

Community Foundation Enhances Quality of Life



The North Dakota Community Foundation (NDCF), a Vision West ND member, has been working with and supporting communities in western North Dakota for several decades and continues to be a partner in efforts to enhance this area of our state.

The organization's mission is to improve the quality of life for North Dakota citizens through charitable giving and promoting philanthropy. It accomplishes this mission primarily through growing and managing permanent endowment funds with communities, charities, businesses, and individuals in North Dakota. These funds generate grantable dollars every year that can be used for a multitude of projects and programs in North Dakota communities.

NDCF's signature program is its Community Endowment Funds. Currently, there are 63 communities or counties in North Dakota that are supported by a permanent endowment fund at NDCF, including Stanley, McKenzie County, Parshall, Williston, Tioga, Kenmare, Bottineau, Minot, Killdeer, Richardton, Bowman & Slope Counties, Killdeer, Golden Valley, Dickinson, New England, Mott-Regent, and Adams County, all within the Vision West ND geographical area.

These local community foundations are guided by volunteer committees who take the lead in networking, marketing, fundraising and recommending grant awards every year. These grants can make a significant difference in a community's quality of life.

For example, the Stanley Area Community Foundation was established at NDCF in 2008. A group of volunteers has supported and promoted the foundation and it now has total permanent assets of over \$1 million. In 2016, the Stanley fund awarded a total of \$32,800 in grants, including

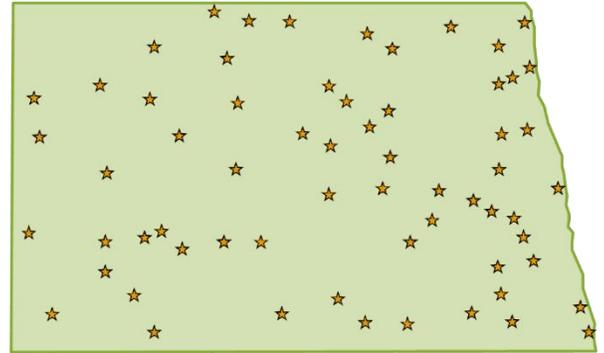
- \$15,000 to the Stanley Park & Recreation Department for a baseball/softball field
- \$5,000 to the Mountrail County Health Foundation for renovations to the hospital
- \$3,400 to Stanley High School Band to help purchase new marching band uniforms
- \$1,000 to the Sibyl Center for their Children's Summer Theatre & Art Contest.

Stephanie Everett, the Mountrail County Health Foundation Director, sees the Stanley Area Community Foundation as a partner in their Health Service mission.

"They are a vital, stable funding source for special needs," she says.

And because the fund is permanent, the local committee will continue to have money available every year from which to make grants.

In addition to Community Foundations, NDCF also manages funds that specifically benefit school districts in the state, several of which are in western ND: Watford City, Ray, Grenora, Alexander, Powers Lake, Killdeer, Crosby, New England, Richardton, and Mott-Regent. The school foundations provide a way for alumni and residents to support their school, which often has great needs. The Grenora Public School Foundation used some of its funds to purchase teacher housing, which was in short



63 communities and counties in ND have established permanent endowment funds at NDCF, including 20 in the Vision West ND area.



The Stanley Area Community Foundation gave a \$5,000 grant in 2016 to help purchase a portable ultrasound machine that is shared between the Stanley hospital, clinic, and nursing home.

supply when the oil boom hit, as well as new playground equipment, new bleachers in the gym, and new drums, chairs, and a piano for the music department.

“Generous donors to the foundation have enhanced the learning experience of our students and assist our teachers in doing so. I’m so glad to participate, knowing that every dollar is spent locally and I can see first-hand the exciting and rewarding results,” said Carlyle Norboy, a 1964 graduate of Grenora High School.

The Grenora Public School Foundation is a non-endowment fund, which means the money can be spent immediately for projects that tax revenue would not cover at the school. NDCF also manages non-endowment funds for special projects, including the Killdeer Cowboy Sports Complex. Donors receive a tax deduction for their gift and grants are made to update the high school’s football field and track, including new field event areas, bleachers, concession stand, and restrooms.

“We handle all the administrative work of taking in donations,” explains Kevin Dvorak, President & CEO of NDCF. *“Every donor gets a tax receipt, our books are audited regularly, and we file the required Form 990 with the IRS every year. That takes a large burden off of local communities and volunteers – they don’t have to worry about establishing a 501(c)(3) organization or filing the correct paperwork. They can focus on their project, fundraising efforts, and recommending grant awards.”*

This partnership with local volunteers and community leaders is the cornerstone of NDCF’s work. To further support their local community funds and other project funds, NDCF has three Development Directors that work with volunteers, donors, and community leaders in their territories. John Heinen is NDCF’s Development Director in western North Dakota and works out of their Dickinson office. Kara Geiger is based out of NDCF’s Bismarck office and covers the central part of the state, including Minot and the surrounding area. Amy Warnke-Stromsodt is based out of NDCF’s Grand Forks office and covers the eastern part of the state.

“The philanthropic sector is an important component of a viable, healthy community,” said Heinen. *“Our funds provide grant dollars for the very programs and projects that people say they want in their hometown – arts programs, walking paths and other fitness-centered projects, strong schools, and a robust non-profit sector. Having those amenities attracts more people to your community.”*

Some donors find the state’s tax credit for gifts to qualified North Dakota endowment funds particularly appealing. Individuals earning ND income who give at least \$5,000 and North Dakota businesses that donate any amount to one of these funds is eligible to take a 40% income tax credit. Almost all of NDCF’s funds, including all of their community endowment funds, are managed as qualified North Dakota endowment funds.

Heinen is available for presentations to communities, businesses, groups and individuals that are interested in learning more about the funds at NDCF or starting one of their own. Contact him at 701-590-4614 or at John@NDCF.net. Go to www.NDCF.net to learn more.



When the population increased, the Alexander Elementary School suddenly had enough students to field a basketball team – the first time in 10 years! School Foundations can help pay for unexpected expenses like team uniforms.