

PASSION & PURPOSE

THE CFO NEWSLETTER
WINTER 24/25



MORE INSIDE

A MORTGAGE PAID IN FULL

HONORING THE 2024 HUMANITARIAN

NEW COMMUNITY LEADERS

Giving Together

Giving circles — like Springfield's Generosity Collective — maximize impact of new philanthropists



A MESSAGE FROM WINTER

One of the hallmarks of the Community Foundation over the years has been our intentional communication with stakeholders: those donors, nonprofits and community leaders without whose generosity and service we could not exist. In my longtime development role, and now as president and CEO, I have had the honor to be a part of those efforts. As the CFO and our excellent communications team have grown, these opportunities have become more frequent, which delights me.

This edition of Passion & Purpose represents another increase in our engagement. Beginning with this edition, P&P, as we lovingly call it, is now a quarterly publication, expanding on our previous single summer magazine. In it you will find the same updates about the CFO and its 55 affiliate foundations spread across southern and central Missouri, as well as in-depth reporting on the impact of our work and the people like you who make it possible.

Our investment in communications is long-standing — in fact, yours truly was the first communications staffer when I joined the CFO out of college nearly two decades ago. The scope of the team has grown over the years. Behind the scenes our communications team oversees internal communications, messaging strategy for everything from current events to financial policies and is a key part of critical conversations about how to best promote philanthropy and its many facets to the people we serve.

But at the end of the day, isn't excellent communication always about story? This issue of Passion & Purpose highlights the concept of giving circles and the impact that can happen when like-minded individuals use their resources of time, talent and treasure to do more than they could do alone. The most recent example of this is the Springfield-based Generosity Collective. In November this group



of 60-plus individuals and households awarded a whopping \$144,580 to four nonprofit organizations, selected through a competitive grant-making process. The Generosity Collective is largely composed of emerging philanthropists in the middle of their careers who see collective giving as a path to greater impact and achieving their own giving goals. It has been an inspiring year, and we look forward to even bigger things in 2025.

Also in this issue we begin "Passion for Progress," a series of profiles on emerging community leaders across our region. These individuals are taking big steps to make their hometowns better places to live. They are the folks the CFO will need in coming decades — a new vanguard of stakeholders — as we seek to reframe philanthropy as a transformational force in the region. I hope you are as inspired by them as I am.

There is much more here, I hope you will take time to enjoy it. Thank you for your investment in our communities and being part of the CFO family. I can't wait to share more stories with you in just three short months!

Winter Kinne is president and CEO of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.

CFO UPDATES

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

- William R. Smith Jr., Carthage
- Angela Swan, Perry County

The Legacy Society recognizes donors who make a planned gift to a fund held by the CFO or its affiliate foundations. For more info, visit cfozarks.org/legacy.

AFFILIATE LEADERSHIP UPDATES



Ash Grove Area Community Foundation

Outgoing: Tyler Gunlock
Incoming: Jason Whitesell



Aurora Area Community Foundation

Outgoing: Mike Thach
Incoming: JP Lee



Carthage Community Foundation

Outgoing: Stephanie Howard
Incoming: John Nicholas

UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional Affiliates Meeting

- Jan. 28, 2025
- The Resource Center, 801 N. Lincoln Ave., Monett
- For more info: Contact Joe Kammerer, jkammerer@cfozarks.org

Attracting Gifts of Assets: Legacy Giving Series for Nonprofits

- Featuring Jaime Freidrichs, CFRE
- Jan. 30, Feb. 13, Feb. 27 and April 3, 2025
- Virtual meetings
- For more info: cfozarks.org/legacy-series

Youth Empowerment Project Conference

- Feb. 3, 2025
- Drury University, Springfield
- For more info: Contact Rachel Tripp, rtripp@cfozarks.org

Rural Philanthropy Summit: Stronger Together

- Co-presented with Philanthropy Missouri
- April 10–11, 2025
- Lodge of the Four Seasons, Lake Ozark
- For more info: cfozarks.org/summit25

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of the OZARKS

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Production: Aaron Scott, Kaitlyn McConnell, Matthew Stewart and Matt Lemmon

Paid in Full

MUSGRAVE FOUNDATION PAYS OFF MORTGAGE FOR WOMEN'S MEDICAL RESPITE THROUGH CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS GRANT

The kitchen table is a special place at Women's Medical Respite: meals are shared, crafts are made, puzzles pieced together — and, most importantly, healing bonds are formed.

In late October, the table served as the center for pumpkin carving, and WMR hosted a presentation for a transformative grant from the Jeannette L. Musgrave Foundation to pay off the mortgage on the home in Springfield that serves as WMR's residential facility.

WMR provides a haven for unhoused women recovering from medical procedures. For these women, time, space and care — essential to recovery — are nearly impossible to find while unsheltered.

This fall, Darlene is one of the residents. She arrived at WMR in September after hip replacement surgery, uncertain where she would recover after losing her apartment just before her procedure. The house has been a place of peace for her, she says: "It doesn't feel institutional. It feels like a home, and it's filled with people who like to help each other."

The house's comforting atmosphere and sense of community play a crucial role in residents' healing journeys. Carol Daniel, a board member and former clinical supervisor at Missouri State University's School of Nursing, emphasizes the importance of the connections fostered here. "These women receive more than simply a bed and meals; it's companionship and friendship," she explains.

The quiet support within WMR empowers many women to break the cycle of homelessness

"These women receive more than simply a bed and meals; it's companionship and friendship."

CAROL DANIEL
WOMEN'S MEDICAL
RESPITE



after they leave. "You don't have time to look at the big picture of your life when you're struggling to just survive every day," Daniel notes.

WMR's journey began in 2014, inspired by senior nursing students at MSU under Daniel's guidance. During clinical rotations, students saw the harsh reality faced by unsheltered women discharged from hospitals — often lacking food, clothing and access to their prescribed medications. "My students, understandably, were livid," Daniel says.

Working with practicing nurses, the students channeled their frustration into the Women's Medical Respite project. Originally, WMR was housed in a small apartment in the Ollis Building, and shortly after that, moved with The Kitchen Inc. to its location on Glenstone Avenue. However, the new location's limited beds and accessibility issues made it clear that WMR needed to find new space.

In July 2023, WMR secured a four-bedroom house in a quiet Springfield neighborhood. With room for eight residents and improved accessibility, the charming home expands WMR's capacity to serve Springfield's



PHOTOS BY AARON SCOTT

Women's Medical Respite's four-bedroom house, the site of the grant presentation in October, can serve eight unsheltered women recovering from hospitalization.

unsheltered women.

The Musgrave Foundation has supported WMR since the beginning, starting with a \$1,000 grant for the pilot project. But this year, the foundation's impact reached new heights with a \$172,175 grant, administered by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks in partnership with U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management, to pay off the new house's mortgage. It was the largest of three grants comprising the Musgrave Foundation's latest support for nonprofits' capital projects.

The surprise relief the money brings will allow for future projects and renovations to be realized sooner, Daniel says.

"When Bridget [Dierks, the CFO's former vice president of community impact] called and told me about the grant, it was just tears."

—by Matthew Stewart



Circles of Impact

GIVING CIRCLES CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW PHILANTHROPISTS TO BUILD COMMUNITY, ADDRESS PRIORITY ISSUES

Giving circles are making a big difference in communities across Missouri — through both the projects they fund and the folks who make them happen. Not only are giving circles improving quality of life, but they're also offering new ways for people to become philanthropists and make a difference where they live.

“The power of it becomes magical,” says Kim McCully-Mooley of the Aurora Area Community Foundation, which organized its first giving circle in 2023. “Paying it forward and coming together to make decisions to improve people’s lives and advocate for needs is both powerful and contagious.”

A growing number of CFO affiliate foundations are using giving circles to engage people who care about the community but might not consider themselves philanthropists. Each has its own membership dues and focus areas, but they all share the common goal of giving community members a way to maximize their charitable impact.

They first gained momentum in 2016 following a keynote address by Wendy Steele, founder of Impact 100, at the CFO’s Affiliate Appreciation Conference. The model focuses on engaging women to give back to their communities.

In response, eight Impact 100 giving circles were established in rural communities. A key example is Impact 100 Ozark, which recently granted \$53,000 to benefit the Christian County community, bringing its total to more than \$412,000. Another is Impact 100 Crawford County, which granted \$47,500 in September. To date, it’s funded projects totaling more than \$310,000 in mid-Missouri.

The Joplin Regional Community Foundation took a more high-impact approach when it established the Philanthropic Society in 2018, raising and granting more than \$1 million to date. The “Phil” has also contributed to the JRJCF’s community grantmaking endowment and seeded youth-focused philanthropy groups in Joplin, Carl Junction and Webb City.

Inspired by the success of the JRJCF’s “Phil,” the CFO established the Generosity Collective in 2023, which recently made its first grants (see opposite page).

In addition to these moments of impact, here are three other new CFO giving circles that are gaining momentum.



Benton County PHIL members Suzie Brodersen, left, and Dorcas Brethower, right, presented a \$25,000 grant to Tracy Barton and Victoria McColm of the Benton County Salvation Army. The grant supports summer meals for local students in need.

Benton County PHIL

BENTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Benton County Philanthropic Hometown Impact Leaders — better known as the PHIL — has disbursed \$100,000 to nonprofits since its first grants in 2023.

Allocations in amounts of \$25,000, \$15,000, and \$10,000 have benefited needs ranging from recreation — like the addition of a toddler swimming spot at a public pool and the creation of a new baseball field — to food for local kids in need.

With annual dues set at a minimum \$250 donation, the giving circle met its membership goal both years, and its impact was extended through matching funds from the Patterson Family Foundation.

“When an organization can use a grant through this type of giving circle to be that catalyst, then you know you are creating impactful change in your communities,” says Suzie Brodersen, chair of the PHIL and part of the Benton County Community Foundation. “To stand there after the grants have been distributed and have someone look at you with tears in their eyes and say, ‘thank you,’ you know what you did has value. I always want to remember how good that feels.”



Hometown Partners

AURORA AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The first year of AACF's Hometown Partners Giving Circle raised nearly \$4,000 through 20 charter donors who donated at least \$100 and represent the Aurora, Mari-onville and Verona communities. After saving about \$800 to fuel the next round, \$3,000 was contributed to one cause: Evan's Voice, a non-profit founded in the wake of Evan Boettler's death by suicide after an extortion attempt in 2023.

"The purpose is to advocate for awareness, tougher legislation and provide for more education to help save lives," says Kim McCully-Mobley of the Aurora Area Community Foundation. The grant is paying for educational and advocacy efforts, including food, advertising and promotional materials involved with the website hosting and other items.

"There were only two applicants for the first grant and the other applicant withdrew because he valued the efforts of Evan's Voice and the timing of the need for the efforts," says McCully-Mobley. "That really tugged at my heart as the whole idea behind a giving circle is giving everyone some skin in the game and showcasing that we are stronger together."

Nevada/Vernon County Philanthropic Society

NEVADA/VERNON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Now in its second year, the Nevada/Vernon County Philanthropic Society, with membership dues ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000, has distributed \$83,000. In 2024, it shared \$53,000 among three charities dedicated to improving community health.

The Nevada Regional Medical Center Foundation received \$15,000 to support safety in its behavioral health unit; Council on Families in Crisis/Moss House received \$18,000 to support survivors of domestic abuse through repairs to its shelter; and Fostering Hope received \$20,000 to fund heating and air conditioning in its newly acquired storage facility in Sheldon, which will house supplies for foster families.

"These organizations are engaged in important work addressing critical issues, and we are proud to extend our support to them," says Amy Bishop, coordinator of the Nevada/Vernon County Foundation. "This is a testament to our dedication to boosting community welfare and tackling urgent needs in our area."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell



Generosity Collective members and nonprofit leaders celebrated the giving circle's inaugural grants in November.

THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE

Four nonprofits benefited from the kindness of 64 people in November, when the Generosity Collective — the CFO's new giving circle dedicated to the Springfield community — distributed \$144,580 to rounds of applause and stories sharing the difference those dollars will make.

"The idea behind the Generosity Collective is to bring together a next generation of philanthropists to collectively make a significant impact," said Winter Kinne, CFO president and CEO. "When everybody's gifts are added up, it results in larger grants than those individuals could make alone."

With membership dues of \$2,500 in its first year, the giving circle allocated funds to four nonprofits that focused on "red flags" identified in the Community Focus Report for Springfield & Greene County: child abuse and neglect; a shortage of safe, affordable housing; economic disparities impacting early childhood development; and mental health and substance-use problems. Those priorities led the Collective to choose four organizations to receive \$36,145 each.

"This money is helping people right here in this community function and heal and do better in their everyday lives and do basic things that a lot of us take for granted, like going to our job," said Anne Crites, assistant director of The Victim Center. The center received funding to provide free counseling to victims of sexual and violent crimes.

The four grants also support needs from child development to the care of neighborhoods and community building, the latter in both literal and figurative ways.

"This project is more than providing houses. It is also providing employment, skill development with a 70-year-old guy teaching our 20-year-old men to frame right now," noted Amy Blansit, CEO of the Drew Lewis Foundation. Its Blue House Project provides



PHOTOS BY AARON SCOTT

Generosity Collective members Ashley Casad and Jody Dow chat after the grant presentation in Springfield. Giving circles often include a social component so members can build connections with fellow philanthropists.

affordable, quality home-ownership options for low- to moderate-income individuals. Funding from the giving circle will support a complete home renovation in the Grant Beach neighborhood. "This is going to affect multiple families, multiple homes, and continue to allow us to do affordable housing in Springfield," Blansit said.

Down the street, the OTC Foundation received funding to support the full-time site coordinator/family advocate at Study Nursery, which offers care for babies and toddlers of high school students.

"Every day, when I go to work, I get to watch a brain being built that is going to serve our community for generations to come," said Faith Swickard, Study Nursery site coordinator. "Because of the daily love, care, support and safety that they're provided, they will have an impact on all the things they do for years and years after."

Ultimately, all of those dollars focus on a common mission: Making the world better today, and tomorrow.

"It also inspires organizations like CASA to sit down and say, 'What are we doing well, but what do we need to do better?'" said Laura Farmer, executive director of CASA of Southwest Missouri, which received funding to add an early childhood specialist. "I can't wait to put these funds to good use, and hopefully in a year, we can report back to you all the great things that we've done."

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

Caring by the Book

LIBRARIAN SHEILA MICHAELS RECEIVES ANNUAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD FOR IMPROVING LIVES OF CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN COUNTY

Sheila Michaels' story is one for the books. Her community service was seen through her time as a school librarian in Nixa, where her innovative efforts helped lead more kids to read. Today it's told through the BookBag program, which provides families with free books, snacks, hygiene items and school supplies during summer months.

"No one should be without what they need — most of all our kids," Michaels said, whose work with the program led to her selection as the CFO's 2024 Humanitarian of the Year. The annual award recognizes individuals in the region who excel at serving others in a humanitarian capacity.

BookBag, a summer reading-and-more initiative, began in 2022. It started to help provide kids in need with supplies over the summer — books, but also food, toiletries and essentials — without stigma.

"Every family wants their kids to have free books," Michaels said. "I thought, 'If I can get them here to get the books, we can give them the snacks. We can give them their travel kit for the summer, which is hygiene items. We can give period kits away.'"

And they did: Through a series of pop-up events and community partnerships, the program served more than 260 kids in 2024.

"I don't know which would be worse: To be the child that has to show up to the



first day of school with an empty backpack, or to be the mother at home that had to send them to school with an empty backpack," Michaels said upon accepting her award. "But no one should have to feel that, and I don't want anyone to feel that in my community."

The BookBag program cascaded from Michaels' time as a librarian within the Nixa school district, where she served both elementary and high school students. She worked to reach kids where they were, whether that was by providing reading materials for those whose first language wasn't English to connecting students with unique resources in the face of a global pandemic.

An example of the latter was the BookBox program, which began in the 2019–20 school year. Enrolled students could get a hand-picked book tailored to their interests, a snack and a surprise in a cardboard box.

"When I think about Sheila Michaels, librarian and equity and diversity advocate, I know she is a servant leader and the best example of a humanitarian I have ever met," wrote Haylee Anderson, the educator and instructional specialist who



PHOTOS BY AARON SCOTT

Anne E. McGregor, chair of the CFO's Board of Directors, and Laurie Edmondson, CFO board member and goddaughter of Humanitarian of the Year founder Jewell Schweitzer, presented the award to Sheila Michaels on Nov. 19. The award includes a \$5,000 cash prize, which Matthews chose to donate to U-Turn in Education.

nominated Michaels for the award. "She has invested her blood, sweat, tears, time, money, effort and passion into making Christian County a more accessible place for its residents."

The Humanitarian award isn't the first time Michaels has been recognized for her work. Her other honors include being named to the American Library Association's 2022 Class of Emerging Leaders. The Missouri Association of School Librarians also named Michaels its inaugural School Librarian of the Year in 2024.

—by Kaitlyn McConnell

HUMANITARIANS THROUGH THE YEARS

Learn more about the Humanitarian of the Year award and find the full list of past recipients at cfzarks.org/humanitarian.



PASSION *for* PROGRESS

Three leaders moving the needle in their communities through the power of philanthropy

STORIES & PHOTOS BY KAITLYN MCCONNELL

DeeDee Button

FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHAOS CLOSET · WEST PLAINS

The Chaos Closet proves that a little care can make a big difference. The boutique-like stop off the square in West Plains provides clothing, essentials and a few extras for kids who reside in foster homes.



“Kids in foster care in Missouri get an annual clothing allowance, but it doesn’t provide everything that a kiddo is going to put on their body for an entire year,” says DeeDee Button, who founded the nonprofit with her husband, Ed.

The Buttons saw the need firsthand through kids they fostered. Efforts to save and pass along items grew from their home to a storage building and ultimately the colorful storefront that opened last year.

“I didn’t want kids to really associate coming in here with hand-me-downs,” DeeDee says of its cheery atmosphere. “I wanted it to feel like you had the dignity of going to a store, just without the exchange of money.”

Racks of clothing serve babies to teens. Larger items like beds are lent out, returned, sanitized and reused. Necessities like diapers and formula are found alongside other wares, like makeup and jewelry, that aren’t essential — but are important.

“This is the fun stuff to make them fit in with their peers a little more,” DeeDee says. “That’s all they want.”

Another item of need is new underwear. That mission is supported by the Community Foundation of West Plains Inc., which has granted funds to stock the closet’s shelves with all-new undergarments. In the process, DeeDee says, the CFO affiliate’s actions also raised awareness for the need — one that’s always there but not always top of mind.

“That funding has had this rippling effect out into the community, which is really great,” DeeDee says.

Josh Cherry

BOARD MEMBER OF THE WOLF PACK FOUNDATION · REEDS SPRING

Josh Cherry lives continuing legacies. The Reeds Spring alum represents the fourth generation of his family to graduate from the Stone County district. Today, he pays that history forward through his own time as a board member of the Wolf Pack Foundation, formerly known as the Reeds Spring School Foundation.



“When I’m gone, people aren’t going to talk about how I served on the Pack Foundation board,” Josh says. “They’re going to talk about my character, how I made people feel and what I was willing to do for other people. That’s what’s important.”

In high school, Josh was involved in a lot. He was captain of the baseball and football teams, was in drama club, and found an interest in video production. He was also an inaugural scholarship recipient from the Wolf Pack Foundation when he graduated in 2011. Back then, the foundation raised about \$25,000 to distribute.

That number jumped to \$110,000 in 2024. In addition to scholarships, the foundation distributes grants to teachers and staff within the district whose projects need a financial boost.

“It’s anything that will enhance the educational experience for the kids,” he says. “I think last year we had 80 students who applied (for scholarships), and I think all of them got something.”

The dollars — raised through Pack Night, a fundraiser at Dolly Parton’s Stampede, as well as other fundraisers — are administered through the Wolf Pack Foundation’s funds with the CFO’s Table Rock Lake Community Foundation.

“We keep pushing the envelope every year,” he says. “\$110,000 — why stop? Why not send every kid out of here who wants to go to college or trade school with something in their pocket?”

Shelly Haag

PRESIDENT OF THE BARTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION · LAMAR

Community service is in Shelly Haag’s blood. It was her grandfather, a pastor now in his 90s, who first instilled in her the spirit of giving back. When Shelly was a teenager, he donated some farm animals in her name to a community in Africa for Christmas. While the gift was appreciated then, it means a lot more today to the president of the Barton County Community Foundation.



“He opened my eyes to the world and what I have the opportunity to give,” Shelly says. “Even if I don’t feel like I have a lot to give, I always have something — whether it’s money, whether it’s encouragement, whether it’s him donating something in my name. The world’s so much bigger than just myself.”

Shelly’s role as BCCF president evolved from her time as a board member. Neither were roles she expected to have when she and her husband, Brandon, moved to Lamar about 10 years ago. It wasn’t their first time in the area. He was from the Barton County seat, and she grew up about 30 minutes east in Lockwood. Those local roots and small-town connections were part of why Shelly decided to serve after being approached by a board member.

“Being a part of the foundation has made me recognize and realize locally what we can do when we come together, when we put our mind to ideas and visions,” she says. “Being able to partner with other people that have a vision for things they want to do is exciting to me.”

As president, Shelly oversaw the distribution of \$160,000 in grants at the BCCF’s annual Night of Philanthropy in November. In addition to funding, a goal Shelly has for the board is finding ways to bring together neighbors of all generations in the western Missouri county.

“We’re not just here for Lamar. We’re not just Golden City or Liberal, but we get the opportunity to serve everyone,” she says.

WHO INSPIRES YOU? Send your suggestions of individuals moving the needle in your community to Kaitlyn McConnell, the CFO’s writer in residence, at kmccconnell@cfozarks.org.



PARTING SHOT: In November, the Community Foundation of the Ozarks took a symbolic step toward its future by hosting a “wallbreaking” ceremony at its soon-to-be permanent home at 300 S. Jefferson Ave. in downtown Springfield. Donning hard hats and wielding hammers, CFO board members past and present, along with staff, celebrated the start of renovations for the new office space.

CFO President and CEO Winter Kinne shared her vision for the new building. “We’re basically building a house,” she remarked, “because we don’t intend to ever move again — 300 South Jefferson is going to be our forever home.” She emphasized that the renovation and eventual move reflects the CFO’s dedication to stewardship and long-term sustainability.

CFO Board Chair Anne E. McGregor concurred. “We say that a good business is more like a river than a lake; you build things so that they can withstand what comes downstream. The CFO has been built that way.”

Attendees were also invited to leave notes for future generations of CFO staff and board members, which will be preserved in a time capsule within the new space.

Past and current board members then followed staff up to the fourth floor for a tour of the future layout — to be completed in summer 2025 — and (under professional supervision) to take hammer to drywall.



PHOTOS BY AARON SCOTT

Anne E. McGregor, chair of the CFO’s Board of Directors, celebrated with fellow directors Roy Hardy Jr., Laurie Edmondson, Sarah Honeycutt, Gail Smart and Kari Creighton.