

PASSION & PURPOSE

THE CFO MAGAZINE  SUMMER 2020

Responding to
COVID-19



and Generosity



with Grace



Across
Our Region

*Experience and training in disaster philanthropy anchor
the CFO's work in unprecedented times as donors, nonprofits
and businesses answer the call to support needs.*

*Our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our region
through resource development, community grantmaking,
collaboration and public leadership.*

FROM THE COVER

By early July, Boys & Girls Club of Springfield had provided some 44,000 meals using a drive-through pick-up process.

Bridget Dierks, Vice President of Programs for the CFO, presented the first COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund grants during a livestream on April 3.

Audrey Bell and Brandon Doosing load up delivery supplies for the Shannon County Extension in Eminence, which received \$5,000 to help families whose jobs were furloughed.

Elevate Branson used its COVID-19 grant to support meals and other needs of individuals quarantining in extended-stay motels in the Branson area.

Alex Cobb, of the SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging, accepted a \$25,000 grant to provide meals and wellness checks for seniors in the agency's rural communities.

CFO President Brian Fogle, announced a \$1 million commitment to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund on March 20.

Creative expression and the arts helped many cope during the stay-at-home period, including Sculpture Walk Springfield's lawn art project.

Kids at the Discovery Center of Springfield made thank-you cards for medical professionals while DCS provided childcare for parents who work in health care.

Johnny Warren with Golden Echoes of Steelville accepted a Coover grant for a meal-delivery vehicle while describing the old one via Zoom.

Melissa Gilstrap said a tech room for domestic violence clients at Polk County House of Hope would be named in honor of Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover.

Emergency dental needs still occurred despite the pandemic, so Children's Smile Center's Dr. Gary Dollens and assistant Janis Gardner were there to help kids.

Community Foundation of the Hermann Area Inc. granted \$5,000—with proper physical distancing—to the city's landmark Showboat Theatre where renovations stalled due to revenue lost from the pandemic.



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of the OZARKS

Connecting passion to purpose.

PASSION & PURPOSE is an annual publication of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, a public charitable foundation founded in 1973, now representing the region of Missouri south of the Missouri River. For more information, call (417) 864-6199 or email cfo@cfozarks.org.

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PASSION & PURPOSE

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COVER STORY

Global pandemic hits home

CFO, donors, nonprofits, businesses respond to needs

AFFILIATES

Number 50!

Ash Grove Area Community Foundation joins CFO network, representing northwest corner of Greene County



AGENCIES

'I am a Rural Teacher'

Gates Foundation supports program with \$250,000 grant to give platform to rural educators



PLUS: Brother2Brother in Springfield

DONORS

Humanitarian Award

Annual award planned for new date in conjunction with local National Philanthropy Day celebration



PROGRAMS

Legacy of a proud alum

With historic gift, couple's scholarship funds will support MSU students in Vernon & Barton counties



A FINAL WORD

Letter from the Chair

A NOTE FROM OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR ABRAM MCGULL II

Of the many things I have accomplished in my life, earning a Bronze Star for my work during my second tour in Iraq war was the most rewarding. I say that not to pat myself on the back and act like butter won't melt in my mouth. But the experiences leading up to that coveted accolade are what molded and guided me to where I am today.

Waking every morning to go to work in a country where enemy combatants were trying to kill you each and every day, adds a different dimension to the term, "commute to work." My 1.5-mile walk to the U.S. Embassy from my sandbag-surrounded abode would often involve armed checkpoints, brief encounters with local nationals, sprinkled with alert sirens with a loud announcement of "duck and cover." Mind you, that was just my morning stroll to the chow hall for breakfast at 0600 hours.

On a good day, we would only hear a couple of loud explosions surrounding the green zone or what we affectionately called the "ultimate gated community." Unfortunately, our fortress of defenses of checkpoints, radar, informants and our agency partners such as the CIA could only do so much against a determined enemy that had set their sights on killing Americans and their Allies. Sometimes, the combatants penetrated our defenses and killed scores of people within our gated community.

Beneath this backdrop of maligned external forces, we had to perform our jobs. As the media operations chief (MOC) in Baghdad, Iraq, I was expected to execute at the optimal level and manage my team of civilians, Iraqi Nationals and military members to do the same. The stakes were high and the pressure was anything short of unbearable at certain times. Yet, we persevered and accomplished the mission. At times, I was more than the manager of the MOC.

Often times I was a sympathetic

ear to a civilian who knew no fear like rockets raining down in the middle of the night, or a counselor to a service member who had issues back home with his or her family. Within this crucible of high alert and mission critical efficiencies, there was very little room for failure.

I find great similarities in my Iraq experience to what we are facing now within our community. We are confronted with a different enemy, one in which, ironically, we are potentially the combatant facilitator. What should we do in these difficult and trying times? As a nation and a community of Americans, we have faced challenges before that have taught us that we encounter these tests of our fortitude with grit, intelligence and a sense of community.

As your CFO Board Chair, I have brought those bold Iraqi experiences to bear for our organization. I made it our mission to improve our financial position as good stewards of donors' dollars in order to face the challenges ahead. With the help of outstanding mentorship from past board Chair Robin Walker and the fiscal wisdom from incoming board Chair Rhonda Christopher, I was fortunate enough to see this organization rise to that challenge in defending our most vulnerable citizens from the effects of the enemy combatant COVID-19.

Here is what we have done to defend our citizens, shore up our management and financial position and laid a solid foundation to continue to do the needed work in the future:

- Granted \$2.3 million across the region to support vulnerable citizens affected by the dual health and economic crises;
- Participated at the community-leadership level in Springfield-Greene County to better perform our own work and reach out to external funders to support our regional response and recovery;



- Worked with affiliate leaders to renew community grantmaking to address unprecedented challenges;
- Experienced a market portfolio rebound from a very challenging March of 3.38% for May and quarter to date of 12.42%; and
- Continued the annual Action Plan and rest of the work the CFO does every day to inspire generosity across the wide range of interests supported by our donors and executed by non-profit partners.

In bringing my term as board chair to a close, I cannot tell you how proud I am of our fellow board members, affiliates and the staff of this outstanding and compassionate organization. But what is even more gratifying is the generosity of our community to roll up their sleeves, empty their pockets and give back to fellow Americans in need of a helping hand. Although I am not originally from these parts, I am now engrained in that Ozarks spirit that knows no stranger and no challenge too great to overcome. May God bless you and your family and this great nation we call America.

Respectfully submitted,

ABRAM "ABE" MCGULL II
FY21 CHAIR EMERITUS

Passing the Torch

THE CFO SAID GOODBYE TO a group of board members at the end of the fiscal year in June. We are grateful for the time, energy and expertise provided by all of the CFO's volunteer leadership in Springfield and across the region. We offer our appreciation for the service of these outgoing board members.

- **Don Davis**, a vice president and portfolio manager at Commerce Trust Company, ends his time as a director, but will continue serving on the Investment Advisory Board.
- **Mitch Holmes**, a financial advisor for Edward Jones in Branson, completed two terms and has chaired the Development Committee for the past several years. He also has been active for many years with the Community Foundation of Taney County.
- **Susan Krauss**, a business owner in Perryville, also serves on the board for the Perry County Community Foundation in eastern Missouri.
- **Kelly Parson**, president of Oak Star Bank in Bolivar, also serves as president of the Bolivar Area Community Foundation.
- **Ron Reed**, who works in economic development in Houston, has been a champion for the CFO for many years.
- **Jean Twitty**, a retired elected official, completed two full terms. She also served as Chair of the Steering Committee for the Community Focus Report for Springfield-Greene County, representing the CFO.
- **Robin Walker**, the managing partner of Walker Asset Management, has completed seven years on the board, including serving as Chair and Chair Emeritus. He also has served as Chair of the Investment Advisory Board and has been active for many years with the Monett Area Community Foundation.

New Board Members

The CFO welcomes six new members to the FY21 Board of Directors as of July 1. The new members represent a broad cross-section of the CFO's 58-county service region. CFO Board members can serve up to two three-year terms.

- **Richard Cavender**, Rolla, a retired regional planning director and former CFO Board Chair, who will fill an unexpired regional term
- **Kari Creighton**, Springfield, a financial professional and member of the Investment Advisory Board
- **Stan Irwin**, Cape Girardeau, a financial advisor with Edward Jones and member of the Investment Advisory Board
- **Michael Garrett**, Monett, a retired judge
- **Emily Kembell**, Springfield, attorney with Kirkland Woods & Martinsen LLP, and member of the CFO's Professional Advisors Council;



Don Davis



Mitch Holmes



Susan Krauss



Kelly Parson



Ron Reed



Jean Twitty



Robin Walker

- **Anne Herschend McGregor**, Branson, CFO donor-advisor for the Anne E. and Mac McGregor Fund
- **Kristi Montague**, Carthage, Edward Jones Financial Advisor and board member for the Carthage Community Foundation

FY21 Executive Committee

- President: **Rhonda Christopher**, Springfield (BKD Wealth Advisors)
- Vice President: **Robin Morgan**, West Plains (Valic Financial Advisors)
- Treasurer: **Dean Thompson**, Republic (Springfield City Utilities)
- Secretary: **Laurie Edmondson**, Springfield (Drury University)
- At-large: **Morey Mechlin**, Springfield (retired Executive Director)
- At-Large: **Jim Holt**, Nixa, (retired educator)
- Investment Advisory Board Chair: **Jeff Layman**, Springfield, (BKD Wealth Advisors)
- Chair Emeritus: **Abram McGull II**, Springfield (U.S. Attorney's Office)

CFO Staff Updates

The CFO welcomed a summer intern this year, **Alexis Jackson**, who graduated from Washington University in St. Louis this spring with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Lexi was a recipient of the Hearld and Marge Ambler Scholarship for business majors; Ambler was one of the CFO's 11 founders and also the first-ever Managing Partner at BKD LLP. Lexi's summer project has been documenting the Springfield-Greene County leadership response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She has conducted a series of interviews with community leaders representing a variety of institutions to archive the lessons they've learned and key takeaways through the initial response to the pandemic.



Putting philanthropic leadership into action

The CFO Board of Directors approved the following Action Plan for FY21, beginning July 1, 2020.

- ▶ Conclude initial five-year commitment to Northwest Project grant program and evaluate for future.
- ▶ Implement Affiliate best practices for operations, leadership and grantmaking, including Foundation Coordinator program.
- ▶ Transition Musgrave Foundation into its own program within the CFO.
- ▶ Assess the regional economic, health, and cultural impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and use data to support recovery grantmaking.
- ▶ Facilitate a market survey to determine potential areas of charitable services expansion for fee-based or value-added services for regional nonprofits.
- ▶ Research updates to supporting technologies, such as internal databases, office functions, recordkeeping and cybersecurity systems.
- ▶ Research Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment offerings as a stand-alone investment product or integrated within current diversified investment pool.
- ▶ Develop Inclusive Excellence framework for implementation relevant to the CFO's operations to promote inclusive organizational culture and opportunities.

Radio series on mental health wins broadcasting award



▲ In one of the “Let’s Talk About It” segments, Producer Mike Smith interviews Stephanie Appleby about how her own mental-health experience shapes her professional role as the Executive Director of the southwest Missouri office of NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Springfield public radio station KSMU earned a 2020 Missouri Broadcasters Association First Place Award in the Documentary/Public Affairs category for a series produced through its long-standing partnership with the CFO.

“Let’s Talk About It: Normalizing Mental Health Conversations” was recognized in the Documentary/Public Affairs Category for Medium Market Radio. The series was produced by Mike Smith with support from Jamie Henline.

The Missouri Broadcasters Association is the largest professional association for broadcasters in the Show-Me State, with members representing 351 radio and television stations.

After Greene County data revealed skyrocketing rates of depression and suicide, KSMU invited community leaders and neighbors to talk about their own mental-health challenges. The series was programmed through the CFO’s “Making a Difference” partnership. With every “conversation,” KSMU also provided resources like phone numbers, websites and addresses where listeners could go for help.

KSMU also was honored with a regional Edward R. Murrow award for another series that included a segment on the CFO’s Every Child Promise initiative.

Listen In

Find all six episodes of “Let’s Talk About it” at cfozarks.org/difference.

Generosity, Grace and No Regrets

How do we avoid “future regret” in the months and years ahead about something we didn’t do well enough today?

That refrain haunted CFO President Brian Fogle from the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. He repeated it often to staff and board members. It underscored his decision to commit \$1 million to the CFO’s initial response to the pandemic, despite some inherent challenges:

- We don’t have huge endowments like larger private or public foundations;
- Our region is generous, but not rich;
- Our staff had moved offsite and communities were shutting down, making sensitive conversations with donors and foundations more complex than ever.

On the other hand, we had several marks in our column:

- Years of experience in natural disaster philanthropy, including five years of recovery work after the Joplin tornado;
- In-depth training on natural disasters through six years of participation in a group of 18 Midwestern community foundations made possible through The Funders’ Network;
- Strong commitment from our supportive Board of Directors, affiliate foundation leaders, generous donor advisors and professional staff.

The CFO established the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund on March 16. Within days, commitments to fulfill the \$1 million pledge were secured, helping propel grantmaking that began April 3 and continues today.

In addition to all of our own discretionary funds we could muster, we’re especially grateful to Missouri Foundation for Health and the Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation, managed by Commerce Trust. Each funder and donor willing to be acknowledged is thanked on the last page.

The initial response was very similar to a natural disaster. Our goal, as always, was to help ensure critical needs were met, especially for vulnerable residents. In three months, the CFO made 101 grants from its primary COVID-19 program—13 more than all discretionary grants made the prior fiscal year.

Big differences still exist, though. Natural disasters occur in some geographic area—not everywhere at once. So, our pandemic grantmaking extended across our 58-county region. Natural disasters have a fairly defined pace: disaster, emergency response, cleanup, secondary impacts and recovery. This time, we recognize we may need to pivot from recovery back to response while secondary impacts, like mental health, are already happening during such uncharted times.

We need you to stay with us, virus fatigue notwithstanding. We need nonprofits to keep doing their work on the ground. We need funders and donors to dig deep as circumstances evolve in coming months, perhaps years. We’ll be here doing our work to help our communities stay resilient. We hope you’ll stand beside us.



▲ On March 20, President Brian Fogle announced the CFO’s initial \$1 million commitment during a Springfield-Greene County civic and health leaders briefing. The first grants from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund Grant Program were made just two weeks later.

► Ronald McDonald House Charities received a grant to help offset additional costs for the Tooth Truck due to the pandemic. PHOTO PROVIDED BY RMHC



▲ Sculpture Walk Springfield, which holds funds with the CFO, invited residents staying at home to create L.A.W.N. sculptures to display for community enjoyment. Kristi Bench created “Flamingo Starr” in west Springfield.

Grants power regionwide pandemic response



▲ Evan Pilkington, audio-video engineer for Pitt Technology Group, installs a new webcam at SeniorAge Area Agency on Aging's headquarters in Springfield to enable the organization to better communicate with staff at senior centers across southwest Missouri. SeniorAge was one of several agencies that received a grant to upgrade technology through a special program with Pitt Technology Group, which donated services as part of its participation in the Paycheck Protection Program. PTG partnered with WON Communications, Graybar and several other Springfield-based IT companies to provide equipment and services to nonprofit agencies.

► Discovery Center of Springfield wouldn't let the pandemic get in the way of a kindergarten graduation. After converting its operations to provide childcare for healthcare workers with support from the CFO, the science center held a physically distanced ceremony for students in its care.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DISCOVERY CENTER OF SPRINGFIELD



Kim Moberly

AURORA YEP

"The CFO grant matched our efforts to deliver food, cleaning, and hygiene supplies to veterans, seniors, and low-income families in the area. It also gave us some credibility and momentum, and it bolstered everybody's confidence a little bit. When people see agencies like the Community Foundation and groups like the Youth Empowerment Program, and then other community organizations and civic organizations jumping on board with us, they realize everyone is in it for the long haul and everyone's trying to take care of themselves and each other."

Deb Wilson

O-STEAM

"CFO was kind enough to take a chance on us, and within four days we had product in hand to 3D print PPE for area hospitals, dentist offices, universities, and more. I was just hoping that CFO would understand the significance of bringing together all of these individual makers that can create and invent something in dire need for the community. The opportunity that CFO has given us has been life changing for a lot of people and life saving for our community."



Julie Cassity

MUSIC THERAPY OF THE OZARKS

"Our CFO grant gave us the funds we needed to switch to telehealth services and purchase dozens of iPads and iPods for our senior clients to participate. Just seeing the faces of our clients through the video conferencing platforms is truly priceless. You can really sense the value of the relationship between the clients and their therapists just by looking at their reactions. We wanted to demonstrate to folks that there is value in music therapy, especially during a pandemic, and CFO's support of our program really affirms that."

—Compiled by Lexi Jackson

PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT



**COVID-19
Response &
Recovery Fund**

\$1,000,000

Initial commitment to the CFO's
COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund



\$685,961

Additional gifts to the CFO's
COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund



\$1,337,435

Discretionary grants from the
COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund



\$907,768

Grants from **donor-advised
funds** held by the CFO

\$53,533

Grants from **employee benevolence
funds** for COVID-19 response



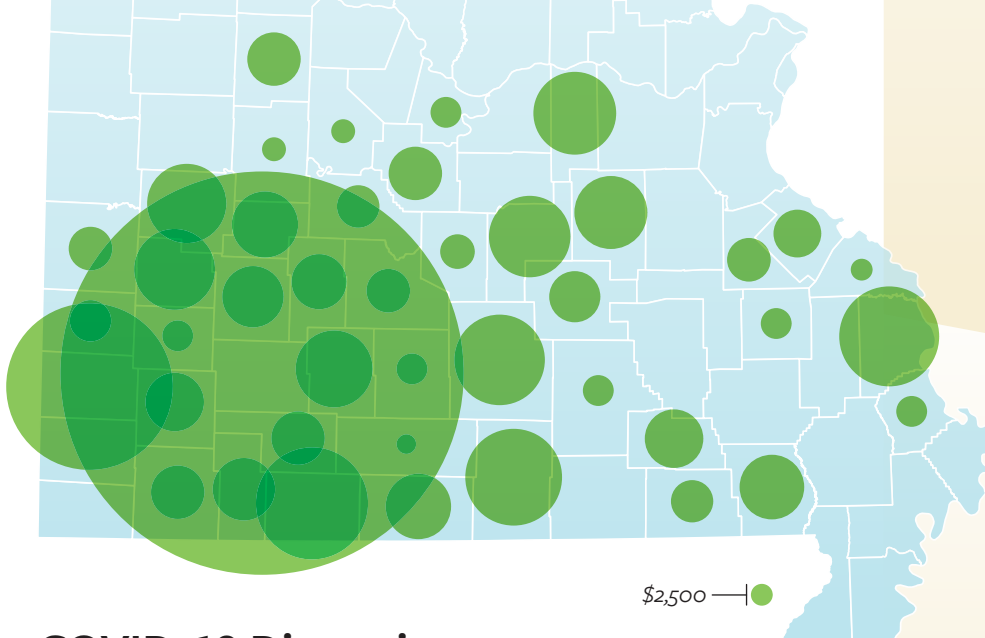
Total COVID-related support
made through the CFO in FY20:

\$2,298,736

COVID-19 Discretionary Grantmaking in FY20 by County

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund provided 177 discretionary grants totaling \$1,337,435 for nonprofit agencies across the region through June 30. The support came from multiple programs, including the primary COVID-19 grant program, affiliate grantmaking, the Springfield Regional Arts Council

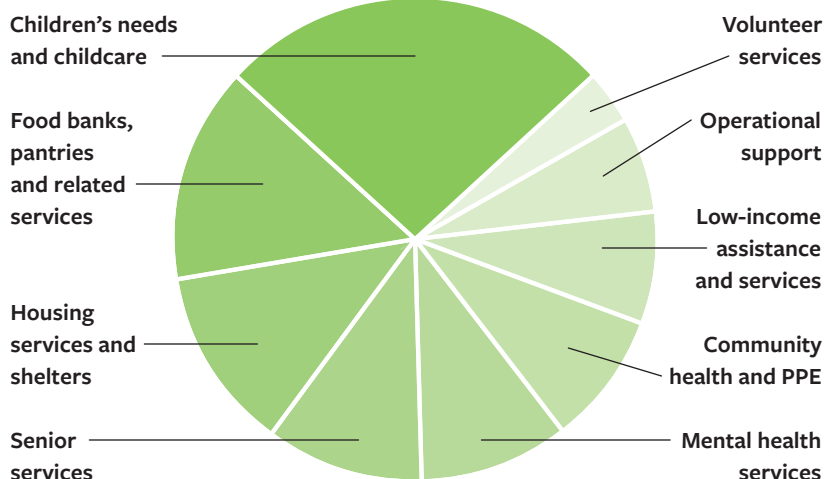
Arts Relief and Recovery Grants, the Rurals Schools Partnership/Coover Charitable Foundation Challenge Grants, and a portion of the annual Coover Regional grant program. Many of the grant dollars for Greene County-based agencies supported regional response beyond the Springfield city limits.



COVID-19 Discretionary Grantmaking in FY20 by Program Area

Initial grantmaking from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund supports agencies serving vulnerable populations to meet an increased need for services in areas such as food insecurity, childcare, transportation, mental

and physical wellbeing and more. By June, grantmaking began to shift to a regional recovery effort, supporting agencies addressing needs related to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.



AFFILIATES



Ash Grove becomes 50th affiliate

NEW AFFILIATE QUALIFIES FOR \$30,000 GRANT FROM MISSOURI FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

▲ Jason Whitesell, Rachel Griffin, Pat Cook, Ronessa Williams, Tyler Gunlock, Austin Houpp, Ryan Squibb and Mike Roberts (with Chris Thompson, not pictured) are the founding board members of the Ash Grove Area Community Foundation.

Ash Grove is undoubtedly a small town, with a population of about 1,500 people in the northwest corner of Greene County. It's a charming, tidy town, with a handsome city park and streets lined with its eponymous ash trees. But don't call it a quiet or sleepy town. Whether it's the freight train that rumbles through the heart of its historic downtown or the group of citizens fervently envisioning its future, Ash Grove is full steam ahead.

On May 29, after a year of fundraising, the Ash Grove Area Community Foundation became the 50th regional affiliate foundation of the CFO. Communities with the intent of establishing an affiliate foundation must raise at least \$30,000 to establish a community grantmaking fund—an investment in the community that will pay dividends forever.

The first step to establish AGACF was taken about two years prior when founding Board President Tyler Gunlock had a conversation with Vice President Jason Whitesell.

"We wanted to take on a project to help improve the community," Gunlock said. "I threw out a couple ideas, then Jason suggested forming a community foundation." Whitesell had worked in Aurora and around other towns with affiliate foundations and saw the benefits community foundations provide.

"I told him, 'That's a much better idea!'" Gunlock said. "The only thing I really brought to the table at that point was deciding we should do it now."

Knowing an engaged board with strong community representation was key to both the initial fundraising stage and the long-term success of

the affiliate foundation, Gunlock and Whitesell took their time recruiting board members.

"I think it's interesting that seven of our nine board members are originally from Ash Grove—they've either grown up here or lived here for a really long time," Gunlock said. "Once we had the right board in place, the fundraising kind of took care of itself."

The fundraising began in June 2019 with what seemed like a clear road ahead. But despite the size of the Ash Grove and neighboring Bois D'Arc, despite a global pandemic and the resulting economic downturn, the community came through to invest in itself, with more than 70 donors supporting the effort.

"We didn't receive a whole lot of large donations," Gunlock said. "We relied on the community stepping up and that, I

think, will prove to be beneficial in the long run.”

By reaching the \$30,000 goal to establish a community grantmaking endowment, the foundation will receive a big boost in grantmaking from Missouri Foundation for Health. The 1:1 matching grant from MFH provides \$6,000 a year for the next five years to support projects related to the societal determinates of public health.

A portion of that grantmaking will support Ash Grove’s participation in the third phase of Growth in the Rural Ozarks. The AGACF will provide 20% of the funding to support the initiative, with the remainder coming from the city and other donors. GRO was launched in 2016 by the CFO and Cleveland-based Innovation Economy Partners as an economic development program for communities with regional affiliate foundations.

“From the initial survey for GRO, we know that the people of Ash Grove love living here, and they believe in this town,” Gunlock said. “The community foundation is just one of the good things happening here.”

The CFO started its affiliate network in 1993 in Nixa. The network has since spread to represent communities in 58 counties south of the Missouri River. The philosophy is based in the concept of community foundations as place-based organizations governed by local leaders who best understand the needs of their communities. The CFO’s 50 regional affiliate foundations are led by volunteers, which CFO staff supports by working together on asset and resource development, grantmaking and community leadership opportunities.

—Aaron Scott



▲ A past revitalization effort touted Ash Grove’s heritage as a railroad town. By participating in the Growth in the Rural Ozarks program with the support of the Ash Grove Area Community Foundation, the town will explore new opportunities for economic development.

Affiliates receive \$100K for rural health programs

THREE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH MISSOURI FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH NOW TOTALS \$750,000 FOR MORE THAN 30 COMMUNITIES

The CFO, in partnership with Missouri Foundation for Health, distributed \$10,000 each to 10 regional affiliate foundations in March. The grants mark Year 3 of the Rural Ozarks Health Initiative, which has distributed \$750,000 to more than 30 rural communities. Over the next few months, these 10 regional affiliate foundations will redistribute the funds for health-related projects in their communities:

- Benton County Community Foundation
- Dallas County Community Foundation
- Douglas County Community Foundation
- Eldon Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of the Hermann Area Inc.
- Houston Community Foundation
- Jacks Fork Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of Rogersville
- Stockton Community Foundation
- Willow Springs Community Foundation

The ROHI grants were awarded in March, just as the new coronavirus began to spread in Missouri. Several agencies prioritized their



ROHI grantmaking to support local response to the pandemic.

“We look forward to these projects building on the success of the first two years of community-based grants across the region to support key health and wellness priorities,” CFO President Brian Fogle said. “This has been an outstanding partnership with the Missouri Foundation for Health to get its resources working on the ground through our Affiliate network, which is comprised of local leaders who are well positioned to identify specific needs in their communities.”

New volunteers step up to lead affiliates

Several CFO affiliates changed leadership between fall 2019 and the end of the 2020 fiscal year. We appreciate the efforts of these past presidents and wish the new leaders much success in building these foundations’ roles in community betterment.



Carthage Community Foundation

Outgoing: Danny Lambeth
Incoming: Jeff Williams



Finley River Community Foundation

Outgoing: Karen Miller
Incoming: Gerald Chambers



Hickory County Community Wellness Foundation

Outgoing: Abby Gordon
Incoming: Gary Edwards



Marshfield Area Community Foundation

Outgoing: Alan Thomas
Incoming: Dustin Ross



Monett Area Community Foundation

Outgoing: Regina Bowsher
Incoming: Shawn Hayden



Community Foundation of West Plains Inc.

Outgoing: Robin Morgan
Incoming: Eric Gibson

AGENCIES

Gates Foundation supports rural teacher campaign

\$250,000 GRANT PUTS OZARKS TEACHER CORPS, OTHER RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS ON NATIONAL STAGE

Well known for its international philanthropic work to improve health and wellness in developing countries, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has poured billions of dollars into programs to help improve the quality of life for people around the world. Domestically, the foundation—established by Microsoft founder Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda—takes a different approach, focusing its grantmaking on education with the belief that high-quality K-12 education is the path to social and economic mobility.

It's a similar philosophy held by the Rural Schools Collaborative, a nonprofit agency partner of the CFO led by past CFO president Gary Funk. Last fall, RSC launched the "I Am a Rural Teacher" campaign, funded by a \$250,000 grant from the Gates Foundation. The project is a collaboration of RSC, the CFO and the National Rural Education Association.

"The IAART campaign has given rural teachers a platform to present their unique perspectives on a variety of school and community issues," says Funk. "Their stories share the great potential for a career in rural education."

Joaly Ray, whose IAART profile appears at right, is an Ozarks Teacher Corps alum and now the Spanish teacher in Forsyth. Recently, IAART has shared narratives on how rural teachers have adapted to best help their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read other profiles of rural teachers at iamaruralteacher.org.



Joaly Ray, right, helps a student at Forsyth High School. Ray participated in the Ozarks Teacher Corps while pursuing her master's degree. PHOTO PROVIDED BY RURAL SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE

JOALY RAY'S LAUGH ECHOES THROUGH the hallways of Forsyth High School. With each student she passes, she connects with a joke or a smile.

"It's like that here; it's a big family," grins Joaly. "It's so small, and you get to have [students] for four years. How are you not gonna love them?"

For the past 10 years, Joaly has shared her infectious joy with the community of Forsyth as the high school's Spanish teacher. Joaly grew up in Venezuela, then moved to Atlanta in 2006 and met her husband, Brad. Now, the two raise their family in Brad's hometown of Forsyth.

Becoming a Spanish teacher was not always the plan. While working with her husband at Boy & Girls Town of Missouri, Joaly noticed how much she enjoyed working with high schoolers. After Forsyth lost their Spanish teacher in the middle of the year, Joaly applied as a full-time substitute. She's been there ever since, working hard to give her students the best education possible.

The year she began teaching, she started her master's in education. This past December, she finished her second master's degree, this time in second language acquisition.

"I want to be the very best for my students," Joaly reflects.

While pursuing her master's at Missouri State University, Joaly participated in the Ozarks Teacher Corps program, a two-year

scholarship program managed by the CFO available to teacher-education candidates willing to make a commitment to teach in a rural school for at least three years after graduation. Corps members participate in a wide range of seminars to learn about place-based education and other rural matters. The overarching goal is to develop teacher-leaders who can in turn impact their rural communities.

For Joaly, the Ozarks Teacher Corps provides a new perspective on the importance of strengthening rural areas.

"I think that a lot of my students just want to leave town, especially the brightest ones. And when we go to the rural teacher trainings, it can make us think more about how those kids can improve town, and use what they learn here in their hometown."

After growing up in a large city, Ray now relishes in the connections found in a small town.

"You get to know everyone. There's four siblings, you have them all. You go to their weddings, meet their kids, they are excited to come tell you their accomplishments."

Not only has Joaly formed close relationships with students and their families, but her students have become part of her own. Her husband teaches chemistry, so students will often have both Brad and Joaly in their time at Forsyth High. They connect with their students in different ways and share advice when a student is struggling.

"We want to improve the community; we care for the same kids," says Joaly.

—Julia Levine, Rural Schools Collaborative



SAAB moves headquarters to MSU

FIVE-YEAR COURTSHIP BRINGS NATIONAL DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION LEADER TO SPRINGFIELD

IN 2015, JAVEON ENGLAND WAS a student at Parkview High School participating in a relatively new program called Brother2Brother. It was a group of young men of color who got together to do community service projects, develop mentorships with community members and work on the soft skills they feel they need to get ahead in their lives and careers.

About the same time, a courtship was getting underway. Several community leaders began recruiting B2B's parent agency—the Student African American Brotherhood—to consider moving to Springfield.

Five years later, in the midst of spring 2020's season of social unrest and a global health pandemic, Javeon is thriving as a personal banker at Commerce Bank who completed his associate's degree at Ozarks Technical Community College and will start his junior year with online classes at Ashford University this fall. And Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe, SAAB's founder and executive director, has completed the move from Toledo, Ohio, to Missouri State University's offices on Park Central Square.

SAAB's move to Springfield was made possible with support from the CFO, MSU and the Missouri Scholarship and Loan Foundation.

"I think it's a great opportunity and a great thing that's going to open some doors for some people to see what is out there and what the world has to offer," says England, who serves as president of the Springfield chapter.

SAAB's mission is threefold: to give education-to-career support to young men of color in chapters across the nation; help them build and sustain strong bonds; and enable them to achieve recognition for their talent, drive and contributions to society.

"We've had the privilege of supporting Dr. Bledsoe and his organization

for several years," CFO President Brian Fogle says, noting that B2B members have a remarkable two- or four-year college graduation rate of 86 percent. "We see the difference the B2B program has made in the success of under-represented students in Springfield and across the country."

Dr. Bledsoe says the move was predicated largely on his contacts in Springfield and the encouragement from civic leaders, particularly MSU Chief Diversity Officer Wes Pratt and his wife, Francine Pratt, who recently moved from Prosper Springfield to serve as the new Executive Director of the Missouri College Access Network. But the location is also geographically central for the 250 chapters across the nation and offers opportunities to grow the program further.

"We are excited about our new space," said Bledsoe, who participated in the early June announcement of the move via Zoom. "We look to scale our cause."

Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he said: "We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

England says Dr. Bledsoe's ability to motivate and inspire B2B members, combined with a focus on practical life skills, creates the program's value for



◀ Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe speaks at the CFO's Diversity and Inclusion grant presentation in November. SAAB joined the CFO's agency partner program in 2017.



▲ At the June 9 announcement at Missouri State University, CFO President Brian Fogle and FY20 Board Chair Abram McGull II congratulate SAAB CEO Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe, who joined virtually from Toledo, Ohio, on SAAB's move to Springfield.



Javeon England

those who participate. They learn self confidence and build contacts through their community projects, they learn social etiquette to gain confidence in interviews and job settings and they support each other through personal challenges and successes.

"Some people are saying it's scary to be a Black man in American right now so we're keeping each other level headed and letting them know we're there for each other right now," England says.

"Honestly, I was in that position where I was raised in Springfield as a Black kid where there wasn't a whole lot of opportunity. In high school, I was in the honors classes and I was one of the only colored people in those classes.

"(In B2B), you meet good people. If you're willing to work for it, you'll get it. If you have a great opportunity like this, take advantage while you can."

—Louise Knauer

DONORS

► *Jill Bright, the 2019 Humanitarian of the Year, was recognized for her longtime dedication to Diaper Bank of the Ozarks. She was joined by CFO board members Laurie Edmondson, left, and Abram McGull II. The 2020 recipient will be honored at an event in conjunction with National Philanthropy Day.*



Continuing a Tradition

HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECOGNITION WILL HAVE NEW LOOK ON NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY

The CFO has a big change of plans in honoring future Humanitarian Award winners on a larger scale in partnership with the annual National Philanthropy Day luncheon in November.

Now, it's a matter of determining whether the COVID-19 virus will affect the plan.

After discussions with Laurie Edmondson, the goddaughter of Humanitarian Award founder Jewell Thompson Schweitzer, and selection committee partners at the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, the CFO plans to partner with the local Association of Fundraising Professionals. The local AFP chapter marks National Philanthropy Day each year with community-wide recognitions of philanthropic, nonprofit and corporate charitable leadership.

This year's event is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 10, at the White River Conference Center, with plans subject to change based on the circumstances of the pandemic in Greene County near that time. Details on making nominations for the award will be posted later this summer at cfozarks.org/humanitarian.

The 2020 winner will follow the big and tiny footprints of 2019 Humanitarian Jill Bright, the retired Executive Director of Diaper Bank of the Ozarks. While no babies attended the December luncheon, she came prepared—as she always does, wherever she goes—with fresh diapers. Bright said her

“clients” are happier, healthier and better rested babies who are more inclined to cuddle because they are wearing clean, fresh diapers.

“Our babies will grow up to become happier and healthier adults,” Bright said in accepting the 30th annual Humanitarian Award. The award was founded by the late Jewell Thompson Schweitzer, a longtime CFO donor and volunteer leader who wanted to recognize individuals in southwest Missouri who find their calling in service to their communities. The honor includes a \$5,000 award for the recipient's favorite cause in appreciation for his or her service.

Her journey began in 2003 when, living 200 miles away from her children and grandchildren, she decided to volunteer with Newborns in Need by sewing items for babies leaving the hospital with families in need. While attending a conference a few years later, she learned about the extent of diaper need in the United States.

“She returned to the Ozarks, ready to get something done,” said Janet Furneaux, a Diaper Bank board member who nominated Bright for the award and introduced her at the luncheon.

“To Jill, a diaper is filled with hope; it's her belief that a diaper can change a life,” Furneaux said. “She is a woman with a passionate, serving heart.”

—Louise Knauer

Legacy Society

The following people have made planned giving commitments to benefit the CFO or one of its affiliate foundations from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

Carthage

Kristi Montague

Cassville

Brenda Skelton Bendtsen
and James Bendtsen

Crawford County

W. James Barnett III

Dallas County

S. Joy Beamer

Dent County

Bernard and Michelle Sirois
Genie Zakrzewski

El Dorado Springs

Kay Clonts Anderson

Joplin Regional

Peter Ramsour
John and Nancy Good
Jane Cage

Springfield

Charles "Chuck" and Jody
Dow
Sam F. and June S. Hamra
William R. Luckfield
Michael and Josette Tilley
John E. and Lori K.
Wanamaker
Anonymous

Table Rock Lake

Jim and Linda Holt

Professional Advisors Council

The CFO welcomed six new members to its Professional Advisors Council over the past year. The PAC is comprised of professionals, including accountants, attorneys, financial advisors, wealth managers and others who help clients fulfill their charitable giving goals.

Free membership on the PAC includes an annual opportunity for continuing education credits, invitations to CFO social and educational events, a weekly GiftLaw newsletter, and recognition in CFO publications and on the website.

For more information, contact Winter Kinne, Vice President of Development, at (417) 864-6199 or wkinne@cfozarks.org.

James Ballard, Commerce
Trust Company,
Springfield

Tyler Camp, Merrill Lynch/
Ozgun, Deimund,
Beckham Group, Cape
Girardeau

Stan Irwin, Edward Jones,
Cape Girardeau

Kristi Montague, Edward
Jones, Carthage

Matthew Schmidt,
Schmidt, Kirby & Sullivan,
PC, Springfield

Catherine White, Begley,
Young, Unterreiner
& White LLC, Cape
Girardeau

Ready to Talk?

For more information on the Legacy Society, Professional Advisors Council or Founders Fund, please contact Winter Kinne, Vice President of Development, at (417) 864-6199 or wkinne@cfozarks.org.



◀ Gary Vernon, program officer for the Walton Family Foundation, says northwest Arkansas now has a higher trail usage per capita than bike-friendly San Francisco.

Trailbuilding defines placemaking efforts in northwest Arkansas

ARKANSAS HAS LONG STAKED ITS claim as the Natural State, with plenty of jaw-dropping vistas, scenic back roads and the beautiful Buffalo River. Developing those public assets into a national destination by building hundreds of miles of mountain bike trails is the very definition of placemaking.

This example, from an area so familiar to Missourians who venture south of the border for floating, hiking and visits to Crystal Bridges Museum, resonated with donors and community leaders who attended the CFO's quarterly Donor Education lunch meeting on March 2.

Gary Vernon, program officer at the Walton Family Foundation, recounted how northwest Arkansas' system of mountain bike trails grew from five miles in 2007 to about 150 miles today. Those trails, along with other projects that are nearing 1,000 miles statewide, make up a network that puts Arkansas on footing with areas like Moab, Utah, and Whistler, British Columbia, for mountain bike enthusiasts—the benefits of which will last into perpetuity.

"When we build trails, that greenspace is preserved forever," Vernon says.

A longtime mountain biker himself, Vernon now works a dream job fostering public-private partnerships to promote the trail system for benefits ranging from eco-tourism to healthy lifestyles. "It gets kids off their screens," he says.

The CFO invited Vernon to speak at this donor education session as a follow up to its first-ever Philanthropy Summit in October, which explored how philanthropy can support larger-scale community development activities.

He credits Tom Walton, grandson of Walmart founder Sam Walton, for this area of focus for the family's foundation.

"(Tom) started this as a trail in Bentonville to give something back to the city," Vernon said of the network that has now grown into an annual economic impact of \$137 million for Arkansas.

He cited five principles to succeed in intentionally focusing on place to create a world-class destination:

- Use the natural environment in a low-impact way.
- Recruit the best to create the best.
- Reward innovation.
- Connect communities.
- Create experiences for all skill levels.

Vernon noted that placemaking, coupled with the affordable cost of living for the region, has great potential for economic development.

"Why would someone open up a cycling company in southern California where you have to pay three or four times the rent and your workers can't afford to live there?" he asked. "Come to Arkansas. Come to southwest Missouri and enjoy the trails."

—Louise Knauer

PROGRAMS

Legacy lands at MSU

**LARGEST SCHOLARSHIP GIFT IN MISSOURI
STATE UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY OFFERS
NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS
IN BARTON AND VERNON COUNTIES**

In the not-too-distant future, it may be possible for every eligible high-school senior in Barton and Vernon counties to earn a scholarship to attend Missouri State University, if that fits their academic plans.

That's a remarkable legacy left by MSU alum Larry Hale and his wife, Linda, who lived and worked in Sheldon. The couple—Larry died in 2015 and Linda in 2018—left a multi-million estate gift divided between the CFO and MSU to benefit students from those two counties attending MSU.

Larry Hale was a real estate broker who specialized in selling large farms and ranches in a four-state area. He also was a cattle rancher for 20 years in Sheldon, the same community where he'd graduated from high school and went on to earn a degree in agriculture from then-Southwest Missouri State University.

Larry's sweetheart, Linda, was still in high school so she came to Springfield to finish her senior year at Glendale, while Larry attended SMS living in a trailer he'd pulled here for his "student housing." They moved back to Sheldon and Larry started scraping together every bit of money he could to buy parcels of land. They had one son, Cody.

While the couple's real estate holdings are still being sold and settled, their gift is estimated at potentially \$12 million.



▲ Linda and Larry Hale bequeathed most of their estate to scholarships for students in Barton and Vernon counties attending Missouri State University.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE HALE ESTATE

The scholarship will be available for applications for the fall 2022 semester.

"The Hales truly lived the American Dream, leaving their small community to seek an education, and returning to put that gift of learning to build a life," CFO President Brian Fogle said. "This tremendous gift will provide that same opportunity for other students in their home area to better themselves through the quality education provided by Missouri State University that they enjoyed. It's a legacy that will go on forever."

Fogle expressed his appreciation to Barton County attorney, George Nichols, who worked with the Hales on their estate planning. In a May announcement via Zoom, Missouri State leaders said the gift will be represented in the university's Onward, Upward fundraising campaign, which includes scholarship support as a priority.

"This gift provides a great opportunity to recruit and retain students as well as financially assist numerous students throughout their college career. We are extremely grateful for the Hale's thoughtfulness and kindness," said Dr. Ronald Del Vecchio, dean of the Carr College of Agriculture.

—Louise Knauer

New look for CFO grantmaking in FY21

FOCUS ON EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS SPRINGFIELD METRO PROGRAMS WITH INCREASES IN RURAL GRANTMAKING

There is no doubt that regional recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will dominate the CFO's grantmaking over the course of the next year. But there are other important societal needs that philanthropy can help address.

As calls for social justice and racial equity resounded across the globe following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and other Black Americans, the CFO and its board decided to expand the annual Diversity and Inclusion grant round to focus on equity.

The Springfield-Greene County Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Grant Program will provide \$80,000 for projects that pursue short-term changes in issue visibility, interim changes in norms and practices, and long-term changes that positively impact the Springfield metro area.

A smaller, ongoing grant program will provide similar support regionwide. The Ozarks Inclusive Opportunity Fund will help ensure equitable participation and engagement for leaders and students of diverse backgrounds. The program will provide grants up to \$1,000 to provide equitable opportunity for community engagement, education and leadership.

"Racism and intolerance are roadblocks to the pursuit of our mission to improve the quality of life for everyone in our region," CFO President Brian Fogle said. "We hope that philanthropy—with flexible, creative capital—can contribute to the progress needed to heal our nation."

The CFO also remains committed to addressing the unique issues of rural communities across central and southern Missouri, and a growing relationship with an anonymous outside funder is bringing more grant dollars to the region.

Before the CFO's discretionary grantmaking took a sharp turn towards pandemic response in mid-March, the CFO had awarded the first Rural Vitality Grants. This new program greatly



▲ The CFO awarded the 2019 Springfield-Greene County Diversity and Inclusion grants last November, granting a total of \$80,000 to seven agencies. For the 2021 fiscal year, the emphasis of the program will shift to support equity projects in the Springfield metro area.



◀ During one of the last events hosted by the CFO before the pandemic, the recipients of the first Rural Vitality Grants gathered to share details about their projects.

expands the CFO's grantmaking for rural communities and serves as a complement to the Coover Regional grant program.

Funded by an anonymous private foundation with specific charitable interests—particularly services to improve health, education and economic self-sufficiency in rural communities, as well as supporting young

people in communities with median incomes of 200 percent or less of the poverty rate—applications for the Coover Regional program that meet certain criteria are designated for the Rural Vitality Grant program. The first grants, awarded in January, totaled more than \$209,000 for 13 agencies. A second round of Rural Vitality Grants will be announced in late July.

A Final Word

A NOTE FROM CFO PRESIDENT BRIAN FOGLE



Halfway through the year, several visuals compete for the most appropriate symbol to represent this historic and surreal 2020. Certainly, the novel coronavirus itself is a contender—that Seussian planet-like orb is certainly memorable. So are the signs, placards and sea of humanity representing the protests of a movement whose time has come. For me, though, I would nominate the mask.

I have commuted daily past Missouri State University for the last 12 years. Each August, as international students returned, I would see many of them walking down the street, wearing masks, carrying parasols, on their way to class. I thought, here in the Ozarks, how peculiar it was to see so many students wearing them. Of course, that was before our pandemic. Now, they seem ubiquitous.

We see them on the faces of our leaders, workers and protestors. They serve to both protect the wearers from others, and protect others from the wearers. They also have hidden the smiles of those who help bring light to darkness, and shrouded the sadness of those deeply impacted by this virus that brought our world to its knees. Masks have hidden the anger of the protestors tired of injustice, and the identities of those who wish to destroy instead of build.

It is now more peculiar not to see a mask than to see one. Masks, unfortunately, have become more of a political statement for some than the personal protective equipment they are intended to be.

There will be a day when masks will cease being a symbol, and will return to serving the utilitarian purpose originally intended. Heck, there might be a

time in years hence that they might look a bit peculiar out in public once again. I think we'll all cherish and covet that day.

And maybe, with time and perspective, we can look back on 2020 and talk about this most challenging and strange year—about how we faced the challenge and what we learned from it. I, for one, won't take for granted how an unmasked smile can literally change my day, and how I need to be more aware and attentive to the sadness of a frown.

Literal unmasking can be vulnerable to our health during a pandemic, but letting others see us for who we are has always been uncomfortable. But now that we've shared this experience, I hope we all are willing to not just put our best selves out there on social media—but to let folks directly see our real selves and realize that that will be good enough.

As our communities open, my hope is that our hearts and minds open as well, followed by our treasure. Philanthropy is going to be more important than ever in recovering from this disruption of every part of life. Government resources can certainly do some of the heavy lifting, but there will never be enough for all we need to do to reopen, recover and rebuild, and it will never be in all the places it needs to be. Philanthropy can provide the flexibility to fill those gaps, but only if donors answer the call.

The spring and summer of 2020 will be a defining time for our lifetimes. I hope when this year, too, is stripped of its mask, a more just, equitable and prepared future will be revealed.

Thank You

to everyone who has donated to the COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund

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PARTING SHOT: Nature has provided a balm, a respite, a source of hope for growth and renewal during this challenging season of our lives. Kaitlin Marshall, volunteering through Americorps Vista as a development coordinator for Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, tends to starts of native trees and shrubs in late April. WCO, working with Hillcrest High School and the Darr Family Foundation, received a \$25,000 Collective Impact grant to launch the Watershed Natives program.