

PASSION & PURPOSE

THE CFO MAGAZINE  SUMMER 2022



New Paths to Prosperity

With rising wages presenting a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity, two CFO programs are helping workers like Laura Baker find and keep jobs. **PAGE 4**



Nonprofit Realities

New report examines challenges for agency leaders.

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Hometown Heroes

Jewell and Danny Little focus their philanthropy on Lamar.

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COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of the OZARKS

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

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Letter from the Chair

A NOTE FROM OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR ROBIN MORGAN



As my year as Chair of the CFO Board of Directors draws to an end there are many things to reflect upon. I was honored and humbled to receive the call from Brian to fill this role. I always knew the CFO was an amazing organization, but the deeper you dive into the inner workings, the more you realize just how remarkable it is. When you see the low turnover rate of the staff, you must consider that something is working really well.

The CFO staff is committed to this organization and its donors and believes wholeheartedly in its mission. It is amazing to see how quickly the CFO pivots in a new direction when community needs arise. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been many opportunities in which to better the lives of people in our communities. The CFO has been a leader, and many times the leader of the pack, in coming up with new ways to improve lives and outcomes.

One instance was helping get people back into the workforce. The CFO partnered with several other agencies to support transportation expenses that reduce barriers to working and job hunting. “Let’s Get to Work” has been an outstanding initiative, very well received with outstanding results.

We hit another milestone—\$400 million in assets—albeit temporarily, after our investment portfolio was affected by the market downturn like everyone else’s. Still, our Chief Financial Officer Luis Leon encourages us to think in terms of being a \$1 billion community foundation! Do you think our founding board ever imagined we would grow to this capacity, let alone be looking toward a billion-dollar foundation?

We live in such a giving area. It is not just the Springfield area, but our regional affiliate areas as well. I’m proud that two new affiliates got started during my term representing the Bootheel region and Pleasant Hope. We can all be very proud to live in such philanthropic communities. Our donors have not missed a beat even during this pandemic as we have continued to grow in gifts coming in AND in grants going out. We can be proud to live in the Ozarks.

We did have one priceless moment this past year that I



◀ At the December 2021 board meeting, FY22 Board Chair Robin Morgan presents CEO Brian Fogle with a cartload of gifts from communities represented by regional affiliate foundations.

want to share. Each year, the board gives CEO Brian Fogle a gift at the December board meeting. With the recent growth in our affiliates, board member Morey Mechlin suggested the great idea to involve them in Brian’s gift. We asked our affiliates to participate if possible and send us something representing their communities. We had an outstanding response! When we rolled in a cart after December’s board meeting piled with gifts from our affiliates, Brian was actually speechless. Now those of you who know Brian, have you ever seen him speechless? He may have sputtered a few syllables.

This has been an amazing journey for me in my association with the CFO. I want to thank everyone that had enough confidence in me to elect me to this position. The CFO is an amazing organization that does amazing things in our communities. I encourage all of you to get involved and dig deeper. You will be enlightened at what you learn.

Warmly,

Robin L. Morgan

—ROBIN MORGAN
FY22 BOARD CHAIR

Outgoing directors pass batons

Two members of the CFO's Board of Directors completed their second terms in June. The CFO appreciates their combined 12 years of service on the board and in leadership roles as well as their extensive contributions to the community.

Abram "Abe" McGull II served as Board Chair in 2019-20 during his six years on the board. A U.S. Navy veteran, McGull retired as an assistant U.S. attorney in Springfield and now works in private law practice. McGull also serves as a member of the Springfield City Council. He has chaired the CFO's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion grantmaking committee and served on the Governance Committee.

Morey Mechlin completed two terms on June 30. During her terms, she served as an at-large member of the Executive Committee and chaired the Development and Community Focus Report steering committees. A longtime community volunteer, Morey also retired as Executive Director of Care to Learn, which started as a fund with the CFO before becoming a nonprofit agency that



Abram McGull II



Morey Mechlin

supports health, hunger and hygiene needs of students.

New Board Members

The CFO welcomes two new board members. They joined the 21-member board on July 1 for three-year terms.

Lynne Meyerkord is the Executive Director of AIDS Project of the Ozarks, where she has worked since 1994. Established in 1985, APO provides HIV care and prevention services in a 29-county region. She also has served on the CFO's Collective Impact grantmaking committee. She holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Doug Nickell served as the CFO's outside counsel at Carnahan Evans PC for many years before his retirement this year. He brings a deep knowledge of the CFO to his new board role along with his experience in trust and estate planning. A frequent guest lecturer for the Missouri Bar and other continuing legal education programs, Nickell is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law.

FY23 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Chair: Laurie Edmondson, Springfield (Drury University)
- Vice chair: Dean Thompson, Republic (Springfield City Utilities)
- Treasurer: Anne E. McGregor, Branson (The Neighbor Company)
- Secretary: Ron Kraettli, Hermann, (Retired banker)
- At-large: Roy Hardy, Jr., Republic (Associated Electric Cooperative)
- At-large: Gail Smart, Springfield (Attorney and community volunteer)
- IAB Chair: Kari Creighton, Springfield (Financial professional)
- Chair Emeritus: Robin Morgan, West Plains (VALIC Financial Advisors)

The CFO's FY23 Action Plan

The CFO Board of Directors approved the following Action Plan for the 2023 fiscal year, which began July 1.

Completion of Financial System Migration

The CFO transitioned to a new financial system, CSuite by Foundant, on July 1. This is the first large-scale transition to a new system in more than 20 years. Following the data migration, staff will implement new processes and work to educate donors, nonprofit partners and affiliates on features of the new system.

Attraction and Retention of 'Next-Generation' Donors

The Development Committee recommends implementing a plan to engage and cultivate "next-gen" donors through collaborative philanthropy and learning about community needs.

Help Launch a Nonprofit Services Center

After a year of research about services needed by the region's nonprofit community, an ad hoc committee recommended contracting with the St. Louis-based Network for Strong Communities to expand into south-west Missouri for training and other services. This is expected to start in fall 2022. (For more about this project, see page 11.)

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the CFO

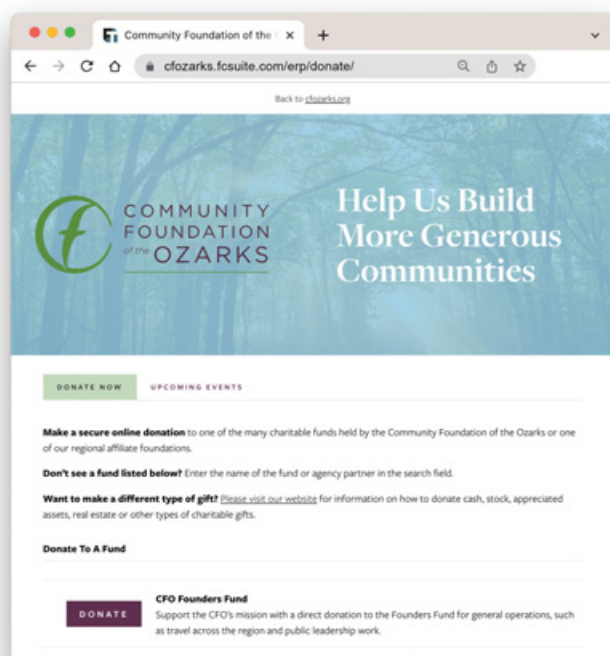
The CFO will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023. The board and staff will host a series of events and activities to express appreciation for all who have built our region's premier public charitable foundation.

Support a New Transfer-of-Wealth Study

The CFO is a member of the Alliance of Missouri Community Foundations, which will contract with the University of Missouri to conduct a new transfer-of-wealth study using more recent Census data to update the first study produced in 2013.

Develop a New Strategic Plan for the Next Five Years

The CFO will undertake a new strategic planning process because the current plan concludes in 2023.



Transition to new financial system brings improvements

On July 1, the CFO migrated the financial system in use for decades to a new and improved cloud-based system called Community Suite, or CSuite for short. The CFO already has used this company's grantmaking and scholarship management portal, called Foundant, for several years.

The transition is a huge undertaking, but the end result should be an improved experience for donors, affiliates and nonprofit partners who use online services for their funds as well as for the CFO staff. The new donor portal will provide real-time information and make it easy to submit grant recommendations or make a donation online.

The CFO has been working to update our donors and partners through the monthly electronic newsletters, emails and mailings to specific constituents. Information also is compiled, including a list of frequently asked questions, at cfozarks.org/switch.

Report archives leadership lessons

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued through a second year, Springfield-Greene County leaders faced both new and ongoing challenges that tested systems, strained staffing and affected the daily lives of citizens. In an effort to chronicle the community's response to the pandemic for future leaders, the CFO decided to prepare a follow up to its "First Response" report on pandemic leadership.

In "First Response: Two Years Later," Kaitlyn McConnell, the CFO's writer in residence, re-interviewed most of the community leaders from the original report to expand their reflections on the past two years.

Read the full report or download a printable version at cfozarks.org/firstresponse.



New pocket-sized resource to the CFO

The CFO means many things to many people. But it's not always the same frame of reference, depending on your relationship with our services.

"Your Guide to the Community Foundation of the Ozarks" is a new pocket- or purse-sized resource to the core services and programs available through our region's leading public charitable foundation.

It includes brief descriptions of each program as a convenient reference along with contacts for more information—perfect for a convenient reference or when introducing the CFO to a friend or client.

If you would like one or more copies, please email your request to cfo@cfozarks.org, or call (417) 864-6199.



PHILANTHROPY GOES TO WORK

RECENT YEARS HAVE CREATED CHALLENGES

for the southwest Missouri job market, but it's not necessarily due to a lack of open positions. Instead, other factors employees face may impact their ability to gain—and sustain—employment.

The reality has affected industries across the region, and has only been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A series of panel discussions held by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks in fall 2021 identified three key themes preventing people from searching for or staying in jobs: workforce flexibility; access to child care; and transportation barriers.

Out of trying times, however, come new ways of thinking about philanthropy's role. In recent months, the CFO has taken action to help the latter two issues by launching the "Let's Get to Work" and "Ozarks Early Childhood Support" grant programs.

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to lift individuals and families economically, reduce poverty, and thereby enhance the quality of life for so many in our region if we can lower barriers to enter the workforce," CFO President Brian Fogle said in 2021.

Here's a look at where things stand with these grant programs.

Helping the workforce by helping each other

GETTING A JOB IS LESS COMPLICATED THAN GETTING TO IT WHEN TRANSPORTATION IS A CHALLENGE

For folks with unreliable transportation, roadblocks in getting to work begin before they even hit the road.

Such a reality presents a problem for both employees—from an income perspective—and employers, who need workers in this tight labor market. And it's an issue facing many individuals throughout the Ozarks.

One person who knows that firsthand is Laura Baker, a Springfield resident faced with challenges in getting to work after her previous shared transportation became unavailable.

Through the "Let's Get to Work" grant program, that isn't the case now. The program helped provide funding for a down payment so she could purchase a vehicle.

"I needed a car and this came at the right time," says Baker. "The program helped me immensely and without it, I would not have had a car."

Launched by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks in late 2021, LGTW helps remove barriers related to transportation through grants made to nonprofit agencies, which, in turn, support eligible expenses for current workers and people who could work if they had

reliable transportation.

The LGTW fund supports needs such as car repairs, new tires, gasoline cards, licensing fees or taxes, transportation services such as bus passes, ride-sharing services, taxis, purchase or repair of bikes/e-bikes, or vehicle purchase down payments.

In Baker's case, her employer, Select Brands, worked with the Springfield Business Development Corporation, an arm of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, to access funds to help employees who were at risk of losing work due to transportation-related barriers.

The vehicle also gave her the reliability to advance her career, where she moved from packer to machine operator.

"I wasn't a machine operator until after I got the car," says Baker. "I'm just so grateful that they were able to help."

Baker is among the individuals served by LGTW, thanks to gifts by David and Stacey O'Reilly, the O'Reilly Charity Golf Classic Fund, Bass Pro Shops, the Jeannette L. Musgrave Foundation, an anonymous donor and other generous donors, along with \$250,000 from the CFO's reserves.

As of June 2022, \$595,000 has been distributed through the fund.



◀ Without a reliable ride to work, Laura Baker was at risk of losing her job at Select Brands in Springfield. But after receiving assistance through the Let's Get to Work fund to purchase a new-to-her vehicle, she was not only able to keep her job but earn a promotion as well.

Another person benefiting from that funding is Trish Thiesen. As manager of a gas station in Buffalo, Thiesen deals with the business of driving—but was personally challenged by the reliability of her 18-year-old vehicle with more than 300,000 miles.

"I don't work very far from home, but me and my kid, we couldn't go anywhere. Because it wasn't reliable. It was breaking down all the time," says Thiesen. "We weren't able to go to Springfield, which is just 30 minutes away, or anywhere without me worrying that my car would break down, and I'd have my kid on the side of the road."

Other travel for work was also out of the question, such as an out-of-state trip for an annual food show attended by gas station representatives.

"My manager offered to let me go last year. I couldn't go," she says. "I didn't have any way of going."

Things, however, were different this year. Funds granted through the LGTW program to Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation went for Thiesen's down payment and sales tax on a new-to-her vehicle that has not only given her reliable transportation, but improved her quality of life.

"I don't have to worry that I'm going to break down and have to walk the rest of the way to work," she says. "I even drove to Ohio for my job and didn't have a bit of trouble."

"It's just been the biggest blessing ever."

Similar sentiments are shared by Jack Bales, who recently purchased a vehicle with support from House of Hope, which received a grant from the

LGTW program.

Bales has experienced rocky periods in his life, including periods of homelessness and mental health challenges, leading to loss of employment and transportation. He eventually moved to the Branson area in 2011, but a low credit score and a prior vehicle repossession made things difficult when it came to getting around town.

"In Branson, they don't have a transportation system here," he says. "So pretty much if you don't have transportation, then you have to go where you go on foot."

He eventually did purchase a vehicle, but it turned out to have many problems that required expensive ongoing maintenance—a difficult reality while making minimum wage.

"I was paying rent and utilities along with what I was having to pay out-of-pocket for repairs. I'd say I'd spent

close to over \$20,000 over a four- or five-year period of time trying to keep it running," Bales says of his vehicle. "I was always living in poverty. Always just struggling from one day to the next."

While working at The Track, a tourist attraction on the Highway 76 Strip, Bales finally got the vehicle paid off. Then, an accident occurred, followed by transmission trouble.

At just the right moment, Bales says, LGTW helped cover most of a down payment on a different vehicle.

"It pretty much saved my life," he says. "I would not be able to drive anywhere; I'd be on foot. See, I'm 68 years old. So, I would not last very long if I didn't have the transportation."

"I tell everybody about how grateful and thankful I am that the grant was able to help me get past that roadblock."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

The CFO has granted \$595,000 to 21 agencies to assist clients with transportation-related barriers to employment in 14 counties across southwest Missouri:

- Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri
- City of Springfield's Department of Workforce Development
- Coalition of Charities
- Community Outreach Ministries
- Community Partnership of the Ozarks
- Council of Churches
- of the Ozarks
- Developmental Center of the Ozarks
- Drew Lewis Foundation
- Flourish CDC
- Freedom's Rest Family Violence Center
- Help Give Hope
- House of Hope
- The Kitchen Inc.
- Live 2 Give Hope
- Missouri Ozarks Community Action
- Ozark Action Inc.
- Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation
- Springfield Business Development Corporation
- Texas County Food Pantry
- United Way of the Ozarks
- West Central Missouri Community Action Agency

Find more information or donate to the Let's Get to Work Fund at cfozarks.org/transportation.

Grants improve access for child care

HOW A \$300,000 ANONYMOUS GIFT IS HELPING DECREASE BARRIERS FOR DAYCARES AND WORKING PARENTS IN THE RURAL OZARKS

► *The I Can Too Learning Center, which provides care for young children in Salem, received a \$30,000 grant to supplement tuition payments for low-income families.*

Getting to work can be complicated when children are involved, and for more reasons than simply trying to get out the door. For parents in rural parts of the Ozarks, this reality can be especially challenging based on economic and availability factors that make finding—and keeping—a spot at a daycare difficult.

While the issues contributing to such realities are complex, a layer of support was announced in 2021 through the Ozarks Early Childhood Support Grant Program. An anonymous donor pledged \$300,000 through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks to reduce barriers to quality, affordable child care in rural communities.

“We focused on child care as a component of working through solutions we could provide that impact workforce issues in the region,” says Bridget Dierks, vice president of Programs at the CFO. “We wanted to positively impact the lives of individuals who would like to return to work and only lack quality child care to be able to do it.”

In December, the CFO announced 10 agencies throughout the region as the grant recipients. The issues they face—and funding to help alleviate them—are as broad as the region itself, but a key need is greater staffing support. More than half of the pool of funding was devoted to this issue.

Subsidizing tuition

While daycares struggle in recruiting and retaining staff, another funding-related concern can simply be the ability of parents and guardians to pay for their children to attend.

One place facing this reality is the I Can Too Learning Center in Dent County, which received \$30,000 through the grant program to supplement tuition payments for low-income families.

Nancy Major, founder of the Salem center, regularly sees situations in



which parents want to pay their bills, but an unexpected expense or change in state subsidy suddenly makes things very difficult.

“My parents would come in and they go, ‘Is there any way I can wait to pay you until my next paycheck? Because our washer just went out and I have to go buy a new one,’” she shares as an example.

Those types of situations led her to begin a scholarship program through which parents can apply to have up to half of their out-of-pocket expenses covered for a set period of time. However, due to funding limitations, she wasn’t able to offer extended support. That’s where the additional grant funding comes in: It allows parents to have an expanded chance to get on their feet.

“We never had enough to just really give parents a break. So, when we applied for this, that’s what we did,” says Major, who notes that she approached families who had struggled in the past to let them know the grant funding was available.

“I talked to them and said, ‘Do you want to apply for a scholarship? Because we have some extra funds now through the scholarship fund that could give you a chance to kind of get everything

pulled together.’”

Currently, they are assisting 32 of the center’s 148 children through the program.

Applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by a committee, which will make decisions based on the family’s needs. All applicants must be making an effort to work, attend school or apply for jobs. In the case of children in the foster care system, the funds are used to reduce the bill to zero.

While Major has seen the need increase for help, she’s also seen an increase in need for capacity.

“When I first started, there were three large daycares in town,” she says. “We are the final one.”

Expanding to new ages

Accessibility—both overall and especially for certain ages—is an issue in other parts of the state as well. It’s the case in Phelps County, where spots for infants are basically impossible to find in centers.

“The state considers Phelps County a desert because we don’t have near enough to meet the demands,” says Tracy James, director of First Presbyterian Church of Rolla’s Presbyterian Preschool. “Basically, if you’re thinking of

“When I first started, there were three large daycares in town. **We are the final one.**”

—NANCY MAJOR,
I CAN TOO LEARNING CENTER IN SALEM

getting pregnant, you have to put your name on the list.”

Soon, there will be eight more spots after construction is complete on an infant care room at the preschool, which is funded in part by \$15,233.76 from the grant program.

Walking down the hallway of the center, filled with color and the voices of nearby children, James opens the door to the future infant room.

“The stairs will come out, and the ramp will come all the way up,” says James, holding open a second door from the room to the outside.

Although the room is currently empty and down to bare bones, in effect, it’s already full.

“Even when rumors started that we might be taking infants, phone calls came,” says James.

Given the extremely low number of spots locally available, she says that individuals largely rely on their own solutions to find care for their youngest children. That was even a lived reality for James after her daughter had no luck in placing her grandchild prior to his birth.

“My mom and I kept him, which they consider ‘underground,’” says James. “Because you aren’t regulated.”

Helping navigate challenges

In the southeast corner of Missouri, another proof point of the need for greater access is seen through Bell City, where licensed preschool options are limited.

“We were the only licensed facility

within a 45-minute drive of the area,” says Jeremy Hahn, executive vice president of Life360 Community Services, of when the organization took over the operation a couple of years ago.

That reality is compounded by another problem facing the small Stoddard County community: A high rate of poverty, found across parts of the Ozarks, which can complicate families’ abilities to make payments for their children to attend.

Of the four-county region that Life360 serves from its Bell City location, Hahn says, “They are above the 90% free and reduced lunch rate. Ninety percent,” emphasizing the metric often used to illustrate the economic reality of particular areas.

Those needs will be served through \$30,000 from the grant program, which will support increased staffing hours at the center and the addition of a family support coordinator.

“A family support coordinator is really a resource manager,” says Hahn of the coordinator role, which is standard at Life360’s preschools. “It can be as simple as when we receive donated

products, they will package it and give it to families.”

Other times, however, the coordinators can identify challenges in a family’s ability to succeed, such as with housing, transportation and interpersonal situations.

“Our family support coordinators make sure when parents get in trouble—if, say, they’re late on a payment, they begin to ask questions and work with them,” Hahn says.

“Indirectly, that impacts us tremendously.”

He also shares that the coordinators can support families through services including budget training and help, financial management, and even social-emotional development.

“We do work with parents on healthy bedtime routines,” adds Hahn. “Maybe their kiddo’s lacking in being able to identify letters, and so they’ll work with them even on the educational piece a little bit, at least as it pertains to ways parents can help them at home.”

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

More Online

For an expanded version of this story, go to cfozarks.org/childcare.

► Tracy James, director of the Presbyterian Preschool in Rolla, is overseeing the grant-funded construction of a new infant care room at First Presbyterian Church to meet the extreme need for child care in Phelps County. “Basically, if you’re thinking of getting pregnant, you have to put your name on the list.”



AFFILIATES



Together Again

**FIRST POST-PANDEMIC GATHERING
CELEBRATES ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
THE CFO'S 53 AFFILIATE FOUNDATIONS**

▼ Legacy-giving expert Kathryn Miree delivered the keynote address and encouraged affiliate leaders to first listen to donors when pursuing planned gifts.



The Community Foundation of the Ozarks' Affiliate Appreciation Conference lived up to its name as a way to recognize its 53 affiliates, but also expressed how it felt to gather for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

"I love the Charles Dickens' line: 'It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times,' because we have been through a lot as a region, as a country, as a world in these past two years," said CFO President Brian Fogle, in welcoming affiliate representatives at the April 25 event. "But in the midst of a pandemic, we have done—you have done—all of us together, some amazing things."

The work is evident in stories and lives affected throughout the region, but also through data: In 2021, the CFO crossed the half-billion-dollar mark in grants and distributions.

"In one year, our assets grew 26 percent, and we went and surpassed the \$400 million mark in total assets," said Fogle. "Reflecting what you're doing each and every day—that's an amazing thing, and thank you for that. We did it together."

Those benchmarks are moments for celebration, but there is also much work still left to do.

Tools to help reach those goals were shared throughout the conference,

starting with a keynote address from Kathryn Miree, a planned giving, endowment, and foundation management leader.

Her suggestions focused on how to have conversations that focus on meeting donors where they are. For her, a key realization—that it starts with truly listening to thoughts, needs and desires of donors—hit years ago when she began as a volunteer with United Way and made calls with the organization's president.

"I love these conversations because I think they're magic," she said. "The donors are the ones who have taught me more about what I do than anybody else. What they want to accomplish, what motivates them, and where they are."

The rest of the day focused on a number of opportunities to learn, share and compare notes, as well as more celebration of the good things happening throughout the region.

"We never take for granted that you all have the relationships in your communities," said Alice Wingo, CFO vice president of affiliates. "You know your folks there. You know the needs in your communities, and we are so appreciative of this model that the CFO put in place 29 years ago where we're able to help you bring philanthropic resources into your communities."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

Annual awards recognize excellence in leadership

An affiliate foundation can be fundamental to the vibrancy of a small town or rural area, but that foundation requires passionate leadership by a dedicated board of directors to truly succeed. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks recognized seven of those leaders during the 2022 Affiliate Appreciation Conference on April 25 in Springfield.

“One cannot serve on a foundation board without first deeply loving one’s community,” CFO President Brian Fogle said. “That love is expressed through their excellent leadership and dedication that make their communities a better place to live for all their neighbors.”

The 2022 Stanley Ball Award was presented to Ross Richardson, president of the Houston Community Foundation.

The Stanley Ball Leadership Award is presented to the president of one of the CFO’s regional affiliate foundations. Ball, who died in 2015, was the founding president of the Nixa Community Foundation, the CFO’s first affiliate. He embodied the strengths of business, civic and philanthropic leadership working together to enhance our communities. The award is presented by the CFO and Central Trust Company, which manages the Stanley & Elaine Ball Foundation. It included a \$2,000 cash award for the Houston Community Foundation.

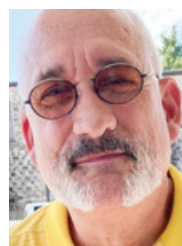
The Fred Lemons Achievement Award was presented to Jack Muench, a longtime volunteer and past president of the Aurora Area Community Foundation.

The Fred Lemons Award is named

for the late president of the Lockwood Community Foundation, who demonstrated remarkable leadership during his 15-year tenure until his death in 2014. Muench is the seventh recipient of the award, which included a \$1,000 unrestricted grant to the Aurora Area Community Foundation.

In addition to the Stanley Ball and Fred Lemons awards, five regional affiliate leaders were honored with Board Members of Excellence awards for outstanding service to their communities:

- Deanna Hendrich, Truman Lake Community Foundation;
- Greg Hoffman, Nevada/Vernon County Community Foundation;
- Ron Kraettli, Community Foundation of the Hermann Area Inc.;
- Stacy Pyrtle, Community Foundation of the Lake; and
- Frank Robinson, Perry County Community Foundation.



Ross Richardson



Jack Muench



Deanna Hendrich



Greg Hoffman



Ron Kraettli



Stacy Pyrtle



Frank Robinson

TAKING THE REINS

Several CFO affiliates changed leadership between fall 2021 and the end of the 2022 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.



Cabool Community Foundation

Outgoing: Kirby Holmes

Incoming: Karl Janson



Carthage Community Foundation

Outgoing: Jeff Williams

Incoming: Stephanie Howard



Finley River Community Foundation

Outgoing: Gerald Chambers

Incoming: Mike Woody



Community Foundation of the Hermann Area

Outgoing: Gary Heldt

Incoming: Ron Kraettli



Community Foundation of the Lake

Outgoing: Amy Hernandez

Incoming: Jane Wright



Monett Area Community Foundation

Outgoing: Shawn Hayden

Incoming: Beth Nation



Nixa Community Foundation

Outgoing: Sharon Whitehill

Incoming: Jimmy Liles

Republic Community Foundation

Outgoing: Josh Troester

Incoming: Alexandria Holmes



▼ The new fish-cleaning station at Roaring River State Park, funded in part by the Cassville Community Foundation, helps successful anglers properly dispose of fish remains.



Improving on Tradition Any Way You Slice It

CASSVILLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HELPS FUND NEW FISH-CLEANING STATION AT ROARING RIVER STATE PARK

On March 1 every year, the opening day of catch-and-keep season at Roaring River State Park brings together familiar faces fueled by tradition and a love of trout fishing. But as rods, reels and rushing water rolled together in 2022, a new feature, backed by the local regional affiliate foundation, provided successful anglers greater access and convenience and also preserved the natural beauty of the popular state park.

A new fish-cleaning station, installed in 2021 at a cost of around \$90,000, was funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri State Parks and the Cassville Community Foundation, the latter of which contributed approximately \$26,000 thanks to support from generous donors.

“More than 200 people from all over the country donated, from \$25 to \$10,000,” says Rachael Freeman, affiliate coordinator with the CCF. “There was a story with every donation.”

The CCF represents the Barry County seat, near the southwest corner of Missouri. The state park, located just a few miles south of Cassville, draws more than a million visitors every year to fish for the plentiful rainbow and brown trout raised in the park’s hatchery.

Freeman says the need for the new station became obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the previous one was closed due to lack of social-distancing opportunities. Worse still, the old station’s subsequent removal caused negative ramifications for the pastoral setting, with no set place to dispose of fish remains.

“It was messing with the beauty of Roaring River,” Freeman says. “We’re a town that feeds off tourism. We wanted to do what we could to act fast.”

According to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, RRSP had 1.9 million visitors in 2021, the most of all Missouri state parks and historic sites.

Joel Topham, natural resource manager at RRSP, says the addition is something that visitors have come to appreciate.

“The fish-cleaning station has been a focal point at Roaring River for years,” he says, noting different iterations as it evolved. “Roaring River is just rich with tradition. People want the convenience of a fish-cleaning station here. So with the foundation’s help, we were able to get that station built.”

Topham describes the station as state-of-the-art: It grinds fish remains into pieces small enough to be disposed of through the park’s wastewater system. The new station also provides equitable access for visitors to the park, given that it is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Following its completion last year, a grand opening was held for the new station.

“When we did the unveiling, people were lining up to use it,” says Freeman.

On the opening day of catch-and-keep trout season, it had a line of people waiting to use it, too. One of those people was Andy Riffle of Oklahoma, who regularly fishes at Roaring River. He caught his limit in around 30 minutes.

“It’s nice—it’s definitely pretty top-notch,” he says of the station. The best part, in his opinion? “You don’t get shocked when you plug in your electric knife.”

“The park has always been about more than just fish,” Freeman says, noting that the station plays more than simply a literal role for those that visit the park year after year. “It’s not just about the fish. They’re preserving their memories.”

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

▲ The opening day crowd of catch-and-keep trout season on March 1 is a widely cherished Ozarks tradition.

Partnering for Stronger Nonprofits

**CFO TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDS NEW
CAPACITY-BUILDING
RESOURCE**



By making an investment in strengthening nonprofits, the Community Foundation of the Ozarks also makes the grant dollars that support their work more effective. That philosophy has been a hallmark of the CFO's commitment to nonprofits for more than a decade as the number of nonprofit partnerships has grown to more than 650 agencies.

As part of the CFO's FY22 Action Plan, a committee led by board member Richard Cavender started exploring current needs of nonprofits in areas such as training and shared services. In June, the Board of Directors approved a new partnership with the St. Louis-based Network for Strong Communities to open a new office in Springfield in fall 2022. In addition, the board approved a plan for the CFO to offer scholarships to eligible nonprofits to participate in the new services.

Network for Strong Communities, founded in 1996, has a mission to strengthen the impact of nonprofits by providing strategic, educational and operational support services. Its programs range from workshops on topics such as human resources issues to engaging volunteers to administrative services such as accounting, marketing

and event planning.

The first priority for the new Springfield office will be developing a cohort of regional nonprofit leaders for joint learning opportunities and customized consulting in their identified areas of need, such as financial management, fundraising, board effectiveness or human resources.

"What we bring to town is a commitment to helping nonprofits do their work in the way that's best for them," says Diane Drollinger, NSC's president and CEO. "Anything that they need concerning infrastructure resources,

we have the expertise in that. We've got great consultancy experience in helping our nonprofit partners grow in the way that suits them and helps them meet their missions."

The committee members who worked with Cavender and staff members Holly Beadle, Brian Fogle and Winter Kinne to develop this model over the past year included Jim Anderson, retired from the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and CoxHealth; Stephanie Brady, executive director of the Community Clinic in Joplin; Kristy Carter, executive director with Least of These food pantry in Ozark; CFO board member Emily Kembell; and Carrie Richardson, executive director of Leadership Springfield.

"The success of this project comes in part because every member of this committee has managed or participated in the governance of a nonprofit organization," Cavender says. "I hope we will all look back with pride in a few years at the thriving nonprofits at work throughout southern Missouri."

More information about the new partnership will be shared in the coming months. To learn more about NSC and its services, visit nscnow.org.

—by Louise Knauer and Aaron Scott

▲ Diane Drollinger and Amy Brooks are working with the CFO to open a Springfield office of St. Louis-based Network for Strong Communities. The new office will extend NSC's capacity-building services to nonprofits in the CFO's service area.

"I think there are all sorts of resources here: **great minds, great talent, great heart.** Just to be immersed with those partnerships is really what we're looking forward to the most."

—DIANE DROLLINGER,
NETWORK FOR STRONG
COMMUNITIES



From resignation to reset

REPORT OFFERS GUIDANCE
ON RETAINING NONPROFIT
LEADERS, IMPROVING
BOARD RELATIONSHIPS

TAKEAWAYS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

While “The Realities of Leading a Non-Profit” examines the work of nonprofit executives, many of the takeaways from the report are geared towards the board members that provide direction for the agency, as the relationship between an executive director/CEO and their board is “perhaps the most significant factor in their turnover intentions.” Here are Habitat Communication & Culture’s top four takeaways for nonprofit board members:

- ▶ **Find a “Commitment Fit”:** Only join boards you’re willing to stay committed to through your entire term.
- ▶ **Be Active, Not Annoying:** Remember that a board member’s role is a guide, a resource, a partner or a subject-matter expert.
- ▶ **Focus is a Resource, Too:** EDs/CEOs are often expected to do more than their fair share of the work.
- ▶ **Normalize Doing More With More:** Nonprofit is a tax code, not a business philosophy.

Find more tips at cfozarks.org/realities.

After seeing a brain drain of experienced and accomplished nonprofit leaders through the latter stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CFO asked Habitat Communication & Culture to study reasons for this aspect of the “Great Resignation” and its impact on services to the region.

Habitat learned valuable insights from more than 120 nonprofit leaders who participated in surveys and discussions. Dr. Spencer Harris presented the study to several groups, including a community-wide release of “Realities of Leading a Nonprofit” on May 24. By sharing information from the report to the public, the CFO’s goal is for nonprofit executives and their board leaders to use takeaways from the findings within their own organizations.

Key points include:

- Nonprofit leaders remain strongly committed to their organization’s mission, but about 30% intend to leave their positions within a year due to stress- and burnout-related issues.
- A majority say that while board members support their missions, they do not provide adequate feedback, evaluation, training or goal setting to help the leaders achieve professional growth and move the organizations forward.
- Due to labor shortages, inability to meet increased pay expectations and reduced volunteer support, nonprofit leaders are overwhelmed with additional responsibilities including custodial work, administrative tasks and interpersonal work such as filling in for open positions and counseling staff.

For more information and to view a recording of the community-wide release of the report, visit cfozarks.org/realities.

▲ Dr. Spencer Harris of Habitat Communication & Culture shares the findings of a study on local nonprofit leaders during an event on May 24 at the eFactory in Springfield.

DONORS



REUNITED AT LAST: After a two-year hiatus, CFO donors and professional advisors gathered for a “Reunion at the River” where friends caught up with each other and CFO staff members in an atmosphere as warm as the mid-June weather.

By hosting the event at Finley Farms, where CFO Director Megan Stack is guiding the look and purpose of the event space, restaurants and working farm, the CFO highlighted the confluence of projects shepherded by the Ozark-based Finley River Community Foundation. The relocated Riverside Bridge, nearby Chadwick Flyer greenway trail and Ozark’s Garrison Springs Garden and Park all received philanthropic support through funds established at the CFO and the FRCF.

Between the din of conversations and the music of the Ozarks’ own Creek Rocks, above right, CFO President Brian Fogle shared a few milestones, such as reaching \$500 million in grants and distributions, and recognized outgoing Board Chair Robin Morgan, right, and board members Abram McGull II and Morey Mechlin.



LEGACY SOCIETY

The following people have made planned giving commitments to benefit the CFO or one of its affiliate foundations from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Carthage

Jim & Delores Honey
Peggy Ralston

Nixa

Brian & Deanna Steele

Springfield/Regional

Caitlin Golike
Robert & Barbara Kipfer
Wesley & Chelsea Litton
Jo & Wayne Scheer
Jack & Stacey Thurman

Lake of the Ozarks

Jane Wright
Walter G. White

Ready to Talk?

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

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS COUNCIL

The CFO welcomed four 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.

Chuck Brown, SMB Trust Services,
Joplin
John Davis, Forvis, Springfield

Ashley Sigrest, Commerce Trust
Company
Matt Williams, Simmons Private
Wealth, Springfield



▲ Jewell and Danny Little began their relationship with the Barton County Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of the Ozarks by establishing a donor-advised fund.

A Fund Type for Every Charitable Goal

In addition to the couple's main donor-advised fund, they also have established:

- Redneck Outdoor Products Community Support Fund, a corporate grantmaking fund to support community needs;
- Show Me Wagyu Charities Lyla Adams Children with Disabilities Fund, a field-of-interest fund to support expenses for children with disabilities in Barton County;
- Show Me Wagyu Charities BCFO Children's Fund, a designated endowment to support Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks's assistance for children of breast-cancer patients; and
- Show Me Youth Ag Academy Fund, an agency partner fund to support the nonprofit agriculture academy in Lamar.

Staying home to make a difference

DANNY LITTLE, A GENERATIONAL OZARKER FROM LAMAR, LEADS IN BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPY TO IMPROVE THE BARTON COUNTY COMMUNITY AND PROMOTE AG-BASED EDUCATION

From banking to blinds to beef cattle, Danny Little is in the business of making a difference.

For more than 25 years, Little was in the financial industry, working his way up to president of Lamar Bank and Trust Company. That time, however, today represents more than a career: It was also an apprenticeship of sorts for the generational Ozarker's work in making his community a better place through business development, job creation and philanthropy.

He transitioned from banker to business owner around 20 years ago, innovating through five different companies as he saw new needs and opportunities. Today, he is the CEO and majority owner of Redneck Outdoor Products, a leading producer of fiberglass hunting blinds in the United States. The company, founded in 2010, intentionally operates from Little's hometown of Lamar, a town of around 4,500 residents and the seat of Barton County.

"It has been important to me to try to create jobs in our town after the recession from 2007 to 2009 caused us to lose our two largest manufacturing employers," Little says. "I'm very proud of the fact that I think we're the largest manufacturing employer in town, and that's happened in a relatively short period of time. We've only been around for 12 years; we started with eight employees, and now we have over 130 employees."

Danny and his wife, Jewell, also have a mission to give back to the community that has supported them and previous generations of their families over the years. Those efforts are seen through the Barton County Community Foundation, with which the Littles have established a donor-advised fund and several other charitable funds, and most recently through their involvement in founding the Show Me Youth Ag Academy, a unique opportunity for area high school and college students to learn hands-on about the livestock and agricultural business by operating a conception-to-chef livestock and meat operation.

“Giving youth an opportunity to be involved in a hands-on agribusiness operation can give them tools to succeed while hopefully instilling the rural values that have made our country great before they go out into the world,” Little says.

“One of my big beliefs in life is that whatever you give, whether it is of yourself, your heart or financially, it usually comes back tenfold. I believe that 100%.”

The importance of giving back

Little began to learn of the importance of a giving philosophy from his parents, whom he says instilled in him the spirit of helping others.

“I watched my parents, over my adult life, give of themselves to help others in many different ways,” he says.

After leaving Lamar to attend college at today’s Missouri State University, the belief was accentuated after becoming a management trainee with the late Ralph Manley, a Springfield business and civic leader and developer.

“He was very instrumental in instilling upon me at a real early stage in life, about working hard, treating people right—and he also was somewhat of a philanthropist himself,” Little says. “That’s probably where I got my first seed, as far as philanthropy, was from Ralph Manley in Springfield. He was a wonderful man, and I admired him a lot.”

After Little came back to Barton County and took a job at Lamar Bank and Trust Company, he eventually worked his way up to president—a role his father also held. While employed there, he befriended Thomas M. O’Sullivan, one of Little’s customers and the founder of the town’s largest manufacturing company at that time.

“He worked tirelessly to make sure that the town had jobs and that his employees were taken care of,” Little says. “He was also a big financial supporter of the community through his charitable giving and helped inspire and cultivate my desire to help the community.”

“Because of my involvement at the bank, I was also witness to some of the efforts of our town’s greatest generation to help the community and give back.”

The bank to businesses

After 26 years in the banking business, Little left that side of the desk to become a business owner at the turn of the 21st century.

“It allowed me to get a basic understanding of what it takes in business to be successful,” Little says of his banking career. “I’ve been fortunate that I’ve had lots of great partners along the way and I consider everyone—whether you’re a friend, financial supporter or an employee—a partner.”

“You can’t do stuff by yourself. Without that team, nothing would have happened.”

One effort led to the next, and in 2007, one of Little’s roles was as a silent partner of a fiberglass auto body company—a difficult business to grow, given the Great Recession. While

it didn’t work out, the product development and fabrication techniques led to something greater after Little asked a friend in the hunting-goods business if he’d be interested in buying some fiberglass hunting blinds.

“I said, ‘Would you give us a shot at some of your business if we build a prototype and come up with a price point that works for you?’” Little recalls. The friend said yes.

“We went to work, and we built a prototype of a blind and we took it to him, and he ordered 250. That first six months, we went to work, and we made 250,” he says. “While we didn’t make any money that first year, we did learn we had a good product and that it could grow and develop.”

Redneck Outdoor Products has grown from producing 250 blinds in 2010, Little says, to an expected 14,000-plus in 2022.

Building to give to others

As years passed and the business grew, Little began to have greater focus on the long-term impact he and his wife could make on the community and the lives of his employees.

Always a believer in the importance of saving for retirement, Little first led the company to found a 401(k) plan with an automatic 4% match of employee contributions. This evolved into an opportunity to eventually turn the company over to its employees.

“I’ve always been about hometown companies and hometown ownership. I’ve always been key on employee ownership, because I had the opportunity when I was very young at the bank to become a small shareholder,” Little says. “Even though it was very minor, as an owner of what I was involved with, it gave me a different sense of purpose. I felt like whatever I

did, if the company succeeded, then I would succeed.”

This belief led Little to announce an employee stock ownership program in 2016, which allows employees to have shares in the company.

Each year since, the company has contributed 21% of employee wages to the ESOP. Those funds contributed to the ESOP are then used to purchase shares of Redneck Outdoor Products Inc.

Relying on a community foundation’s ability to receive gifts of closely held stock, Little donates his shares of stock that the ESOP needs to purchase to the BCCF/CFO, which sells the shares to the ESOP. The proceeds of the sale are then placed in the Littles’ donor-advised fund, which is used to support their charitable giving.

The Littles’ donor-advised fund has been actively used to help create other funds under the BCCF umbrella, along with support of numerous completed and ongoing projects within the community.

“It is the hope of Jewell and I that we can help inspire others to give back to the community and those in need so that Lamar and Barton County remain a place that generations to come will be proud of and want to call home,” Little says.

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

“One of my big beliefs in life is that
whatever you give, whether it is of
yourself, your heart or financially,
it usually comes back tenfold.

I believe that 100%.”

—DANNY LITTLE

PROGRAMS

Feeding Bodies & Souls in the Rural Ozarks

Annual Coover Regional grants invest \$261,777 to help senior centers improve infrastructure and ability to serve



► Shirley Ballard receives her daily meal from Mike Aaron, a driver for the Ripley County Senior Citizens Club's Meals on Wheels program.

IT'S MORE THAN A MEAL, a handshake or a hug. For local senior centers throughout the Ozarks, those seemingly simple things are part of a greater mission: To ensure that people, primarily older adults, have a way to receive life-changing sustenance.

Despite senior centers' life-changing work, a recipe to solve financial realities can be tougher to make than the most-loved dishes they serve. To help in these endeavors, \$261,777 has been granted to 18 senior centers across the region through the Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grant Program, funded by the Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks administers the grantmaking for the private foundation managed by Commerce Trust Company.

"Grantmaking from the Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation is intentionally flexible to meet the emerging needs of our region," said Jill Reynolds, senior vice president at Commerce Trust Company, in a release about the grants. "By serving as a social hub and offering nutritious meals,

senior centers play such an important role in rural communities. We're so glad to help these centers better serve the people who depend on them."

In recent years, the Coover Regional program's funding focus has shifted to help agencies respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural communities. This year, as that recovery continues, grants will help with a variety of needs.

"We found that senior centers had really significant needs, due to being unable to use or update their facilities as they rushed to reallocate all their effort and money to delivering meals," says Bridget Dierks, vice president of programs at the CFO.

"We were very aware that senior centers receive less and less government funding to support their buildings, but are still doing just as much work in those buildings as they deteriorate. This is particularly severe in rural communities without notable county senior tax support," Dierks says.

We visited three of the grant recipients to better understand the challenges faced by senior centers, and the value they bring to the health and

happiness of senior residents in rural communities.

Starting over from the ground floor in Dade County

Randy Daniel, Scott Houston and Missy Netzer have served the Dade County area in a wide variety of ways. It wasn't until a few months ago, however, when they added senior center leadership—roles for which they are volunteering—to their list of responsibilities.

"We're an older community. This is something our people need—bad," says Daniel. "I think we have several people here that this is the only decent meal that they get every day."

It wasn't specifically COVID-19 that caused the closure of the Dade County Senior Citizen Center in Greenfield. Other issues with funding led to an extended shutdown of the facility—and many challenges to overcome as the dedicated trio worked to get it back open.

"He's with the ministerial alliance. He's the commissioner and I'm on the council," says Netzer, of Houston and Daniel respectively. "I didn't realize that

"We're an older community. This is something our people need—bad. I think we have several people here that **this is the only decent meal that they get every day."**

—RANDY DANIEL, DADE COUNTY SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER



it was totally closed. I thought it was COVID. I started asking questions, and found out he was asking questions. And then I went to a meeting and they were both there. And I went, ‘Well, there we go.’”

In addition to the many other issues they’ve worked to address, one is beneath them—literally—but also is a foundation on which other work must build: The floor, which dates to 1984, is showing signs of its age.

Gouges in the kitchen floor are a hazard for mold and bacteria, and flaws elsewhere present a fall risk to visitors. The issues prompted the Dade County Health Department to tell the center that they must be corrected or it will not be able to operate, its leaders say.

To help with the issues, the center

received a \$20,000 Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grant to replace flooring throughout the facility.

In addition to the center’s leadership, two others who are excited about the gift by extension are Roz Kaohn and Deanna Fitches, regular visitors who sit playing dominoes on a rainy Wednesday afternoon.

“I met these people and I think they’re wonderful,” Fitches says. “I love them all. Every day, I wake up and this is what I look forward to.”

Delivering more than meals in Ripley County

A bright and airy center greets visitors to the Ripley County Senior Citizens Club in Doniphan, a county seat on the eastern edge of the Ozarks. But

there’s a strong contrast between the recently renovated space and the vans parked out back, which are used to serve locals through the center’s Meals on Wheels program.

Ineffective gauges, worn brakes and a troubled transmission are only a few of the issues that plague the 17-year-old vans.

“Especially for in-home people, they’re not able to walk, drive or cook for themselves,” says Tina Sharp, leader of the center, speaking of the importance of its Meals on Wheels program. She notes that reality is important but difficult at times to deliver—literally and figuratively—because of the condition of the vans.

“The county roads aren’t as nice as we’d like—a lot of potholes, a lot of flooding,” Sharp says. “The transmission, the brakes—we’ve been trying to repair them monthly, but because of the roads, they keep going out.”

Outside the center, Sharp’s sentiments are supported by Mike Aaron, one of the drivers for the program which distributes meals to approximately 85 people every weekday.

“None of the gauges work, and the brakes are terrible,” he says, bringing the whirring van to life.

Stop after stop after stop, meal recipients share similar reasons as to why they’re grateful for the service.

▲ Representatives from many of the agencies that received Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grants attended the presentation at the Commerce Trust Company office in Springfield.

◆ Roz Kaohn and Deanna Fitches are regular visitors of the Dade County Senior Citizen Center.

► *The mother-daughter team of Heather Greer and Jo Hymer prepare meals every week at the Neal Center in Nevada.*

"It helps me have a meal before my caregiver gets here," says another woman, sitting in a recliner in a darkened apartment. "If it wasn't for Meals on Wheels, I wouldn't have any food until like one, two o'clock. It makes a big difference. I'd go hungry because I'm going blind and I can't cook."

"Mainly because I've got where I can't stand long," says a man at another stop.

"This is a good program. I mean, old people need this program," says a woman who lives in an apartment community where Aaron pulls a wagon of meals for delivery. "When I was first getting sick and I was still cooking, I burned up three pans of beans. Just went off and left them."

Fortunately, the deliveries will continue in Ripley County now that help is rolling down the road: A \$24,800 Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grant will allow the center to purchase two used vans for the Meals on Wheels program.

Sealing in home-cooked love in Vernon County

For Heather Greer and Jo Hymer, creating tasty meals for visitors at the Neal Center in Nevada is a job, but they earn more than a paycheck. They also receive joy.

"You start trying to cook the way



they like it. It's like a second family," Greer says. "It's hard for a lot of them to go to the store and buy what they need—food's so high now."

"We get to know everyone really well," Hymer adds. "When one's not here, we're worrying they're sick."

Together, they serve patrons through a window between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. each weekday. There are others, though, who don't eat in the dining room, and instead receive to-go or delivered meals. While many of these are hot, frozen options are crucial, particularly for folks who need more than one meal a day, or for weekends and holidays when the center isn't open.

Right now, Greer and Hymer pack those frozen meals as part of lunch shifts. However, using conventional freezers, meals can't be stacked and need to freeze for hours, so it can be a

challenge to find where to put them.

A blast freezer—equipment that allows 16 trays of meals to be stacked on shelves and frozen in only an hour—will be a big help. Through the Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grant Program, the center received \$25,000 to purchase one.

"We won't have to wait 12 hours to stack them," Greer says. "So it'll really help us."

On average, Nevada's center sends out 2,535 home-delivered meals per month. More than 1,500 of those are frozen, says Chris McCune, regional services director of Care Connection for Aging Services. The agency that serves as an umbrella for around 20 centers in 13 counties across the state.

"The blast freezer will allow for more meals to be frozen in a shorter period of time and definitely will create efficiency," says McCune. "Quick-freeze is always going to be better. That's what the industry does to retain the freshness and nutritional quality—we want them to be as high-quality as possible."

"Right now, our primary use of the blast freezer will be in Vernon County, but it could certainly be used to assist another center in case of an equipment failure or some other emergency."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

ALL ACROSS THE OZARKS

The CFO's longstanding partnership with the Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation and Commerce Trust Company powers more than \$350,000 in annual grantmaking that specifically targets rural communities in the CFO's service area. In addition to the Senior Center Support Grant Program that distributed \$261,777 to 18 senior centers, the 2022 Coover/Rural Schools Partnership Grant Program provided \$90,000 to 21 rural school districts to improve the physical and mental health of students and educators.

Coover Regional Senior Center Support Grant Recipients

- Alton Multipurpose Senior Center
- Butler County Council on Aging (Poplar Bluff)
- Cabool Senior Center
- Care Connection for Aging Services (Nevada/West-central Missouri)
- Cassville Senior Center
- Dade County Senior Citizen Center (Greenfield)
- Douglas County Council on Aging (Ava)

- Fun and Friends Senior Center (Thayer)
- Marshfield Senior Center
- Naylor Nutrition Center
- Owensville Senior Center
- Ozark Senior Center
- Polk County Senior Center (Bolivar)
- Ripley County Senior Citizens Club (Doniphan)
- Salem Nutrition Center
- Waynesville/St. Robert Senior Center
- Williamsville Area Association of Senior Citizens
- Willow Springs Senior Center

Coover/Rural Schools Partnership Grant Recipients

- Ash Grove R-IV
- Aurora High School Youth Empowerment Project/Alumni Outreach Center
- Cabool R-IV School District
- Cape Girardeau Public Schools
- Clinton School District
- Crawford County R-II (Cuba)
- Greenfield R-IV
- Houston R-I
- Laclede County R-I (Conway)
- Maries County R-II (Belle)

- Monett R-I
- Mountain Grove R-III
- Niangua TLC
- Oregon-Howell R-III (Koshkonong)
- Poplar Bluff R-I
- Sarcoux R-II
- Seymour R-II
- Skyline R-II (rural Douglas County)
- Sparta R-III
- Waynesville R-VI
- West St. Francois County R-IV (Leadwood)

A Half-Million Dollars of Hope

**TWO GRANT PROGRAMS
FUNDED BY MUSGRAVE
FOUNDATION SUPPORT
CHILDREN, FOSTER
FAMILIES IN SPRINGFIELD**

When Laura Farmer rose to speak on June 20, she shared of the opportunity—and notes of hope for a better future—that can be created for children in foster care when support is available. As executive director of Court Appointed Special Advocates of Southwest Missouri, it's a reality she's seen firsthand.

"We know that when a child is in foster care and has a CASA assigned to their case, that child will have more stability in their foster home, they perform better in school, and they will exit the foster care system more quickly due to that consistent advocacy that CASA provides," Farmer said, who also noted that less than 1% of children connected with a CASA will re-enter the foster system.

Those efforts are now augmented by a potential \$95,759 from the Jeannette L. Musgrave Foundation, which will be used to support the hire of an additional advocate supervisor. Every year of the three-year grant, 75 more children in the foster care system will be impacted.

That grant was only one of more than a dozen celebrated on June 20 with the presentation of \$500,000 in funding from the Musgrave Foundation and Community Foundation of the Ozarks, which administers grantmaking for the private foundation in partnership with U.S. Bank Wealth Management. Distributions were divided into two high-impact, multi-year programs that may rise to \$1.3 million over the course of the projects.

"The Musgrave Foundation has been under the care of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks since 2020. In its time, the Musgrave Foundation has awarded well over \$16 million to



Springfield-area nonprofits with missions within its areas of focus. We are honored to continue that legacy for Mrs. Musgrave and her husband," says Bridget Dierks, vice president of Programs for the CFO. "She had significant interest in improving the quality of life for children, which is really well-reflected in the grant rounds we are talking about today."

The grants to 13 agencies in the Springfield metro area were announced at the Creamery Arts Center in downtown Springfield, which serves as home to the Springfield Regional Arts Council and a number of other arts and culture-based organizations.

Ujima Language and Literacy received \$12,294 in the second year of the "Change for Children" program. Monica Horton, board chair for Ujima, recounted the organization's efforts to stop the "summer slide," or regression of learning while away from school. She shared a letter received by the family of one of Ujima's camps from Boyd Elementary School, which noted the student had shown "amazing fortitude" and reflected noteworthy proficiency in areas supported by the camp.

"I am really pleased to be able to come

back and share the story, an Ujima story, as a result of your funding last year. We really wanted to focus on the achievement gap," Horton said. "We thank the Musgrave Foundation for allowing us to create those literacy-rich environments through our organization that allows for us to advocate, connect and empower young readers and all of their families who are in pursuit of their highest levels of literacy."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

▲ Representatives from 13 agencies funded by the Musgrave Multi-Year Impact Grants gathered at the Creamery Arts Center on June 20 to receive the grants and share information about their projects.

AGENCIES WITH IMPACT

Thirteen agencies have received grants through the Musgrave Multi-Year Impact programs. Between both three-year programs, total grantmaking could ultimately exceed \$1.3 million.

Foster Families 2022

CASA of Southwest
Missouri
The Connecting Grounds
Council of Churches of the
Ozarks
FosterAdopt Connect
Great Circle

Change for Children 2021

Boys & Girls Clubs of
Springfield
Care to Learn
OTC Foundation
Ozarks Food Harvest
Springfield Greene County
Park Board-SPARC
Springfield Regional Arts
Council
The Kitchen Inc.
Ujima Language and
Literacy

A Final Word

A NOTE FROM CFO PRESIDENT BRIAN FOGLE

Her name was Eunice Twyla Hobbs, and she was born in 1890 and passed away in 1991. Although she probably didn't weigh even 90 pounds, she was a force of nature. She was also my grandmother.

She captivated me with stories about the first time she saw a car, what it was like living through the depression, and train travel in the peak of that epoch. Having raised a family during our country's worst economic plight, she scolded me for "wasting" too much homemade pear preserves on her homemade toast, or my "extravagant" filling of the bathtub with hot water, when an inch or two would do.

She remained vital until the end of her days. Her only real health challenge was being a bit hard of hearing. Being the diminutive lady she was, everyone looked maybe a bit too large to her. More than once she "whispered" to me in church: "Don't you think she's put on a few pounds?" That would elicit a glare, then usually a smile.

Her world never narrowed as she entered into her twilight. She read National Geographic magazine religiously, and remained engaged in the world. She was curious for a century. I give her credit for so much of who I am, and am so very blessed that she passed down that curiosity to me. I always seem to want to know more about most anything.

I thought of that recently as I hear and read so much about the polarity in our country now on seemingly every subject matter. I think we too often simply pronounce what is so, and if you disagree, well, then, you're misguided at best—and usually called something much worse.

A recent Scientific American report on political polarization noted that Americans increasingly hold "a basic abhorrence for their opponents—an 'othering' in which a group conceives of its rivals as wholly alien in every way." I think some curiosity could help in these moments. Instead of reverting to opinions or name-calling, maybe pausing and asking questions would be a better path. Where did you get that information? Why do you feel that way?



Stephen Covey had it right, I think, with one of his seven habits of success: "Seek first to understand." My experience is that there are usually reasons people feel the way they feel, and often it's because they are fallible humans, not diabolical machines. Anglican priest and columnist Tish Harrison Warren suggests we be more engaged and charitable to opposing views first, "which help our own arguments grow sharper, it also helps us continue to have a posture of learning, of growth, of curiosity, of compassion and of joy."

If you may have had too much turkey for Thanksgiving, my grandmother didn't pronounce you tipped the scale a bit too much, but even framed that in a question. Perhaps we can all learn a bit from her habits of success as well.

Brian Fogle

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PARTING SHOT: “Freedom!” With jubilant shouts, participants of United Community Change’s Freedom Walk marched into Silver Springs Park on June 18 to join Springfield’s Juneteenth celebration, hosted by the local chapter of the NAACP.

Prominent throughout Silver Springs Park were oversized words of affirmation relating to Juneteenth—including “philanthropy”—to encourage hope and positivity to attendees.

At the kickoff of the event, Christine Peoples, Timmons Hall education coordinator for the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, shared the “bittersweet” history of the holiday, which commemorates the liberation of enslaved people in Texas in 1865—but came a year and a half after the Emancipation Proclamation and two months after the end of the Civil War. Springfield’s Black community has long observed a similar holiday at Silver Springs Park—the Park Day Reunion—that coincides with Missouri’s Emancipation Day on Aug. 4.

Springfield’s Juneteenth events were supported by the CFO through the Ozarks Inclusive Opportunity and Celebrations of Belonging grant programs, which also supported the Juneteenth event in Joplin and Pride events throughout the region.

