Together For Good

Lincoln Community FOUNDATION

FALL 2026



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On the cover: Bob Mcroberts and Jenni Hansen capture the moment at this year's Porch Jam Festival. Read more on Page 12. Porch Jam photos by Charles Haacker.

Greetings:

As autumn settles over Lincoln and the holidays approach, I find myself thinking about the moments that make this season special. For our household, one time-honored tradition is gathering around the table for game night.

Competition within the family ranges from friendly to fierce. We learned quickly that my daughter Paige never shows any mercy – something her former opponents on the volleyball court might attest to. Our son Cole is invariably the scorekeeper – an early indication of his eventual path as a Mathematics major.

Those unhurried hours hold some of my favorite memories with my kids. They also offer a simple reminder: no matter how busy life becomes, we can always make room to share and connect – and it is always more meaningful when everyone has a place at the table.

That spirit of connection and joy runs through the stories in our fall issue of *Together for Good*:

You will read about residents and donors championing a new central library that will serve our entire community, and neighbors using music to bring people together without barriers. You'll also discover how Prosper Lincoln 3.0 and the Weaver Awards are investing in our city's social infrastructure – and how you can take one ordinary step to get involved.

We celebrate those who give of themselves so others can thrive – sharing their time, talents and generosity. Scott Young's prior leadership at the Food Bank of Lincoln demonstrates the extraordinary impact of dedicated service. And Mark Tallman created a lasting legacy for local nonprofits that care for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Together, these efforts strengthen the fabric of belonging and possibility in Lincoln. They reflect what is at the heart of our work at Lincoln Community Foundation: bringing people and resources together to build a community where everyone can flourish.

To our donors, partners and fellow community leaders, thank you for the many ways you help make that vision real. I hope the stories in these pages inspire and remind you that there is always room at the table to jump in and join.



With gratitude,

Tracy

Tracy Edgerton,
President

Give to Lincoln Day Gets a Boost

LCF announces largest match fund in event history



Lincoln's One Big Day of Giving just got even bigger! After the 15th Give to Lincoln Day broke records by raising more than $11 million for nearly 500 local nonprofits – LCF announced a new milestone for the annual event: a $750,000 challenge match fund!

All participating nonprofits receive a proportional share of the match fund based upon the organization's percentage of the total dollars raised, provided by LCF and generous sponsors including Presenting Sponsor, West Gate Bank. The event has raised more than $86 million for local nonprofits since 2012. Next year's Give to Lincoln Day is set for Thursday, May 27, 2027.

"Simply put, an increased match fund makes more possible," said President Tracy Edgerton. "From warm meals and safe shelters to inspiring performances and help when it's needed – support for the Match Fund means gifts at every level lead to big change."

Do you want to play a big role in Give to Lincoln Day by becoming a Match Fund Sponsor? Reach out to Sandi Hansen at 402-474-2345 or sandih@lcf.org.

Ready, Set, Play!

New playground opens at Beattie Elementary thanks to community support and anonymous donor

"Playground…playground!"



A small child exclaimed with excitement as they approached the ribbon cutting for Beattie Elementary School's new playground on September 18.

The vision for a safer and more accessible playground became a reality through a capital campaign led by the Beattie Parent Teacher Organization. The drive to raise $270,000 for new equipment was completed thanks to a matching gift from an anonymous donor made through the Foundation.

"We're thrilled we could play a role in creating such a vibrant playspace for our community," said President Tracy Edgerton. "The overwhelming support for this campaign is certainly reflected in the smiles on these kiddos' faces today."

Every element of the play structure was designed with accessibility in mind, including wheelchair access and features for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The new playground offers a community cornerstone at 19th and Calvert, and the Beattie Bobcats gave an open call to come experience the joy of outdoor play.

"I would like to thank the community and Beattie PTO for all your support through our journey, and I would like to invite all of you to play on it during your free time," said fifth grader Flora.



Making More Possible

Recognizing LCF's Legacy Society, Benefactors and Trustees

In September, members of LCF's Legacy Society, Lincoln Benefactors and Board of Trustees gathered at Venue 5 Twenty-Two to be recognized for their leadership and generosity.

LCF Board Chair Lauren Pugliese welcomed attendees and introduced President Tracy Edgerton for remarks and recognition of new members.

"Everyone in this room has a deep connection to Lincoln and a long history of giving back to the causes that matter most to them," said Lauren. "For many, a future gift is a lasting expression of that commitment – a meaningful capstone to a lifetime of giving. We thank you for choosing the Foundation as your trusted partner in philanthropy."

Before acknowledging the new members of LCF's Legacy Society and Lincoln Benefactors, Tracy shared a transformational example of legacy giving that's beginning to take shape in the heart of downtown Lincoln.

"Donors John and Catherine Angle fulfilled a promise to make more possible in our community when they created the John & Catherine Angle Lincoln Public Library Fund in 2017 – an endowed gift intended to help build a future library," shared Tracy.

Catherine cared deeply about helping children learn, and that purpose became an important part of who she was. Soon, children who may never know her name will visit Lincoln's new Central Library and feel the impact of her kindness, her vision and the thoughtful gift she left for their future.

"I keep coming back to the quiet power of legacy," said Tracy. "A single act of generosity, made with intention, can ripple forward for generations."

LEGACY SOCIETY

As you develop your estate plans, remembering your favorite organizations and community can leave a lasting philanthropic footprint.

There are several ways to make a future gift through LCF, whether it's to benefit an organization, an area of interest or the community as a whole. You can include LCF in your will or trust, or you can name LCF as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, retirement or other accounts.

After you work with your attorney or financial advisor to create your gift, we can help you customize your specific instructions in a fund agreement that can be changed at any time.

LCF has created the Legacy Society to honor our donors who have made a gift through their estate or beneficiary designations.

LINCOLN BENEFACTORS

The support of our benefactors strengthens and fortifies the Foundation by providing long-term stability for our organization and significant benefits to local nonprofits. In recognition of their gift, a benefactor's name is etched on the glass display located in the foyer of our building – a testament to their timeless generosity.

With a current or a planned estate gift, you can become a Lincoln Benefactor three ways:

- Gifts of **$50,000 or more from an individual** or **$100,000 or more from a couple** to LCF's operating endowment.
- Gifts of **$500,000** or more to any endowed fund at LCF.

Please join us in applauding the new members of our Legacy Society and Lincoln Benefactors:

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY

Robert C. Hillestad
Scott McDonald & Nancy Petitto
Donna Neal*
The Katie Nissen Family
Eric M. Moellering
Glenda Dietrich Moore
Todd & Shelley Reimers
Lucas Sabalka & Stacie Kotschwar
Patricia Spitzer & Samuel Welsch*
Tom & Sue Tallman
Noel & Sue Timmons
Dr. Annette M. Wiechert
The Wirtz Family
Four anonymous donors

LINCOLN BENEFACTORS

Tom & Sue Tallman

Ready to create your meaningful legacy through expert stewardship? Contact Susan Crotteau at 402-474-2345 or susanc@lcf.org.





Imagine the Future

LCF's Philanthropy Services Team helps bring your charitable goals to life

Year-end is getting closer, which means opportunities for charitable giving are likely showing up more often in your inbox, your mailbox and your conversations with tax and estate planning advisors. Our Philanthropy Services team is happy to help you cut through the noise with practical ideas for charitable giving.

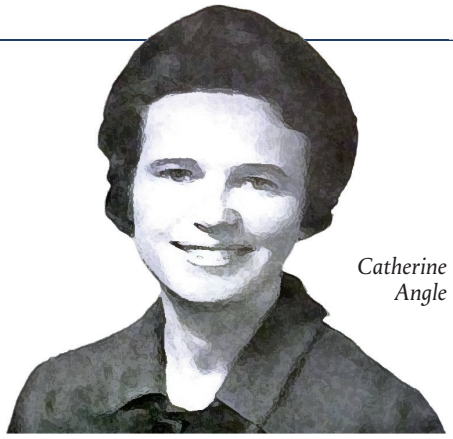
Here are a few giving strategies and tools that may be helpful to consider as 2026 winds down:

- A donor advised fund to organize annual giving to favorite nonprofits, including utilizing "bunching" techniques to front-load contributions and take advantage of itemizing charitable tax deductions.
- A designated fund to support a specific favorite charity or cause forever.
- A gift to LCF's unrestricted Lincoln Forever Fund so that critical issues can be addressed as our community needs change over time.
- If you are 70 ½ or older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a great way to transfer up to $111,000 (2026's per taxpayer limit) income-tax free to a qualified charity, including some types of funds at LCF.

Please reach out anytime to Rhonda Page, Senior Donor Engagement Manager, at **402-474-2345** or **rhondap@lcf.org**. Together, we can create a charitable plan that reflects your vision and your passions.

Possible Today

Legacy gifts support lifelong learning through Lincoln's Central Library Project



Catherine Angle

Catherine Sellers Angle was the consummate student of life.

A 16-year-old valedictorian at Lincoln High School, she went on to graduate Phi Beta Kappa from Smith College in 1946. Her commitment to education continued when she returned home to Lincoln, where she was the first woman elected to the Lincoln Public Schools Board of Education in 1967. The mother of two also served on boards for Head Start, the Child Guidance Center, the Lincoln City Libraries and Junior League. Much of her time and study focused on dyslexia.

That commitment to education led to the creation of the John & Catherine Angle Lincoln Public Library Fund through the Lincoln Community Foundation, an endowed gift that supports the creation of a new public library.

Both Catherine and her husband, John, an insurance executive, were committed to supporting the arts and humanities in the community. Catherine passed away in 2017, nine years after John. For nearly a decade after Catherine's death, the Foundation remained a faithful steward of their fund – which grew thanks to the power of endowed investment.

This year, LCF completed the Angle's visionary gift with a contribution to the new Central Library project.

In addition, the Foundation, on behalf of the Kenneth J. Good Fund, will grant an additional $250,000 to the new library project, to be paid over three years.

"That's the beauty of giving through a foundation," said Michelle Paulk, LCF's VP for Grantmaking and Operations. "Donors are able to support the community of the future – and the possibilities often extend beyond what they could have imagined in their lifetimes."

The new Central Library is an idea long in the making. After a 2003 study demonstrated that Bennett Martin had outgrown its space, the city spent the next two decades debating what would come next. Many envisioned moving the library to the former Pershing Auditorium, while others wanted to renovate Bennett Martin's current footprint.

Library Director Ryan Wieber said a fiscal study essentially ruled out renovation of the current site as well as using the Pershing footprint.

"It was going to be really expensive and would require a bond," he said. "But the study opened the



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>
> - Ryan Wieber, Library Director

door for us to look at other places downtown.”

Two months later, officials from Southeast Community College (SCC) reached out to the city about using the college’s space in the Centrum at 11th and O. Such a move would save the city about $20 million over the other options and came with an attached parking garage as a bonus.

The timing was ideal, and the city embraced the idea.

In May 2025, city and SCC officials announced the sale of the building for the creation of Lincoln’s new Central Library.



“I love seeing the excitement from residents,” said Ryan. “This public building project has resonated in a way I’ve never seen before.”

The 80,000 square-foot $60 million library has garnered great support from public and private entities. While 55 percent of the funds have come from public sources, private donations will complete the remaining portion of the price tag.

“Our residents, through private giving, are making this happen,” Ryan shared.

And Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries Executive Director Tiffani Childress thinks they are going to love what they see.

“The design will attract everybody,” she said. “It will be a multi-generational destination.”

Tiffani shared that the Library Foundation has already raised $23.7 million towards its $26.5 million Central Library Capital Campaign goal.

“There are so many people who have lived to see this built,” she said. “The sanctuary that this library will offer will be vital for our residents.”

Ryan is grateful for both foundations’ help in making this happen.

“Fundraising isn’t my line of work, and foundations do a great job of garnering community support,” he said.

Scheduled to open in 2028, the Central Library will be a gathering place for everyone. With a coffee shop, a makerspace area, flexible gathering spaces, a teaching kitchen and collaborations with other businesses, including KZUM radio, the Central Library will be a place to love, for all kinds of reasons.

“Many of us remember receiving our first library card at a young age – the joy we experienced as a new world opened to us,” said President Tracy Edgerton. “I look forward to the day when we witness that same joy at 11th and O. I hope folks will think of Catherine and John, Kenneth and the many other generous donors behind the project. It’s a true testament to the values of our community.”



From left to right, Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries Executive Director Tiffani Childress, Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird and Library Director Ryan Wieber.

Showing Up Is a Simple, Extraordinary Act

What if changing our city starts with joining one thing?

Inside the Sheldon Museum of Art's auditorium on August 25, animated electricity pulsed among attendees gathered for a screening of the documentary *Join or Die*.

The setting carried its own irony. In 1888, Sarah Moore and the Haydon Art Club held their first art exhibition in Lincoln at the local post office, charging 50 cents a head to view a single painting on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The demand was so overwhelming that extra train routes were added to transport crowds from across the state.

That single act of gathering became the foundation of the institution standing today, proving that when people assemble around a shared purpose, whole civic landscapes can shift. The museum auditorium provided the ideal backdrop for our collective conversation about community building, social cohesion and civic trust.

WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

The *Join or Die* documentary examines Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam's landmark book *Bowling Alone*, tracing the half-century collapse of American social infrastructure – from shrinking bowling leagues and declining service clubs to rising digital isolation. Yet Putnam's central thesis cuts through modern cynicism with disarming simplicity: ***What if our democracy's survival hinges not on grandiose political gestures, but on our willingness to join one thing?***



The film asserts that connection is not merely a social preference, but a vital foundation for individual health, civic resilience and public democracy.

"Residents and leaders all across Lincoln told us that they wanted to invest in the human infrastructure of our community – the social fabric that makes Lincoln a great place to live," said Amanda Barker, Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships at the Lincoln Community Foundation.

INVESTING IN LINCOLN'S HUMAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Launched in spring 2025, Prosper Lincoln 3.0 established three core pillars: Early Childhood, Housing, and Connections. While capital-intensive projects like Foxtail Meadows build physical shelter and Lincoln Littles expands early childhood education, Connections invests in the invisible scaffolding of civic trust.

As Amanda framed it, social connection is far more than a

warm, nice-to-have ideal. "We know that social isolation leads to worse health and economic outcomes," she noted, emphasizing that deep social ties directly yield better career opportunities, higher happiness scores and improved physical well-being.

That sense of urgency resonated throughout the auditorium. Krista Koch, Development and Fundraising Manager at Educare Lincoln, arrived hungry for "boots-on-the-ground advocacy," as she voiced a desire to move beyond passive support: "I want to see what people are doing right now... and what can I do as an advocate that's not just sitting on the sidelines."

Addressing the city's underlying social dynamics, Anh McClure, co-owner of the Nook at Escape Lincoln, pointed to how easily a community becomes fragmented. "People tend to operate in pockets," Anh observed, adding that genuine civic strength relies on bringing those isolated groups together: "The thing that I always want to see is the cohesion of those pockets... Coming to things that aren't your normal is how those pockets come together."

Organizers from Civic Nebraska echoed that Lincoln already enjoys a strong foundation of social connection, emphasizing how naturally the film's message fits the community.

"Lincoln has such a good culture of social connectedness that I think it is just a natural fit," noted Eric Reiter, Civic Action Community Organizer at Civic Nebraska. Lily Sughroue, Director of Civic Health Initiatives, added that the goal is to translate inspiration into simple action. "The next step that I hope people take is just reaching out to someone – that power of invitation."

WEAVING THE FABRIC OF BELONGING

To ground that philosophy in neighborhood life, LCF brought the national Weaver Awards – an initiative of the Aspen Institute – to Lincoln. The program awards 20 local "weavers" a $4,000 stipend to fund grassroots relationship-building, from pickup sports leagues and card games to neighborhood art and parenting groups. Over four years, $320,000 will directly capitalize 80 local connectors.

Yet as the documentary makes clear, rebuilding civic life requires no extraordinary heroism – just a willingness to move from passive goodwill to intentional presence.

"We're not necessarily asking every person to be a super citizen here," Amanda emphasized, offering a simple call to action. "Take a very ordinary step to gather people together around something you love."

That ordinary step is where abstract ideas turn into lived community. As one attendee reflected after the credits rolled, strengthening Lincoln's civic fabric often starts with the simple "power of invitation" – reaching out to someone new, opening a door or extending a welcome.



For residents wondering where to begin, the entry points are everywhere:

- **Volunteer:** Visit **volunteerlnk.org** and commit to supporting a local community project over the next six months.
- **Engage:** Attend a neighborhood association meeting or join a School Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNAC) supported by Lincoln Public Schools' Community Learning Centers.
- **Reach Out:** Introduce yourself to someone on your block or invite a colleague to join you at a local event.

By taking that small, intentional step to join in, Lincoln residents can ensure that no one in our community ever stands alone.

Every small action counts. Jump in and join us at ProsperLincoln.org.

That's what hope looks like

Recognizing radical generosity and service



On May 5, nearly 300 community members came together for LCF's Donor Recognition Celebration at Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center. The annual event provides an opportunity to recognize the many ways donor generosity is transformed into relief, innovation, hope and change.

The gathering also highlighted two remarkable examples of philanthropy and leadership through the Foundation's distinguished awards.

The Charity Award was created as a gift to the community to recognize individuals for their momentous philanthropy, and the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award was established in honor of JoAnn's legacy to recognize an individual or couple for exemplary servant leadership.

This year's awardees – the estate of Mark H. Tallman and Scott Young – demonstrate quiet, yet visionary commitment to community.

2026 Charity Award: Mark H. Tallman

For Mark Tallman, giving back was never about recognition. The intention behind his generosity was perhaps best captured in five simple words to a deserving nonprofit: "Keep up the good work."

Unassuming and without ego, Mark was a successful business owner with a unique sense of humor and a deep love for Lincoln. Following his graduation from Princeton University, Mark returned home and purchased a small computer company. He grew DATA SOURCE MEDIA from a basement operation into a nationally recognized company, earning a spot on the Inc. 500 list for three consecutive years.

When he retired in 2021, Mark began working with his estate planning attorney and was ready to have a broader conversation with the Lincoln Community Foundation about how to create a legacy plan that would incorporate philanthropy.

"Mark was always pro-Lincoln," said Tom Tallman, Mark's brother. "He wanted to leave his estate to charity to make it easier for these organizations to live out their mission and continue to do great work for the community."

On November 14, 2024, the extent of Mark's generosity came into view when seven organizations were named in his estate to receive approximately $90,000 a year over the next 10 years.



Tom and Sue Tallman accept the 2026 Charity Award on behalf of Mark H. Tallman.

The nearly $7 million legacy gift benefits Center for People, Food

Bank of Lincoln, Friendship Home of Lincoln, Lighthouse, Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach, People's City Mission and Lincoln Community Foundation in support of the Give to Lincoln Day Match Fund.

Through his term endowment, Mark's legacy has created a pipeline of critical support for our community.

"Every person who walks through our doors that feels seen and cared for – that's Mark's compassion coming through," said Alynn Sampson, Executive Director of Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach.

"I think that somehow, he knew these individuals needed to feel that. To me, that is what hope looks like, and that's how Mark lives on forever."

Scan the code to learn more about the impact of Mark's estate.

2026 JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award: Scott Young

If there were a hall of fame for showing up, Scott Young would have a place in it.

That's how longtime friends and colleagues describe Scott – someone who has spent decades lending his time, talents and leadership to countless organizations across Lincoln.

It was Scott's early career in broadcasting that brought him back home to Lincoln and ultimately to lead the Food Bank of Lincoln – shaping decades of hunger relief for our community.

From the time Scott joined the Food Bank through his retirement, the number of neighbors connected with meals grew twelvefold. He helped launch and expand programs including the Backpack Program and school food markets, while building partnerships that extended the Food Bank's reach throughout Lincoln and its rural service area.

"Thanks to Scott getting things started with the help of some great colleagues, we are in just about every school in Lincoln with some sort of a program right now, and he deserves a lot of credit for that," said John Mabry, Food Bank of Lincoln's Chief Relationship Officer.

But those who worked alongside Scott say his influence extended far beyond programs or numbers. He recognized talent, brought people together and then gave them room to grow.

Scott's commitment to community included other organizations as well. He served as chair of the Bryan Medical Center Board of Trustees during the onset of the pandemic and, following his retirement, stepped into interim leadership roles at Clinic with a Heart and Habitat for Humanity.

Throughout it all, Scott has rarely sought the spotlight. Instead, he simply shows up – offering his steady presence as someone who listens, challenges others to step forward and lends a hand wherever he can.

"To go from radio to the Food Bank and turn it into something that is bigger than ever imagined only happens because of people's willingness, desire and care," said Greg Yank, Food Bank of Lincoln former board member. "And I think that's at the core of Scott's person – it's in his DNA."



Scott Young poses with the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award.

Hear what others have to say about Scott's service by **scanning the code.**

Lincoln Community FOUNDATION

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Open Door Grants Build Belonging Across Lincoln

When neighbors connect, communities thrive. Guided by the Prosper Lincoln 3.0 vision, three recently awarded LCF Open Door Grants championed resident-led initiatives that strengthen social trust, celebrate local culture and foster genuine belonging across our city's neighborhoods.

September's third annual Porch Jam Festival puts that spirit of connection on full display. Supported by a $2,000 Open Door Grant to the Front Porch Foundation, the festival keeps community music accessible to everyone.

"Porch Jam provides a platform for neighbors to know neighbors," shared co-organizer Justina Clark. "Our primary goal is to share free music with the community so there is no financial barrier preventing anyone from enjoying the festival."

The walkable, free community music festival transformed residential front porches into vibrant stages for local bands, student performers and folk artists. Centered around historic Cooper Park, Lincoln's oldest public green space, Porch Jam celebrates neighborhood culture, showcases local music and builds meaningful relationships across generations.

Porch Jam exemplifies the core goals of Prosper Lincoln 3.0's Connections focus area, which emphasizes building social trust, civic engagement and neighborhood belonging. That same commitment to human connection extends across Lincoln through other Open Door Grant recipients.

The Nebraska Storytelling Festival received a $2,000 Open Door Grant to provide local residents an annual stage to share compelling personal narratives.



"We appreciate the grant from the Lincoln Community Foundation," said Randy Bretz, treasurer and co-founder of the Nebraska Storytelling Festival. "It's allowed us to keep the $10 ticket price and spread our wings a bit."

By bringing storytellers and audiences together to share laughter, tears and lived experiences, the festival builds intercultural and intergenerational empathy.

Meanwhile, a $10,000 Open Door Grant awarded to the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table supports year-round efforts to empower voters and strengthen community power. Through nonpartisan voter education, grassroots coalition-building and localized "Table Talks," the organization ensures underrepresented Lincolnites – including immigrant, refugee and low-income residents – have an active voice in shaping their city's future.

Behind these grassroots efforts, LCF's Open Door Grants provide flexible capital to support local nonprofit partners.

"At the Lincoln Community Foundation, we believe that strong communities start with strong connections," said Tracy Edgerton, LCF President. "These Open Door Grants aren't just about funding events – they're about investing in the relationships, neighborhood pride and shared experiences that make Lincoln a vibrant place for everyone."