

The Community Foundation Story

By Richard and Linda Livingston

Printed with permission from Smart & Caring - A Donor's Guide to Major Gifting by Richard and Linda Livingston. The Livingstons are former Rockford, Illinois residents who have retired and moved to Louisville, Colorado. Complimentary copies of their book are available through The Community Foundation of Decatur/Macon County, 429-3000.

Early in our search for the right charities, Linda noted in the paper that a local businesswoman had made a very substantial donation to the local Community Foundation. We had never heard of a Community Foundation, so we called Josie Heath, executive director of the local organization. Hers was a familiar name in our community. We met with her and a couple of the organization's board members. We learned a great deal about Community Foundations in general and were impressed.

We then basically went our own way for three years. We still needed to go through a learning process to discover what all was out there in the world of nonprofits. But then, we came back. By then, we had learned much more about nonprofits, about ourselves, and about what a Community Foundation had to offer us.

We have developed a great deal of respect for the community foundation concept and for this Community Foundation in particular. It may sound a little odd, but we have found it to be the most balanced nonprofit organization that we have become involved with. It truly views the community as a whole, looking for creative ways to bring the donors, skilled, volunteers, and nonprofit groups together to find ways to satisfy everyone's needs.

We have selected the local Community Foundation to be the beneficiary of Dick's tax-deferred retirement plan, should he die prematurely. We have funded an advised fund with them that will have the dual purpose of supporting regional charities over the long run and creating an opportunity for a younger family member to become involved with philanthropy.

In the years ahead, we will probably be channeling most of our annual gifting to local charities through the Community Foundation. Working with the Community Foundation is proving to be a rewarding experience on every level.



There are community foundations in these Illinois cities:

Aurora, Barrington, Bloomington, Carbondale, Champaign, Charleston, Chicago, Decatur, Edwardsville, Evanston, Galena, Kankakee, Moline, Morris, Oak Park, Peoria, Quincy, Rockford, Rock Island, Springfield, Sycamore (DeKalb County) and Wheaton (Dupage county).



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