



The Community Foundation focus

Summer 2017



Serving Donors. Leading Change.

Kindergarten Readiness Program Reaps Rewards and Reflects Community Collaboration



The message to youngsters starting kindergarten in August was loud and clear: The community supports you and is collectively invested in your success.

Evidence was apparent well before the first day of school. This summer, “Knowing, Growing, Going to Kindergarten,” a kindergarten readiness program created by the Education Coalition of Macon County (EdCo) in 2014, expanded to encompass ten area childcare centers, one in-home center, and three District 61 schools. The initiative, which follows the Second Step curriculum and directly addresses EdCo’s key goal to improve kindergarten readiness, impacts almost 200 kindergarten-bound students in fifteen different classrooms.

“This goal-centered initiative continues to grow in momentum, garner increased attention among community, business, and education leaders, and is supported by an ever-growing body of international research,” says EdCo Executive Director Dani Craft.

Research strongly suggests that positive academic outcomes depend on students being socially and emotionally prepared for kindergarten. To that end, the Second Step curriculum familiarizes students with classroom rules and teaches them how to identify and appropriately express their feelings in a classroom setting.

“As an educator, I’m most excited about the focus on social and emotional learning,” says Rida Ellis, community initiatives coordinator for EdCo and a former kindergarten and first grade teacher. “There’s so much that goes on in a child’s brain, and so many life experiences that contribute to their learning.

“We want to grow our students into independent, self-regulating readers, writers, mathematicians, and scientists, and that path begins at a young age.”

For one week this summer, pre-kindergartners at Hope Academy, Durfee Technology Magnet School, and Baum Elementary enjoyed first-day-of-school previews. They met teachers and principals; ate lunch in the cafeteria; rode the school bus; and familiarized themselves with their classrooms and school buildings.

“Collaborating with EdCo enabled us to provide teachers with trauma-informed professional development sessions, which fell directly in line with our focus for the school year,” says Durfee Principal Dianne Brandt of the school’s late July “Kindergarten Safari” week. “We also were able to offer additional resources such as snacks and take-home activities.”

At the core of trauma-informed training is the understanding that every student comes to school with a story, and that their

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From the President

When people begin to think about philanthropy in a serious way, they often consider a gift to education.

Some create scholarships to help others reach their educational goals. Others make a difference through support of their local private and public schools, or through early childhood education initiatives. Education naturally segues to philanthropy. And it certainly represents an investment in the future.

The reasons make perfect sense. Education is the building block for individual success and the foundation for the success of our society and culture. When we care about a bright future for young people and for our community, investment in education is a no-brainer.

People connect to education. If they've been impacted by great teachers and a solid education, they appreciate the difference a scholarship can make toward someone else's future. If their children have excelled because they had a good start in life, donors know that investing in our littlest learners can make a difference over their lifetimes, too.

At The Community Foundation, we see the fulfillment that donors realize when they give to education. In this issue of *Focus*, you will read about the delight one donor experiences each year when her scholarship is awarded and she meets with the student who will benefit from her generosity. She is forever connected to the future of this young person and the impact she will make.

You will also see how investment through philanthropy can help our smallest scholars get ready for kindergarten. The many donors who have supported our *Knowing, Growing, Going to Kindergarten* initiative can relish the thought of the little ones headed off to big school ready to learn.

Education is an ideal connector to philanthropy. Think about how you might change someone's life and impact the future through supporting education. We can help!

Wegi Stewart

Kindergarten Readiness, *continued*

actions and behaviors often reflect chapters in those stories. Bolstered by training, teachers learn techniques to help students understand their feelings and to work through struggles.

For Brandt, the effect of Kindergarten Safari was visible. "Students weren't nervous on the first day of school, and I could tell they were ready to go," she says. "They knew where to put their things, and how to behave in the classroom.

"I got quite a few hugs, too!"

Confidence also built throughout the summer at Wee Folk childcare and early education centers. "This year, we had the opportunity to integrate more small group and hands-on activities," says Kim Dewey, director of the Childcare Center Initiative. "Social and emotional learning was a huge component of the curriculum — stopping and counting to ten when you're angry, or taking a deep breath.

"The goal is to teach students to self-regulate so teachers don't need to intervene."

Making Play-Doh faces to express happiness or anger; playing a version of Candyland where colors represent emotions; and drawing pictures in their journals also helped students understand themselves and each other. Lessons were supplemented by take-home activities.

Wee Folks' summer curriculum was capped with kindergarten preparedness sessions, held at the Children's Museum the week prior to school. On the last day of Kindergarten Safari, Durfee students were treated to a trip to Scovill Zoo, which coincided with the week's theme of learning about a different animal every day. Breakfasts and lunches throughout the week were provided by the Decatur Park District.

In addition to casting a wider net among elementary schools, childcare centers, and community partners, Dewey sees a key shift in ownership of the kindergarten readiness initiative.

"In the past, our team would go into the centers and present classroom lessons," says Dewey. "This summer, we supported the curriculum and shared ideas, but the teachers took the initiative and tailored lessons to their classrooms and students.

"They also understand the value of social and emotional learning as part of a year-long curriculum and they're excited to implement it."

"I look forward to growing our partnership with EdCo," adds Brandt. "Their support enabled us to expand our offerings, and the kindergarten readiness initiative was a great way to set a positive tone for the year."

"Very great change starts in very small conversations held among people who deeply care."

*Margaret J. Wheatley, Ed.D.,
National consultant, speaker, and author.*





Generous Scholarships Support Future Success

From the moment they met at The Community Foundation's Annual Scholarship Reception, held Sunday, June 4, at the Decatur Club, donor Roberta Gorden sensed something special about Mount Zion High School graduate Kayle Mullen.

"I was very impressed with Kayle and felt that she knew exactly what she wanted to do," Gorden recalls. "She also knew that a college education would be the key to her success."

Mullen, the 2017-2018 recipient of the Roberta Gorden Scholarship, was one of 40 area college-bound seniors to receive scholarships totaling over \$80,000.

"Many of our generous donors wish to invest in the future through young people," says The Community Foundation President Wegi Stewart. "It's very gratifying to meet so many worthy students, the families that support them, and the donors who help make their dreams become realities."

Gorden learned of The Community Foundation — and the opportunity to establish a scholarship — through her attorney. "After much contemplation and prayer, I knew that part of my estate planning should include funding a scholarship," she says. Gorden was equally certain that her scholarship be rooted in agriculture.

"Farming is my livelihood, and one of the loves of my life," says Gorden, whose Sesquicentennial Farm, located south of Blue Mound, has been in the same family of lineal descendants for more than 150 years. "Farmers feed the world, and in order to continue to do this, we must encourage our youth to pursue degrees in agricultural fields."

Mullen, who served as chapter president of Future Farmers of America (FFA) her senior year, credits the organization

with her decision to major in Agronomy Management at Illinois State University. And she credits a generous woman who shares her passion with planting the seeds of her success.

"Ms. Gorden has such a kind and caring heart, and we plan to stay in touch as I move through college," Mullen says. "I feel very blessed to have received this scholarship. I know it will help me significantly in the future."





Mansur Steps Up As New Board Chair

Cathy Mansur has served on the Board of The Community Foundation of Macon County since 2013. She is a partner of May, Cocagne & King, P.C. and has been in public accounting since 1991. Her specialty is government and not-for-profit audits.

Cathy is a life-long resident of the Decatur area and is a graduate of Millikin University where she received her Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. She is a licensed CPA in Illinois. Cathy and her husband Blake have two grown sons and one granddaughter.

"It is an honor to serve this organization and the community as chair of the Board. Over the Foundation's 17 year history, it has had great leadership, and I hope to continue that valuable and critical tradition," Cathy said when accepting the gavel in June.



Welcome New Board Members

Najiba Benabess, Ph.D.

Dean of Tabor School of Business at Millikin University, Dr. Benabess serves on the Women Economic Forum Advisory Board. She speaks several languages including Arabic, Moroccan, French and Spanish.



Edward C. Elliott, M.D.

Dr. Elliott has lived in Decatur since 1989 and is semi-retired from Cancer Care Specialists of Illinois.

Dr. Elliott serves on the boards of Decatur Memorial Hospital, the James Millikin Trust, and Crossing Healthcare.

He and his wife Anne recently welcomed their sixth grandchild – a boy on July 28.



New Office Manager

Nora Reed

Nora Reed is a lifelong resident of Macon County with long-term career experience in business and accounting. Nora and her husband live in a house that is over 130 years old. They spend time enjoying their 18 grandchildren.



2017-2018 Board of Directors

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Board Training for Autumn 2017 Scheduled

Introduction to Board Governance training courses are being offered in September, October, and November to address topics important for being a knowledgeable and effective member of a community Board of Directors.

This training, sponsored by the Community Foundation of Macon County, identifies the responsibilities and expectations of Board members, and discusses Board policies and procedures, to prepare individuals to provide leadership for our community's non-profit and social service organizations.

Classes will be held at the Decatur Public Library. Each course offering consists of two evening sessions and one Saturday morning session. Course fee is \$25 per person.

Detailed schedules and additional course information are available at: sites.google.com/site/introductiontoboardgovernance

*Advance enrollment is required – please contact
Bruce Nims at bnims@nims.com.*



Endowment Fund Impacts Art Lovers Of All Ages

For the Decatur Area Arts Council (DAAC), “Anne Lloyd” is a name that speaks volumes — one synonymous with generosity, community outreach and opportunity, and artistic spirit.

Created in 2003 by Bob Lloyd in memory of his wife Anne, The Anne Lloyd Endowment Fund, held at The Community Foundation, supports the gallery named in her honor, but also stretches throughout the community to reach residents of all ages.

“We have a great deal of flexibility with this endowment,” says DAAC Executive Director Jerry Johnson. “It connects to the Anne Lloyd Gallery, but the annual distributions are primarily used for general building operations and for several of our ‘flagship’ programs.”

Directly impacted are Arts In Central Park, held annually the third weekend in September, and the Performing Arts Series for Students (PASS), which offers grade-schoolers the opportunity to attend professional performing arts productions throughout the school year at Kirkland Fine Arts Center. More than 7,500 local students participate in the program annually. At the heart of the Anne Lloyd Endowment Fund is the Madden Arts Center building itself, along with everything it offers and represents to the community. “Bob established the endowment about the same time that our building was being purchased and renovated,” says Johnson of the gift’s history. “Through the years, the Madden Arts

Center has grown — offering classes on the second floor and hosting special events on the third floor. “Numbers of local arts groups also call this building ‘home,’” Johnson adds. “The Decatur Municipal Band rehearses on the third floor and stores its instruments there, and the Barn Colony Artists meet here weekly. Neither group would have a permanent home otherwise, and the flexibility of the Anne Lloyd Endowment Fund helps offset their rent.”

The Madden Arts Center’s 10-year anniversary, celebrated in 2014, was packaged with a significant boost to the endowment: One-third of the proceeds from an anniversary fundraiser were designated for building maintenance, while two-thirds was directed to grow the Anne Lloyd Endowment Fund.

“This endowment is among our major gifts,” says Johnson. “It’s an excellent illustration of how one individual’s generosity got the ball rolling and inspired others to continue its growth.”

Strength In Numbers

In late 2003, the Decatur Area Arts Council used the \$200,000 gift that Bob Lloyd made in memory of his wife Anne to establish an endowed agency fund at The Community Foundation. Because the Anne Lloyd Endowment Fund for the Decatur Area Arts Center was held at The Community Foundation it was eligible for a 1:2 match by Archer Daniels Midland creating a \$300,000 fund.

Since that time, thanks to earnings and additional contributions from community supporters, the fund has grown to \$498,000 and has provided the DAAC with annual distributions totaling more than \$200,000.





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Lynn D. Augustine	Roselee M. Elder	Martha McDaniel	Connie Snyder Wise	Janny Warner
Dewey Barr	Becky Fedrigo	Kenneth Moore	Sally Solana	Matthew Yelovich
Pauline Batman	John F. Fitzpatrick	Harold Murphy	Lindsay Sparks	Bob Webb
Janet Brunner	Betty Fletcher	Chris Olson	Sister Lucy Spinner, OSU	Robert & Joy Witt
Anita Buckner	Don Gepford	Leo & Anne Pondelick	Anna Ruth Thompson	Pam Zimmerman
James J. Burtschi	Joan Gillmore	Vickie Redman	Robin Vogel	
Lois Chervinko	Sandra Goral	Susan Rhodes		
Louise Cole	Helen Hamilton	Phyllis Richey		
David Cooper	Kimberly Hiltz	Sharon Richter		
Rita Cornille	Patricia Hodges	Tony Samuelson		
Connie Cutler	Bob Kissel	Jeannine Schaub		
William Cutler	Michael Lowe	Jacqueline Scott Cobb		
Cleatus Damery	Lillian Mahon	Severns		
Norma Dixon	Judy Mason	Dennis Sedlak		
Sharon Doyle	Beverly McAllister	Michael Shampine		

HONOR GIFTS

Beginning April 1, 2017

Missy Batman	Susie Skeffington
Randy Cannady	Linda Slagell
Marilyn Mertz	Harrison Steck
Carroll Moma	James L. Wade, III, MD

Donate online at www.endowdecatour.org

*to help create great schools, healthy families, strong youth, beautiful parks and public spaces,
 music and art, supportive churches, and engaged community.*