. The speakers did all that and more!

Over 150 nonprofit executives and staff, board members, and volunteers came together to learn how to enhance communication, build relationships, align governance practices, and get tips on how to move the organizations they serve to higher levels of achievement.

“The Community Foundation began investing in Transforming Leadership in 2009,” says Jayna Voss, SFACF Board Member and liaison to the event’s planning committee. “Nonprofits make a big contribution to the quality of life here, and they rarely have funding for training staff and volunteers. This is our way of helping them all become more successful.”

Barbara Khozam, author and nationally ranked customer service, leadership, and communication trainer, kicked off the session with “Communication — the Real Work of Leadership.” Her energetic demonstrations of good and bad messaging had the group laughing and nodding their heads in agreement. Khozam shared basic rules of communication and ways to build an effective communication culture — no matter what one’s role in a nonprofit. “If you want your organization to achieve, you need to inspire and engage the support of the people you depend on,” she advised.

Sioux Falls’ own Jim Woster, former executive director of Livestock Exchange, now president of the board of Stockyards Ag Experience, a Falls Park attraction opening next spring, led the group through a crowdsourcing exercise designed to generate relationship-building ideas. “We’re in this Together” required small teams to share a successful activity and to tag the next team to report by tossing a volleyball across the room. Post-event, SFACF compiled “(Almost) 150 Relationship-Building Activities” and forwarded them to workshop participants.

Offering insight into the principles and practices of nonprofit excellence was Jon Pratt, executive director of the 2000-member Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. Pratt’s remarks focused on the importance of clarifying board and staff roles and responsibilities — key strategies to maintaining an achieving nonprofit.

Bringing it all together was the final presenter, W. Tom Simmons, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, Midcontinent Communications. With the experience of serving on 34 governing boards and chairing 15 of them, Simmons identified the qualities of a high-achieving nonprofit and provided encouraging suggestions on how organizations could build on the information shared throughout the day’s program.

SFACF will survey participants this winter to find out how they’re using workshop information. Brian Bonde, of Advanced Certified Fundraising, LLC and a first-time participant, seems to be betting on a good survey response. SFACF compiled “(Almost) 150 Relationship-Building Activities” and forwarded them to workshop participants.

Since 2009, the Community Foundation has offered low-cost, capacity building workshops for area nonprofit leaders. The workshops feature local experts and regional and national presenters. The September 2016 program included Jon Pratt, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits; Jayna Voss, Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation Board; Barbara Khozam, author and national communications trainer; Tom Simmons, Midcontinent Communications; and Jim Woster, Stockyards Ag Experience.

SFACF GRANT APPLICATION DUE DATES

There are two funding categories for SFACF grants. Spot grants applications — for $2,500 or less — are accepted at any time. Organizations requesting more than $2,500 must submit a letter of inquiry. If approved for consideration, the organization will be sent a complete application form and submission information. Applications for Community Funds grants are due the first of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Visit www.sfacf.org to review SFACF grantmaking guidelines and grant application form. Then call program officer Patrick Gale, 336-7055, ext. 20, to discuss the proposal.

SFACF COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS

More than $2,500

- January 1
- March 1
- May 1
- July 1

$2,500 or less

- Accepted at any time

SFACF Student Scholarships — connecting the hearts of donors to the future!

Beginning December 15, scholarship applications are available online at www.sfacf.org.
Community leadership inspires family legacy

In the early 50s through the mid-1980s, almost everyone in the Sioux Falls area knew Frank Lingo. From the Chamber of Commerce to the Great Plains Zoo to United Way, Frank’s community leadership contributions made him a standout.

The Lingo family’s American roots run deep. Five Lingo brothers, originally from Wales, arrived in Delaware sometime before the Revolutionary War. Many descendants stayed on the Delmarva Peninsula, but Frank’s forebears moved westward, farming in Goshen, Ohio before making a permanent home in Beloit, Iowa — a few miles southeast of Canton.

That’s where Frank’s parents, Charles J. and Luella Luenze Lingo, after brief stays in Wolsey and Spink County, made their home and raised their six children. Charles took a job with John Morrell, spending the week in Sioux Falls and returning to his acreage on weekends to farm.

Nila Lingo Fostvedt, Frank’s younger sister by 14 years, remembers walking up the railroad tracks to attend Canton High School, from where all the Lingo siblings were graduated. Despite the Depression, between their father’s job and the bounty produced from the acreage, “We never went hungry,” Nila recalls.

Frank was a good student — so good that he won a $75 scholarship from Sears, which just about covered the tuition at Brookings. Wilbur Bryant, who taught agriculture at Canton High School convinced Frank that planting a few acres of watermelons each spring would be a good way to help pay for college, and it was. “We had a roadside stand and took orders from grocery stores for the beautiful melons he raised,” Nila remembers.

While Frank was growing up in Beloit, his bride to be, Elsie Bartlett, was going to school near Ft. Yates, North Dakota. Her father, Thayer Bartlett, taught school on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The couple was destined to meet when they enrolled at South Dakota State College. Both were active in campus life, Frank participating in track and Ag Club, and Elsie, who majored in home economics, serving as secretary to the Women’s Athletic Association.

Shortly after graduation in 1942, Frank, a ROTC cadet, was called to active duty. A few months later, on June 17, 1943, the couple were married and stationed in Medford, Oregon. Elsie returned to South Dakota to teach school while Frank was sent with the Quartermaster Corps to supply the U.S. Army as it made its way across European battlefields after the Normandy Invasion.

With the end of WWII, the couple moved to Sioux Falls, where Frank, as his father and three of his siblings had at one time done, took a position with John Morrell. By 1956, the Lingos had two children, Jay and Pamela. Their family established, Frank made the last piece of his dream come true — buying a nearby acreage where he could hobby farm.

He and Elsie found the perfect property, a house and land just off a dusty, gravelled section line in the town of South Sioux Falls, at what is now 41st Street and Hawthorne Avenue. There, Frank planted, gardened, tended sheep, and raised as many as 500 chickens, selling produce and eggs to local grocers.

But farming was what Frank did in his spare time. Dressed in a white lab coat, Frank led the Morrell’s community relations effort, escorting rounds of visitors through the plant and serving on countless nonprofit boards.

His title at Morrell — Manager of the Agricultural Service Department — belies the nature of Frank’s job. When it came to promoting pork production, no one could match Frank’s enthusiasm or creativity. In today’s world, he would have been known as a marketing executive.

Dr. Rick Wahlstrom, a colleague who taught animal science at SDSU, remembers Frank’s frequent visits to campus as a guest lecturer. From chairing the Sioux Empire Farm Show, to making pork loin sandwiches the featured attraction of Ag Day when he served as president of the Sioux Empire Fair, to organizing golf outings to network with Minnesota pork producers, Frank had a hand in virtually every regional effort to boost pork production.

Frank was to spend his retirement without Elsie, who passed away in 1987 after 45 years of marriage, but he was not alone. He kept house with daughter Pam and enjoyed community activities and traveling with Edith Evans, a special friend.

Frank began planning his legacy gifts in 1997 by endowing the Frank Lingo Scholarship at South Dakota State. The same year, Frank and his sister Viola Lingo Watson — who had traveled to Oregon to witness Elsie and Frank’s wedding — shared their charitable dream with the Community Foundation. Remembering fondly their years at Canton High School, each founded a scholarship for graduating seniors. Since then, 58 young scholars have benefitted from their generous gifts.

In 2006, while reviewing his estate plans, Frank returned to the Community Foundation with another request — he wanted to establish an endowment that would make annual distributions to several organizations in the name of the Lingo family.

Frank passed away on March 13th of this year, having spent the better part of nearly 96 years in service to his community. And, just as he planned, four of the many organizations he served during his lifetime — First United Methodist Church, where the Lingo family worshiped, South Dakota Children’s Home Society, the Great Plains Zoo, and Sioux Empire United Way — will benefit from the FRANK LINGO FAMILY ENDOWMENT, for good, for ever.

Print a copy of this newsletter at www.sfact.org