

Finding Purpose Through Philanthropy

DECEMBER 2020

LINCOLN

F O R E V E R



**A LEGACY OF
LOVE AND
PHILANTHROPY**

Acklies Honored with
2020 Charity Award

LINCOLN COMMUNITY
F O U N D A T I O N

2020 by the Numbers

\$15M

in grants distributed,
including a record 4,300 from
LCF Donor Advised Funds,
totaling \$8.7M

\$7M

raised from 31,000
donations on the 9th annual
Give to Lincoln Day

\$1.3M

in contributions to the
Lincoln COVID-19
Response Fund

\$675K

raised on Lincoln Littles Giving Day
to assist 140 children
attend quality early childhood
education programs



Kat Wiese creates Give to Lincoln Day chalk art in front of the Lincoln Community Foundation building on May 28, 2020.

Greetings:

In this season of giving, we are pleased to bring you heartfelt stories from our generous hometown. The Charity Award was established by the Lincoln Community Foundation as a gift to the community as an opportunity to recognize individuals for their leadership and philanthropy to our great city. It was an honor to celebrate Duane and Phyllis Acklie this year with the 2020 award. Read more about their generosity and leadership in our cover story.

LCF helps donors make gifts to support today's needs, like Give to Lincoln Day, as well as help design gifts that will impact Lincoln Forever. The Foundation is honored to be the keeper of these legacies of love for Lincoln. Read the beautiful stories of giving from Ava Thomas, Richard Jones and Willa Foster Jones

2020 is a year we will never forget, especially the generosity of our community. You can see that in the 2020 By the Numbers chart, but you can feel it in the spirit of our city. Read about funds established by donors at LCF for causes close to their heart as well as scholarships that are helping students to follow their dreams. These are stories of neighbors coming together during uncertain times to take care of each other.

Our magazine is a sampling of the generosity and love in our community. It is the strength of our city and its people that gives us great hope for the future of Lincoln.

With love and gratitude,

Barbara M. Bartle
President



Contributors



KELLY BURKEN

Kelly is the Digital Communications Specialist for the Lincoln Community Foundation as well as LCF's resident photographer. She specializes in wedding, family and senior portraits and lives with her husband, Kurt and their standard poodle, Banks.



MARY KAY ROTH

Mary Kay Roth was the director of Communications at Lincoln Public Schools for 20 years and, prior to that, was a newspaper reporter at various publications including the Lincoln Journal Star. She now freelance writes, hikes, travels, plays with her granddaughters and attempts to catch as many sunrises as possible.

Cover photo: Phyllis Acklie is presented with the 2020 Charity Award. Full story on pages 6 and 7. From left to right: Dr. Tom Osborne, Phyllis Acklie, Kim Robak and Barbara Bartle.

Save the Date

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

Lincoln Littles Giving Day



Inspired by the Prosper Lincoln focus on early childhood, LCF is hosting the third-annual Giving Day to support Lincoln Littles Early Learning Fund. On Abraham Lincoln's birthday, you too can live by Abe's words, "When I do good, I feel good." Lincoln Littles focuses on providing tuition assistance at quality early

childcare providers for children facing the greatest odds. Give to Lincoln's littles, help a lot. For information on how you can make an impact, visit www.lincolnlittles.org.



MAY 25, 2021

10th Annual Give to Lincoln Day

The Lincoln Community Foundation will host the 10th annual Give to Lincoln Day on Tuesday, May 25. Give to Lincoln Day is a time when everyone in Lincoln is asked to make a donation toward the organizations that are

critical to the care, support and spirit of our great city. Since the first Give to Lincoln Day in 2012, thousands of donors have raised more than \$33 million to support Lancaster County nonprofits. When Lincoln comes together, big things happen!



DO YOU WANT TO PLAY A BIG PART IN 2021 FOR LINCOLN LITTLES OR GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY? CONTACT TRACY EDGERTON AT 402-474-2345 OR TRACYE@LCF.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MATCH FUND SPONSORSHIPS.

Staff Updates



DIANE MENDENHALL

This year, LCF welcomed **Diane Mendenhall** as Vice President for Gift Planning. Diane works with donors and professional advisors to design and implement charitable gift plans.

Diane joined LCF after 20 years with the University of Nebraska, most recently as associate to the chancellor for External Engagement and a

member of the Chancellor's Cabinet. She has an extensive background in development and previously worked as an administrative leader with both Husker Athletics and the Nebraska Alumni Association. A native of Ogallala, Neb., Diane is an alumna of the University of Kansas.

Diane is the successor to **Paula Metcalf** who served LCF for the past ten years as VP for Gift Planning. Paula will continue to provide part-time general counsel services to the Foundation.



PAULA METCALF

Paula worked with donors and their advisors during a tremendous period of advancement for the foundation. Her tenure at LCF included contributions growing from \$800,000 in 2010 to \$25 million in 2019 and funds held at LCF climbing from 284 to 1,132. She helped develop policies, systems and partnerships that position LCF to better serve the community.

"Paula's leadership and efforts have been essential to the Foundation's growth throughout the last decade," said Barbara Bartle, president of the Lincoln Community Foundation. "We appreciate her continuing counsel and are thrilled to have Diane on our team."

TOGETHER, one LINCOLN



Lincoln City Council member Sandra Washington announcing the Together, One Lincoln initiative with Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird and community partners on July 23, 2020.

COMING TOGETHER

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF RACIAL EQUITY - ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME

Lincoln City Councilwoman, Sandra Washington, didn't set out to build an organization when she had the idea for Together, One Lincoln. But as racial equity came to the forefront of many conversations sparked by the Black Lives Matter protests, Sandra knew that folks needed the tools and resources to facilitate change.

"My hope is that we start these conversations where we feel safest," she said. "The whole idea is to move us toward a place where we can have conversations anywhere, and we can see that we are more alike than different."

When Sandra realized that what she was creating was much more than a public service announcement, she reached out the Lincoln Community Foundation to set up a fund for the initiative. Together, One Lincoln focuses on how each person can help create a community of racial equity by starting a conversation.

At TogetherOneLincoln.org you'll find tips for how to have difficult conversations,

including opening questions and links to organizations ready to host community conversations. In conversations around a table, on the front porch, and at the end of the driveway, a small group of people can come together to get to know one another in a more meaningful way.

"I love living in Lincoln because we care for each other," said Sandra. "We are a community that can have conversations across boundaries."

Guided by a simple format found on the website, participants practice being open and curious about all perspectives, with a focus on learning from one another, rather than trying to debate the topic at hand.

The website also contains reading lists to facilitate conversations supported by Lincoln City Libraries. At TogetherOneLincoln.org you'll find a link to library materials for adults, teens and youth.

Moving forward, Sandra hopes to keep TogetherOneLincoln.org active for two to three years while the platform continues

to help facilitate important conversations.

"People are asking, 'What do we do? What should we be thinking about as an organization?'" said Sandra. "This website is an excellent place to start. Knitting together not insurmountable."

Contributions to the Together, One Lincoln Fund will provide free trainings for organizations as well as supporting materials available in multiple languages.

"I couldn't be more grateful to the Lincoln Community Foundation," said Sandra. "I didn't have the tools on hand to manage the funds coming in and out, so I reached out to LCF because they are an organization looking out for the community's good. They are the fit!"

To learn more about the Together, One Lincoln Fund, visit <https://my.lcf.org/together-one-lincoln-fund> or reach out to Tracy Edgerton at 402-474-2345 or tracye@lcf.org.

Giving to Lincoln Today

Ava Thomas utilizes her LCF Donor Advised Fund to give back on Give to Lincoln Day

Ava Thomas does not forget.

She does not forget growing up poor, her family dependent on food stamps, welfare and community housing. She does not forget living with a grandmother who helped raise her, her brother – and many beloved cousins. She does not forget life as a child in poverty, while surrounded by family members who were nonetheless generous and giving.

In fact, as Thomas grew up, graduated from high school, attended college, and flourished in a 25-year newspaper career – she made it her mission to never forget.

“As I started earning a living, making money, I knew I had an obligation to give back,” she says today. “I knew that, as my family cared for me and gave what they could, I needed to give and take care of others.”

Thomas is now president and publisher of the Lincoln Journal Star, and has dedicated much of her personal life to addressing those childhood memories – donating to a spectrum of causes, helping found Hundreds of Women Who Care, volunteering as a “Big Sister,” serving and donating through the Lincoln Community Foundation.

“The people at the Foundation are so compassionate, their work is so compelling,” Thomas says. “They have an understanding about the incredible generosity in this community ... Lincoln is indeed a big, small town. We are all about taking care of one another, taking care of community. That sense of giving, helping others, it’s in our DNA.”

She points to the recent and perhaps surprising Give to Lincoln Day – held smack dab in the middle of the pandemic. “We are in a time when there are increasing

demands on non-profits, businesses are impacted by the pandemic, people are concerned about returns on their savings, jobs are in jeopardy.”

Yet the ninth annual Give to Lincoln Day was a record-setting year.

“It blew my mind,” Thomas says. “People opened their wallets, even though they were hurting themselves. Lincoln got it – they understood that this is such an important time to understand the sense of honoring the good of the community.”

She also attributes the day’s success to the many tools the Lincoln Community Foundation has created to inspire Lincoln citizens to give – particularly, for her, the “Donor Advised Fund.”

“I call it a charitable checkbook. It’s just so simple. You put money into an account and write ‘checks’ from that account for charities, anything 501(c)(3) ... It not only makes it easy to give, it is all recorded, telling me who I gave to, how much and when ... It’s all so simple. You log into your account, click on the charities you want to give – click, click, you have a complete record of everything.”

Her friends applaud her generous and benevolent spirit:

- Anthony L. Goins, director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development: “Ava is a dear friend and someone I consider to be a natural leader. She also has an incredible gift of generosity, kindness and social awareness that shines brightly through her philanthropy.”



- Steve Kiene, CEO of Ocuvera: “While financial giving is noble, I find that Ava’s many other dimensions of giving are the truest definition of philanthropy. She in fact helped open my eyes to the struggles that are faced by women, people of color, immigrants and many others who were not born into advantage. She has made me a better community-minded person. We are lucky to have her as a quiet leader – and her hard work, perseverance and success are inspirational to everyone.”
- Pete Ferguson, Youth Development Coordinator for Lincoln Public Schools: “What I find amazing is the intensity Ava has in her commitment to impact, empower and invest in other lives. Whether it be her children, grandchildren, philanthropic endeavors or ensuring marginalized and underrepresented people have a voice, it’s that intensity that fuels her generosity of time, talent and treasure.”

Indeed, Thomas believes in imparting a sense of giving from one generation to the next. “While we didn’t have a lot of money when I was growing up, my family was always kind and giving. I believe it is important to pass that on ... I feel strongly about leaving Lincoln a better place than I found it.”

Are you interested in setting up a Donor Advised Fund? Contact Chip DeBuse at 402-474-2345 or chipd@lcf.org.

RIPPLES *of* GOOD

2019 Charity Award Recipient, Dr. Tom Osborne, presents Phyllis Acklie with flowers as she accepts the 2020 Charity Award.



DUANE AND PHYLLIS ACKLIE'S LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY HONORED AT ANNUAL EVENT

The Lincoln Community Foundation hosted its annual Donor Recognition virtually on October 22, celebrating donors from 2019 who are making Lincoln a better place to live – now and for future generations. The virtual event also included the presentation of the 2020 Charity Award to Duane and Phyllis Acklie on behalf of the community.

"We were thrilled to have more than 8,500 donors make gifts to the Foundation last

year," said LCF President, Barbara Bartle. "You are the people who are planting the seeds for the future of Lincoln."

The presentation of the 2020 Charity Award followed the donor recognition portion of the event. The Charity Award was created for the community by the Foundation to recognize individuals for their leadership and philanthropy. The Foundation was honored to announce Duane and Phyllis Acklie as the 2020 Charity Award recipients.

"This is a family that stands as a very good example of what a family should be," said Dr. Tom Osborne, recipient of the 2019 Charity Award. "They are made of the right stuff and they believe in the right things."

From business to politics, faith to philanthropy, the Acklies have been pillars of the community for decades. They consider their community in the holistic sense and spread this love and kindness to many.

"They are not just focused on a single entity," said Dr. Darrin Good, President, Nebraska Wesleyan University. "They want to lift up all of Lincoln and beyond by lifting up the people."

Duane and Phyllis both grew up on farms in Madison County, Nebraska, their fathers both in banking. They purchased Crete Carrier in 1971 and two years later moved its headquarters to Lincoln. Today Crete Carrier is one of the nation's largest privately-owned trucking companies, and the Acklies' business and philanthropic investments reverberate throughout Lincoln and across the state.



“As I got to know them more as individuals, I gained tremendous respect for the business that they built at Crete Carrier,” said Kim Russel, former CEO, Bryan Health. “They’ve been incredibly generous to organizations like Bryan Health and they are just very humble, very down to earth people.”

After Duane’s passing in 2016, he left a legacy of whole-hearted generosity. Phyllis and the family continue to give back to the community that surrounds them.

“I think their real legacy is the impact on their kids and their grandkids,” said Brian Hastings, CEO/President, University of Nebraska Foundation. “If you look at how selfless and how caring their children and grandchildren are to the community, that is the ultimate testament and ultimate legacy.”

Lincoln Community Foundation Board Chair, Kim Robak, and President, Barbara Bartle, presented the traveling Larry Roots “Charity” sculpture to Phyllis Acklie in the Foundation’s garden this fall. 2019 Charity Award Recipient, Dr. Tom Osborne, was also in attendance.

“On behalf of Duane and myself, I am honored to be recognized in a category with Tom and Nancy Osborne and all of the earlier recipients of the Charity Award,” said Phyllis Acklie. “Duane and I felt strongly about giving back to the community that gave so much to us as we raised our family and grew our businesses. Thank you.”

The Acklies many contributions have impacted countless individuals and organizations in Lincoln and throughout Nebraska. Their servant leadership is an incredible reminder of the power of philanthropy.

“You meet a lot of people in your life,” said Angie Muhleisen, CEO/President, Union Bank & Trust. “but very few leave a lasting impact. The ripple effect of what Duane and Phyllis have done is going to be felt for generations.”

The full program can be accessed online at LCF.org.



PREVIOUS CHARITY AWARD HONOREES INCLUDE:

2012

Ed and Mary Copple

2013

James and HK Stuart

2014

James and Rhonda Seacrest

2015

Alice Dittman

2016

Jim and Mary Able and the Abel
Family

2017

Donna Woods

2018

Robert and Karen Duncan

2019

Dr. Tom and Nancy Osborne



HOPE *for a* BRIGHTER FUTURE

SCHOLARSHIPS FUEL LOCAL STUDENTS' DREAMS DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

For millions of college students across the country, going back to campus looked drastically different this year. The challenges wrought by a global pandemic have shifted the landscape of higher education into uncharted territory.

Despite the on-going changes, University of Nebraska-Lincoln sophomore, Hope Whitney, doesn't miss a beat. "We were all a little nervous but there was an excitement to be back to a somewhat normal routine," said Hope. "As long as we all stick together, we'll continue to get through it."

Hope is in her second year at UNL pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition, Exercise, and Health Sciences. She is the latest recipient of the Norma Somerheiser Scholarship, one of 80+ scholarship funds administered by the Lincoln Community Foundation. Many students rely on scholarships to supplement or fully fund their tuition and the generosity of donors who create endowed scholarship funds is not lost on Hope.

"I am so grateful to the Somerheiser family and to any donor that supports students who are following their dreams," she said. "This scholarship is allowing me to receive the education I wished for."

Living up to her namesake, Hope indeed has big dreams for the future. She plans to finish undergrad and attend a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. "I want to center my work around underrepresented and vulnerable communities," she said. "I want to be a part of these neighborhoods to advocate for my patients and show people there's still hope."

In the meantime, Hope is living her college experience to its fullest – no matter how different it may look. She is currently a member of the Cornhusker Marching Band and has fond memories of her first time on the field with her clarinet. "That first home football game was like nothing I've ever experienced," said Hope. "The countdown timer is on, there's 90,000 fans already in their seats and your heart is beating a million miles an hour."

Although there was quite a delay for the Huskers and the marching band to take the field, and no 90,000 in the stands this year, Hope remains unsurprisingly optimistic. She plans to continue to juggle school, band and campus activities while adapting to new norms. The future is bright for Hope Whitney and she's eager to share her gratitude for the scholarships that are supporting her dreams and the dreams of fellow students.

"I cannot express how much receiving the Norma Somerheiser Scholarship means to me," she said. "It's an honor to carry this legacy. I promise to always work my hardest and help as many people as I can along the way in order to make Norma proud."

If helping area students is where you want to focus your support, contact Trish Reimer at 402-474-2345 or trishr@lcf.org for more information on creating an endowed scholarship fund.

Congratulations to the 2020 scholarship awardees. In 2020, there were over 270 individual awards, totaling \$440,000. See a full list of recipients at LCF.org.

GIVE TO LINCOLN FOREVER

Willa Foster Jones and Richard Jones reflect on leaving a legacy of giving

Richard Jones and Willa Foster Jones are compassionate community benefactors who have a distinct message to share about philanthropy: You don't have to fit any sort of wealthy stereotype to believe in the spirit of giving.

"We are people of moderate means who have budgeted sensibly, believed in the importance of saving and invested wisely," Rich says. "But we are also responsible citizens who believe in the spirit of community. Lincoln has been good to us, it has given a lot to us, and we want to be givers – not just takers. We believe in investing back into our community."

Besides, he adds with a smile, "It appears to me that people who give, people who model altruism, seem to have happier lives."

His wife, Willa, whole-heartedly agrees: "Yes, we live comfortably. But at some point, you ask yourself, 'How much is enough?' You can't take it with you. We determined not to isolate ourselves from the needs of our community."

So how do you make the best choices when it comes to charitable giving? Rich and Willa went to the Lincoln Community Foundation for guidance and support. They simplified their giving through their donor advised fund which they utilize to make multiple grants to local nonprofits on Give to Lincoln Day. Rich and Willa are also giving to Lincoln forever through planned gifts that make a commitment to our community beyond their lifetimes. They are both recognized as members of LCF's Legacy Society.

Members of the Legacy Society are generous donors who have named the Foundation as the beneficiary of a future gift through their wills or estate plans. Future gifts to any fund qualify for Legacy Society membership and demonstrate the highest level of trust in the Lincoln Community Foundation.

- Rich: "The Lincoln Community Foundation knows where the needs are in Lincoln ... And they believe in what they do."
- Willa: "The Foundation gives us something to aspire to ... They are mission driven. They care."



Both Rich and Willa are talented professional musicians who have found meaningful work throughout their lives. They both teach music (now Zoom classes) through their Foster Jones Studios. Rich has been a member of at least three regional symphonies, has taught music at Nebraska Wesleyan and now handles integrative technology for Wesleyan. Willa has a broad background in music, something of a jack of all trades, but has focused on serving as musical director for several local churches.

As a result of those vocations and avocations, their donations specifically reflect patronage in just those areas: music, educational and religious organizations.

More recently, the couple has also chosen to increase their donations during the past months

of the pandemic. "Everyone needs help right now," Rich says, specifically citing food pantries and health care organizations, neighborhood centers as well as immigrant and refugee populations.

In fact, donation choices for good causes in Lincoln are varied and many, Willa continues. "I really appreciate the joy of giving here. For instance, when we make our choices on Give to Lincoln Day, I am amazed at the diversity in so many different and great charities in this community."

"There are so many positives to giving," Rich said, pointing out that their tax accountant adds another dimension to the value of generosity: Planned giving is a wise choice for your budget.

"We are at the age when we must take out annual funds from our savings, and making these kinds of contributions just makes sense," he says.

But bank books aside, Rich stresses: "If you have ample resources, giving back to your community is simply the right thing to do ... I would say it sure helps me sleep better at night."

To learn more about becoming a member of LCF's Legacy Society, contact Diane Mendenhall at 402-474-2345 or dianem@lcf.org.

MASKS *for* ALL

THE GADE FAMILY SPREADS LOVE WITH MASKS FOR VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS

“What can we do to make this happen in Lincoln?” That’s the question Steve and Nancy Gade asked when Nancy read articles earlier this spring describing how other communities were providing washable masks for vulnerable residents.

As businesses began to reopen in May, the Gade’s understood that Lincoln needed to have additional conversation about masks. “It’s about more than keeping people healthy,” Steve said. “It’s also about the economy and getting people back to work safely.”

So, the Gade’s got to work. As an executive at Duncan Aviation, Steve knew the company was cutting fabric for masks at no charge and distributing to various groups around the community for final stitching. Nancy reached out to the city of Lincoln, who responded immediately with support for the Gade’s efforts and connected them with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. And that’s when their simple inquiry blossomed into a comprehensive program focused on providing underserved community residents with washable, reusable masks.

“We learned that the primary barrier to ensuring that masks can be made available was money to buy material,” said Nancy. And as they immersed themselves in the process and continued their outreach, the Gade’s were overwhelmed by the community response.

“All the way along the line, everyone said, ‘Yes, how can we help,’” Nancy said. “It was phenomenal how this partnership came together, and it reminded us how special Lincoln is.”

The next step was raising money. Nancy and Steve were ready to reach out to their professional and personal networks and involved their daughter Paige as well. “Although we are novices when it comes to fundraising, it was very fun to come together and work on this as a family,” Nancy said.

Steve asserted that partnering with the Lincoln Community Foundation to create a fund supporting their fundraising efforts has been critical to their success. Paige agreed. “It’s been such a good educational experience to realize how LCF makes it so easy to serve a need in the community,” she said. “You don’t have to have a ton of money to create a fund that can truly make a difference.”

To date, local businesses and community members have contributed more than \$10,000 to LCF’s Washable Masks For All Fund, and the health department continues to connect with local

nonprofits regarding their needs for additional masks. “Right now, our goal is \$12,000,” said Nancy. “We are still trying to keep pace with the identified needs.”

In the end the Gade’s are grateful for the chance to serve the community. “It’s been so rewarding to work on this because Lincoln is such a supportive town,” Steve said. “So many people have said, ‘I am in a position to help, and this is a great cause.’”

If you are interested in learning more about how to support the Washable Masks For All Fund, please contact Tracy Edgerton at tracye@lcf.org, or go to <https://my.lcf.org/washablemasks>.



Kate, Isabella, Story Lee and Hudson Davy model masks produced by the Washable Masks for All Program.



Malone Center: Bringing a bit of normalcy to our children



Each day preschoolers at the Clyde Malone Community Center arrive early in the morning – and school-aged children arrive after the last school bell – for time filled with laughter as well as enrichment.

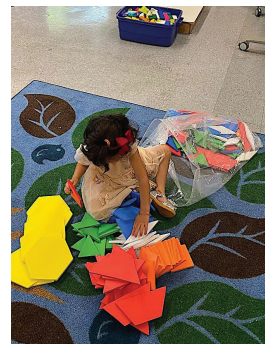
They wear masks, diligently wash their hands and have their temperature taken – while staff members have worked vigilantly to make sure the Center stays in complete compliance with health care protocols.

“Despite the pandemic, we work hard to give children some sense of normalcy here,” says John Goodwin, executive director of the Malone Center. “The pandemic is difficult, yes, but I see it as temporary ... almost like a season. You prepare for the season, and eventually it will pass.”

The Malone Center was awarded one of the most recent grants from the ongoing Lincoln COVID-19 Response Fund – and takes real pride and gratitude in that gift.

“This money has allowed us to stay open, through most of the summer and into the school year,” Goodwin said, citing some of their major initiatives: A program to educate young moms about the value of breast-feeding, and care for preschool and school-aged children.

“You give children structured programming, keep them busy, and they seem to take everything into stride,” Goodwin said. “It sure helps you stay optimistic.”



TO DONATE TO THE LINCOLN COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND VISIT [HTTPS://MY.LCF.ORG/COVID19](https://my.lcf.org/covid19).

LINCOLN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

For it is the strength of our city and its people that gives us great hope for the future of Lincoln.

Though this past year has challenged us in many ways, the spirit of this community shone brightly. The Lincoln Community Foundation is here to serve as your faithful steward for gifts to Lincoln, both today and forever.

Visit LCF.org or call 402-474-2345 to learn more.

