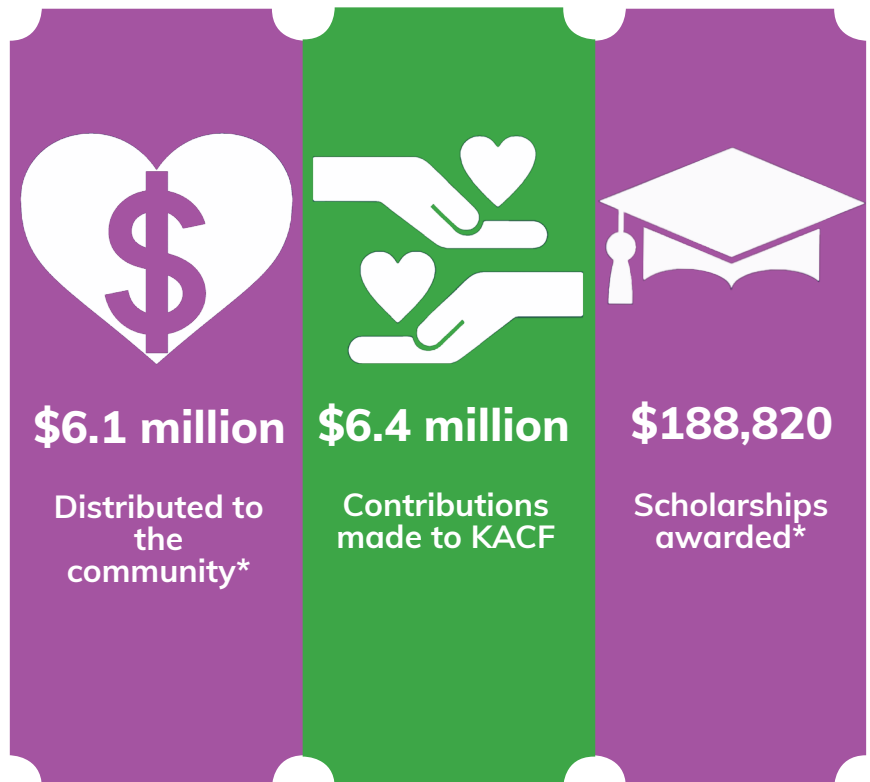


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2023 Impact



*Includes allocations for future distribution.

**2024-2025
BOARD AND STAFF**

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| Audrey Kauders | Matthew Wecker |
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“connecting people who care with causes that matter”

**A New Connection:
Building a Bridge**

Inspiring Donors

The Kearney Area Community Foundation (KACF) is always looking for ways to encourage philanthropy and strengthen the nonprofits in our community. Now, a recently established program is finding a new way to “connect people who care with causes that matter.”

“A Bridge to Greater Giving” looks to connect potential donors with area nonprofits. KACF manages two unrestricted grant funds aimed at helping local organizations with various projects. Applications are received during each grant cycle, but unfortunately, not all requests are able to be fully funded. That’s where “A Bridge to Greater Giving” comes in.

KACF’s Donor Relations Coordinator, Jennifer Beck, compiles the information on each project that is submitted to KACF for grant consideration. She then reaches out to the donors who have a donor advised fund (DAF) with KACF, to see if any of them are interested in using their fund to help. “A Bridge to Greater Giving is a program that was designed to bring awareness to our donor advisors of opportunities to support organizations which have recently applied for grants and still have unmet financial needs for their specific projects,” Beck says.

Through the program, donors are able to learn about each nonprofit and project, and decide if any of them fit the causes the donors are passionate about.



A DAF is a great way to be involved in the community and support the causes you care about. Opening up a DAF can seem like a daunting task, but KACF is able to help. Staff is here to help advise donors on the local charitable organizations they may like to support. The Kearney Area Community Foundation will assist in administrative oversight and provide receipts for tax purposes. Not sure who to help? Stop by our office and we would love to discuss your interests and share our knowledge of local nonprofits with you.

“There’s so much flexibility with Donor Advised Funds at KACF. Donors can give to charities, even outside our community, that align with their passion and values,” says KACF President/CEO Judi Sickler. “However, we always promote giving locally.”

If you are interested in setting up a Donor Advised Fund with the Kearney Area Community Foundation, please call our office at (308) 237-3114 or email judi@kearneyfoundation.org.

Seeing the Progress

A Kearney Project Almost 30 Years in the Making

Yanney Heritage Park

It may be hard to imagine Kearney without Yanney Heritage Park, but it took almost three decades of planning and fundraising to turn a cornfield on the southside of Kearney into “the finest family park between Omaha and Denver”. Since the idea for the park was introduced in 1997, Yanney Heritage Park Foundation (YHPF), a supporting organization of the Kearney Area Community Foundation, has helped transform an 80-acre area along 11th Street into a beautiful public park with a variety of features available to all ages. KACF also partners with YHPF as shared staff to reduce operational costs.

Work has really ramped up in the park over the last few years with The Gardens at Yanney Park taking shape. The Gardens, when completed, will include several different types of gardens, each featuring a multitude of plant species. The finished project will include the: Rose Garden Lilac & Hydrangea Garden, Pollinator Garden, Nebraska Native Garden, Edibles Garden, Xeriscape Garden and Annuals Garden.



It's not just plants that are on display; several world class sculptures have already been installed, including art by Dale Chihuly, Jun Kaneko, Matthew Placzek and Therman Statom.



The crown jewel of the project is now complete. The Gail and Michael Yanney Pavilion, an 8,800 square foot building, is an impressive new event space. It's available to rent for occasions such as educational classes, meetings, community events, family reunions, weddings and other occasions. The Pavilion has large windows and is perched on top of a hill to provide great views to the beautiful 12.6-acre landscape that is The Gardens.



With spring arriving in the Kearney area, it's a great time to head out to Yanney Heritage Park to see the new additions and appreciate this beautiful part of our community. If you want to support Yanney Park, you can donate to their permanent endowment at KACF. Call our office at (308) 237-3114 for more information.

A Part of the Journey

One Donor's Story

Watching the Foundation Grow

The Kearney Area Community Foundation's (KACF) goal is to serve the community, but part of that mission is to serve the donors that make our impact possible. The Foundation is always happy to welcome new supporters, as well as show appreciation to those who have supported KACF for a long time.

One of those long-time supporters is Sherry Morrow, who has a unique perspective of KACF. Morrow served on the KACF board from 2000-2009 and again from 2010-2016. Today she is a fund advisor for various organizations such as the Ainsworth United Methodist Church Endowment Fund, Elm Creek United Methodist Church Endowment Fund, Himanchal Educational Foundation Fund, Kearney Rescue Cats Fund and LoperCats Fund. In addition to those roles, she also has a donor advised fund with KACF.



Sherry Morrow

Morrow says making the decision to stay involved with KACF after her time on the board was an easy one. “I had seen how the Community Foundation operates as a business and I've always been impressed with them from day one.” She says KACF is a great resource for local organizations. “I liked the fact that, when you're a small organization, for example with Kearney Rescue Cats, that being 'under the umbrella' of the Kearney Area Community Foundation and it being audited,

that we don't have to pay for a special audit and we know that things are done right.” She says she also appreciates the credibility the Foundation brings to those organizations. “When you're starting up out there and you tell people 'we're under the Community Foundation', you have instant credibility with the people you're talking to, because they know about the Foundation.”

Her experience also led to her decision to open a donor advised fund, knowing that doing so with KACF would be an easy process. “I had seen other people's accounts working and I liked the way it was handled,” Morrow says. “Just fill out the paper and the Foundation takes care of the checks and sees that they get where they need to go. It's been very beneficial from the donor's standpoint for the donor advised fund.”

Morrow says a lot of positive impacts in the community in the past couple of decades can be traced back to KACF. “It's grown. And sometimes I'm sure it's been blood, sweat and tears for some people, but it's grown by leaps and bounds and it's a very stable, well-respected organization in the community.”

Investing in Your Community

A Personal Mission

Creating a Great Place for Future Generations

A financial advisor once told me their most productive clientele are young, flourishing adults and those close to retirement. So what does that mean for those in between these categories? Being a married father of three at the age of 34, my wife and I would consider our current life status as “settled.” At some point, I had to ask myself, ‘What am I doing in playing my part to better the community in which my children will grow?’ My mother once told me, ‘You're only as busy...as you choose to be.’ Sometimes it's healthy to decline invitations to be involved so as to tend to family priorities or personal matters. Nevertheless, the times where I respectfully declined to be involved in an organization or perform volunteer work, I realized that the outcome of that mission was based on the people involved in that mission and I wasn't one of them. I realized if I wanted the community to reflect the values for which I wanted my children to be raised in, it's my responsibility to be involved. Without my involvement, I personally felt out of place voicing concerns about where our community is being guided.



Matt Wecker
KACF Board Member,
Nurse Anesthetist
at Kearney Regional
Medical Center



Wecker Family

My wife and I came to the conclusion that either we be directly involved in community organizations by volunteering our time, or if possible, we could financially support the organizations that reflect our values. Might I say, the Kearney Area Community Foundation is a great place to start.

With a shared vision for the betterment of our communities, I personally invite everyone reading this to explore how the KACF has impacted the community and how their mission can continue to grow with your support, either through volunteering or monetary donations. The future of your community depends on it!