

The Art of Giving: Supporting Creativity Through A Community Foundation ©

Written by HNW for Community Foundations of America , GivingNet

Orlee Howell of Jamestown, North Dakota has long had a love for the complex choral sound of church pipe organs. She repaired them herself as a young woman, and later she and her husband made their shared musical interest a hobby, seeking out and restoring the often-historic instruments.

When she decided to make pipe organs the focus of her charitable giving, she found she needed more than a love of the instruments to make it happen. "I knew I couldn't do this alone," she says. She found help at the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation, which helped her set up and administer The Howell Pipe Organ Fund dedicated to the restoration of the instruments in 1994.

Connecting Donors and Local Organizations

Community foundations are particularly well equipped to provide the guidance individuals need to realize a unique philanthropic dream, such as the establishment of an arts-related fund. With their vast knowledge of local resources and programs, community foundations provide a bridge between donors' favorite causes and the organizations that support them.

Consider the case of the Daniels family, which boasts three generations of journalists and writers. When the family wanted to honor the memory of writer and relative Elizabeth Daniels Squire, they turned to the North Carolina-based Triangle Community Foundation for advice. The Foundation introduced the Daniels family to the North Carolina Writer's Network, an organization dedicated to serving writers at every stage of development. The Writer's Network now offers the Elizabeth Daniels Squire Writers-In-Residence program, set to debut summer 2003 at Peace College, Squire's Alma Mater. The family decided to fund the program through their existing Josephus Daniels Charitable fund at the Triangle Community Foundation.

"We are thrilled to have backing from the Daniels' family fund to make this new writer's program happen, " says Carol Henderson, program coordinator for the North Carolina Writers Network. "Triangle knew the family and thought the Writers Network would be a good fit."

The Fargo-Moorhead Community Foundation has been able to make similar introductions for the Orlee Howell Pipe Organ fund. Since the fund sent out its first check, it has made eight grants to keep the unique music of pipe organs alive. "Word has spread across the state," says Jan Ulferts Stewart, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation. "It's a wonderful way that an individual has been able to share her passion for this beautiful music and keep the dollars local."

Staying Involved

The role of the community foundation extends beyond matchmaking. The Triangle Community

Foundation helped choose a site for the Writers-In-Residence program and is currently keeping the family members involved in the Josephus Daniels Charitable Fund apprised of the progress. "We in constant contact with family members to ensure that their intent is realized," says Beverly Francis, of the Triangle Community Foundation. "We know they want a quality program that honors Liz."

Community foundations also provide donors with administrative support. Despite serving as the business manager of her family farm, Orlee Howell felt ill equipped to handle the paperwork and financial management involved in grant making. While Howell remains closely involved in making grant decisions, Fargo-Moorhead stepped in to manage the grant proposals and help to grow the fund. This year it was able to give about \$15,000, compared with its first gift of \$300 in 1994.

By making connections, sharing in-depth knowledge, and providing administrative support to donors, community foundations are able to help make unique visions realities.