

# GROW

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Covering the first decade of Giving Resources to Our World.



Kansas Health Foundation

**“Tall oaks**



**from little acorns grow.”**

— David Everett



**It takes nurturing, time and resources to turn an acorn into a strong tree. But once it's grown, that tree can be a strong presence for generations.**

Ten years ago, community foundations across our state were just starting to sprout.

The Kansas Health Foundation saw great potential for them to thrive, and that's how the GROW (Giving Resources to Our World) Healthy Kansas Initiative was born.

In 2000, we invited 16 Kansas foundations to join this \$30 million, 10-year program. In this report, we're pleased to share how GROW foundations have now developed deep roots in their communities.



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## Our History

**In 1999, we designed the Giving Resources to Our World Healthy Kansas program to build and strengthen a select group of Kansas community foundations over a 10-year period. Our purpose was to create local philanthropic leadership and resources that would improve the health of Kansans over the long term. Today, we're proud to share this progress with you.**

## A goal and a plan gave birth to GROW

A decade ago, the Kansas Health Foundation created the Giving Resources to Our World (GROW) Healthy Kansas Initiative to build and strengthen community foundations across the state. We believe that in the process of meeting needs in their communities, these foundations can help further our goal of making every community in the state healthier.

The Kansas Health Foundation committed to invest more than \$30 million in matching funds, training and other resources into GROW to help Kansas community foundations. In Fall 2000, we launched

this program that wound up exceeding our expectations in building lasting assets benefiting many areas of our state.

At the beginning, our Foundation invited 16 communities to join GROW Healthy Kansas. With financial and technical assistance from the Kansas Health Foundation, each foundation established a local office. Over the course of the GROW program, participating foundations set a series of fund-raising goals for operations and endowments that we agreed to match. The Kansas Health Foundation also provided each of the GROW foundations with

permanent assets that support local programs to benefit children's health. We gave these foundations money to re-grant into their communities for projects that would strengthen local nonprofits.

The intensive technical help we provided proved to be a key element of the program's success. Our Foundation hired outside experts to support these community foundations with weekly phone calls, monthly on-site visits and quarterly training sessions. In addition to purchasing computers for GROW participants, we also gave them grant tracking software to help make awarding and administering grants simpler, faster and more uniform.

Ten of the original 16 GROW foundations participated in every step of this program. For a variety of reasons, six of the GROW foundations did not complete the entire program. One foundation left the program and later rejoined GROW. Another foundation was invited to participate in GROW after the initiative had already started. Currently, we have 12 foundations that are a part of GROW.

But the successes that all of the GROW foundations have achieved during the past decade ensure that the Kansas Health Foundation's investment will continue to show a return for generations to come.

## Partnerships, model program were keys to GROW's success

We had high hopes for GROW from the start, but we didn't launch it with just a dream.

GROW was inspired by work that the Lilly Endowment was doing to fortify community foundations in Indiana. We saw the Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) Initiative helping Indiana foundations to make positive changes, and we hoped to bring some of that success to Kansas.

Before GROW, we were working with communities across the state to help them further develop the skills of local leaders through our Kansas Community Leadership Initiative, which taught communication and collaboration. The Kansas Health Foundation developed deep relationships with these communities, and towns participating in KCLI were creating a new, broader group of people who could serve and lead.

Because these KCLI communities had already boosted their capacity to lead, it made sense to invite them to be the pioneers in our GROW program. We believed that with GROW's additional resources, these communities could significantly advance their efforts to make their towns stronger, and they've proved us right every step of the way.

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## The goals of GROW

When the Kansas Health Foundation designed GROW, we set the following parameters for the program because we believed these goals would best help GROW foundations realize their potential to improve the health and well-being of their communities.

### To increase philanthropy in Kansas

When we began working with the GROW foundations, they had total assets of just more than \$19 million. At the end of 2009, they had increased those assets to almost \$95 million and they had awarded more than \$33 million in grants over the past decade. Most of this progress is a direct result of GROW, according to an independent evaluation of the program. Furthermore, these foundations now have the tools to continue to thrive, to make grants for important local projects and to be a longstanding voice for philanthropy.

### To improve the health of Kansas children

GROW has put the framework in place for these community foundations to have a significant impact on children's health in the long run, but we knew that concrete evidence of this goal was unlikely to materialize in just 10 years. The endowments focused on children's health are starting to produce notable annual grants, and the GROW foundations are emerging as leaders in their communities. We intend to continue to provide support for projects across Kansas that aim to give children healthier lives.

### To develop a network of local partners

Another key aspect of GROW involved building partnerships with community foundations that can participate in future Kansas Health Foundation initiatives. This goal has clearly been achieved. The GROW foundations have flourished in their relationships with us, and we are all enthusiastic about additional opportunities to work together.



# GROWTH

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## Leveraging Statistics

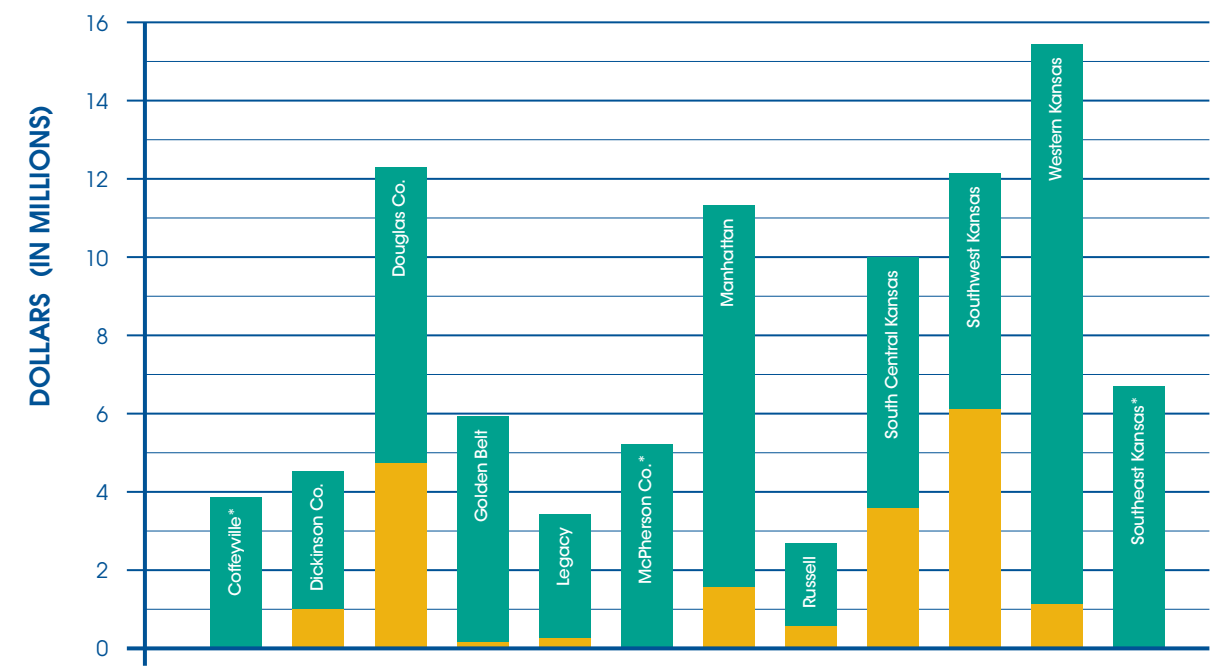
**Don't worry – you're not about to be bored by a decade's worth of facts, figures and pie charts. But we do want to give you just enough math to demonstrate how the GROW participants' dramatic successes year after year for the past decade have planted the seeds for improvements across the state of Kansas that will stand the test of time.**

## GROW foundations build assets over time

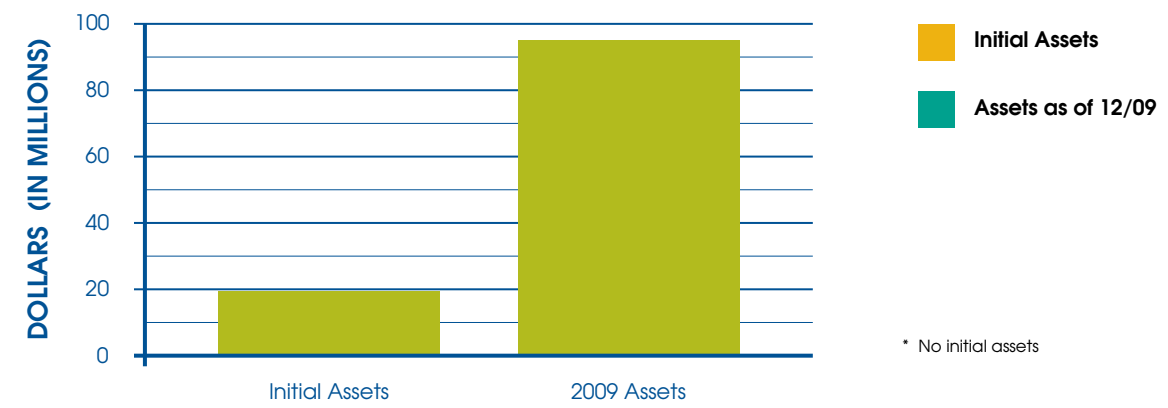
Through every phase of the GROW program, each community foundation had opportunities to receive matching grants from the Kansas Health Foundation, set some fundraising goals and get expert advice on managing their investments. All of these foundations told us that at some points, they had to overcome big challenges to reach their funding goals, but people in these communities banded together to succeed. They have all had different results, but every GROW foundation has built millions of dollars in assets that will give their communities a brighter future. GROW foundations weren't immune to the nation's economic downturn, but their investments are bouncing back, and we're confident that these foundations will continue to prosper. Below you'll find the statistics for current GROW foundations.

FOUNDATION	INITIAL ASSETS	ASSETS 12/09
Coffeyville	\$ 0	3,918,484
Dickinson County	1,052,159	4,600,000
Douglas County	4,801,669	12,242,907
Golden Belt	11,685	5,994,455
Legacy	23,091	3,561,465
McPherson County	0	6,123,554
Manhattan	1,602,340	11,339,960
Russell Area	563,545	2,703,792
South Central Kansas	3,756,357	10,042,269
Southwest Kansas	6,134,045	12,210,268
Western Kansas	1,100,000	15,437,798
Southeast Kansas	0	6,700,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 19,044,891</b>	<b>94,874,952</b>

Foundation Assets



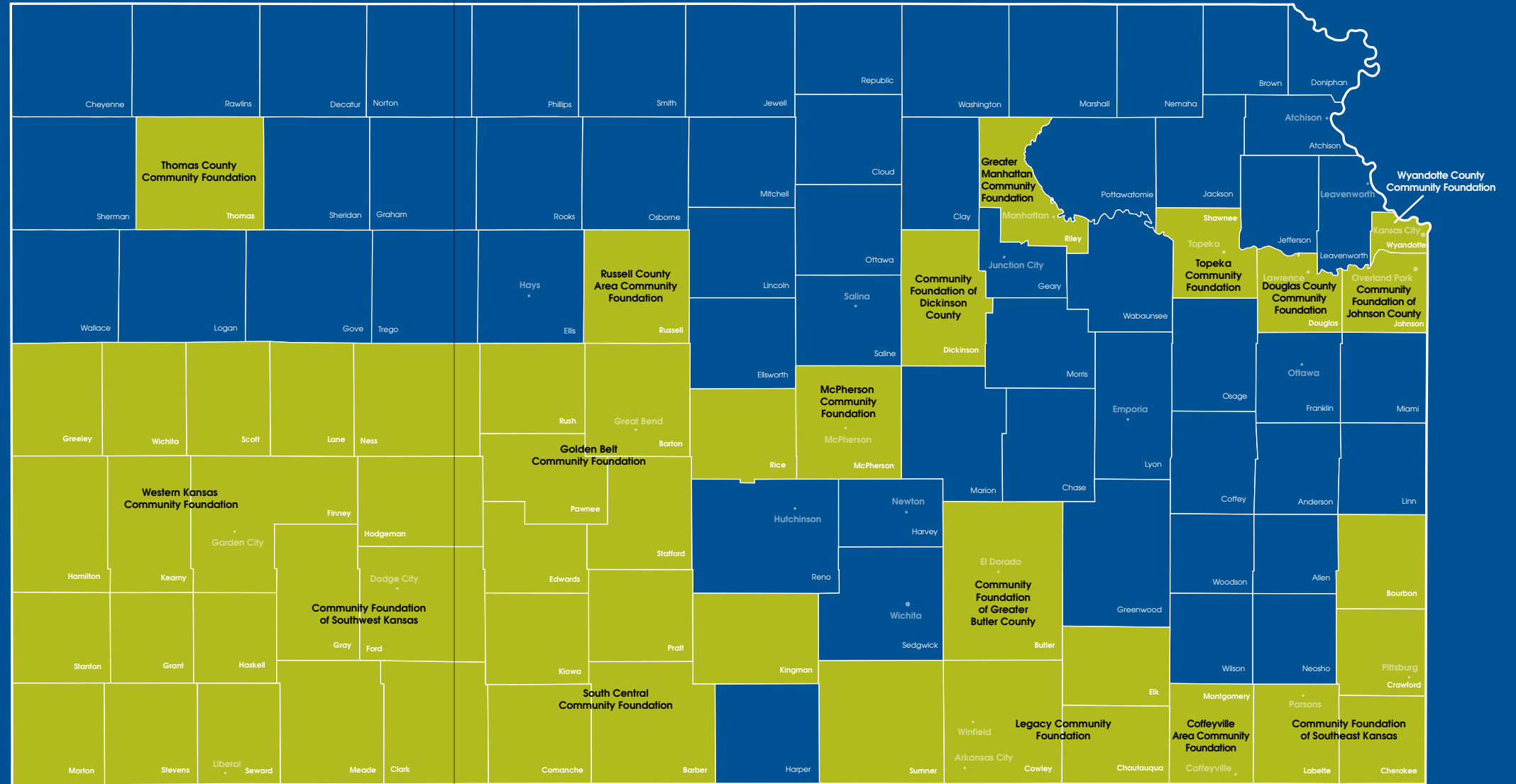
Combined Total Assets



# GROW reaches across Kansas

Almost half of the counties in Kansas – 49 to be exact – were served by community foundations that have participated in the first decade of GROW. As the Kansas Health Foundation begins our second phase of the program, we’re excited to extend GROW’s reach to many more areas of our state.

Many foundations focus on just one county while others choose to help a larger area of the state. All of the counties in green represent an area of the state that has been served by at least one GROW community foundation.





# ROOTS

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## Community Foundation Stories

When we asked each GROW community foundation to tell its success stories, we soon realized that we didn't have nearly enough paper to report on all of the triumphs. They have all responded to crises and met a wide range of needs. So here's just a sample of the inspiring ways that people and places in Kansas have been supported and enriched by GROW.

## GROW helps western Kansas take the lead

The Western Kansas Community Foundation knows that leadership is an important ingredient in the recipe for a healthy community. One of this foundation's funds has significantly expanded Leadership Garden City, a program that has helped hundreds of local businesses, nonprofits and families.

Through GROW matching challenges, the foundation has been able to increase its scope of influence.

The local leadership program used to involve taking tours of businesses and visiting the state Capitol. "But that's not leadership," says Carol Meyer, one of the first facilitators of Leadership Garden City. "We weren't seeing them make a difference in our community."

The revised program was modeled after methods taught by the Kansas Community Leadership Initiative. "We call it Every Voice because every voice matters and here are skills so you can be that voice,"

Meyer says. About 60 area residents take this training every year.

"We see leadership graduates on almost every board in Garden City, and they're taking those leadership skills and transferring them into benefit for our county," foundation program officer Troy Unruh says.

At the same time that Leadership Garden City was bearing fruit, GROW helped the foundation's assets blossom. The Western Kansas Community Foundation was created in 1996 with a \$500,000 endowment, and its asset base has now grown to more than \$16 million.

Over the past 10 years, this foundation has made amazing progress in the 15-county area it serves.

"We have involved the community in many different opportunities to bring positive change," says foundation executive director Shea Sinclair. "Our gratitude to the Kansas Health Foundation for this growth opportunity will show in how we continually strive to bring positive outcomes to western Kansas."



## Leadership Garden City

Melissa Gallegos, Troy Unruh, Shea Sinclair, Shonda Collins and Carol Meyer

## Women’s fund quickly earns its wings

Most people think Fairy Godmothers only exist in children’s stories. But hundreds of Fairy Godmothers live in Manhattan, and they help grant wishes that improve women’s lives.

When five women wanted to create a philanthropy fund for the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation in 2006, their first event raised \$10,000 in two hours. Today, the Fairy Godmothers Fund contains \$180,000.

“We were blown away by the response,” says Lucy Williams, a founder of the fund.

Money from the Fairy Godmothers Fund helps dozens of women each year to pay for needs including car repairs, medical care and tuition. The grants, which average about \$300 each, go straight to the vendors providing services.

Grantees are asked to continue the cycle of generosity by helping someone else someday.

This story is happy, yet there’s no ending in sight. The Fairy Godmothers Fund keeps building a legacy with the potential to benefit Manhattan forever.

## Fairy Godmothers

Lee Taylor, Sue Maes, Polly Stoecklein



## Manhattan’s Fairy Godmothers help a family get moving

Holding baby Ayona on her lap, Sarah Sessin watches her sons, 3-year-old Cedric and 2-year-old Adrian, chase each other at a Manhattan park.

Nearby, several Fairy Godmothers are keeping a respectful distance as Sessin tells her story. They know one of their grants helped this young family, but the details are a mystery to these benefactors because Fairy Godmothers never meet their grantees.

The 22-year-old woman had lacked a stable place to call home for four years when she decided to seek help at a shelter in 2009. Public

transportation in Manhattan is spotty, but Sessin couldn’t afford the expenses for the car she needed to go to work.

Then the Fairy Godmothers stepped in. After Sessin applied for a grant, they paid for her car tags and six months of insurance. The aid allowed Sessin to start working at Sonic. Today, she is studying business courses online.

Sessin feels grateful to her Fairy Godmothers. “A car is a must-have with kids and to be able to maintain a job,” she says.

Later, when they’re told how they made a difference for Sessin and her kids, the Fairy Godmothers are all smiles. “I’m so glad we were able to help them,” one says. “That’s just wonderful.”

## Dog Days make Lawrence fit and happy

Calls of “Five! Six! Seven!” echo in Allen Field House as about 75 people count jumping jacks. Exercisers of all ages huff and puff through this 6 a.m. “Red Dog Days” workout, a longtime local tradition.

Those who complete 25 workouts earn a coveted Red Dog Days T-shirt. That’s no easy feat when Don “Red Dog” Gardner tells everyone to run five laps – and take the stairs while they’re at it. He’s tough, but he treats the group like an extended family. Members attend each other’s weddings and some meet for coffee on a regular basis. Many say Dog Days changed their lives.

“I’ve spent money before at health clubs, but I’ve never had the support that I do here,” Nancy O’Connor says. “(Red Dog) just builds community.”

Last July, the Douglas County Community Foundation teamed up with Red Dog to host the world’s largest community workout. Workouts like these may be coming to a city near you. A group in Hutchinson recently asked Red Dog to show them the ropes.

“We’ll be out there making those people suffer,” he says with a grin.

“Hutchinson asked us to show them how to do Red Dog Days. We’ll be out there making those people suffer.”

**Don “Red Dog” Gardner**  
*Red Dog Days*



## Douglas County foundation helps put people on a healthy path

The Douglas County Community Foundation often takes the lead in grassroots efforts to make Kansas a more active state for the long run.

The foundation funded an initiative called LiveWell Lawrence to boost physical activity and good nutrition.

Its director, Chip Blaser, sets a strong example. At a recent Red Dog Days workout, there he was,

bright and early, ready to break a sweat with the rest of the crowd.

“Our community has made physical activity and health a priority through actions,” he says.

Blaser credits GROW with helping Douglas County gain ground toward better health.

“Without GROW, we simply wouldn’t be in a position to take a leadership role on this issue and others.”

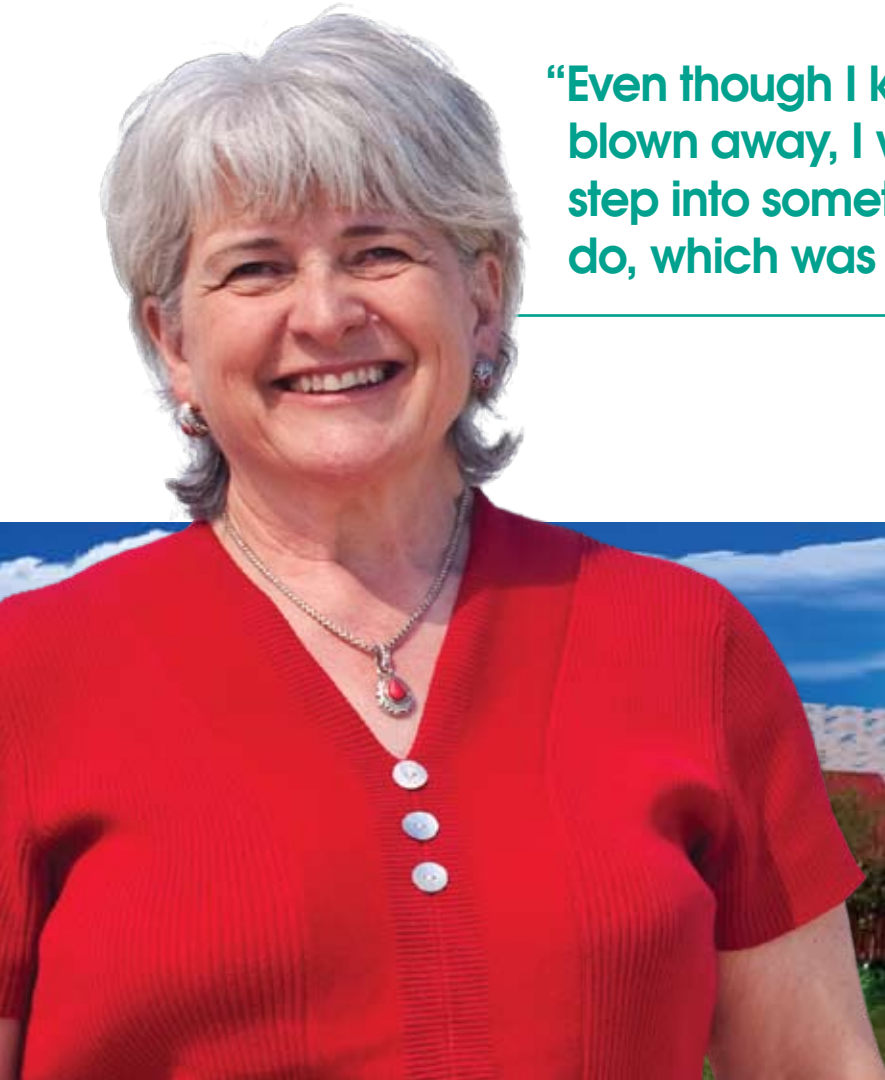
## Foundation helps Greensburg recover

Moments after a deadly tornado barreled through Greensburg three years ago, a harsh reality began to dawn on Mitzi Hesser, Kiowa County Director of Public Health. Her town was gone.

"I knew that we were charged with the mental, physical and spiritual health of the people," she says. "I stepped into a mode outside of myself, setting up my health department in my front yard."

**"Even though I knew that my house had blown away, I was able to immediately step into something that I knew how to do, which was take care of people."**

**Mitzi Hesser, Director of Public Health**  
*Kiowa County*



The tornado left so much debris behind that vehicles couldn't drive into town yet, so Hesser sent teams with grocery carts to walk the streets and hand out sunscreen, masks, water and Tylenol.

At the same time, another challenge was growing. People around the world had heard about Greensburg's fate, and donations started to pour into the area. "It was just mind-boggling how many people wanted to hand you money," Hesser says.

That's when the South Central Community Foundation quickly set up the Greensburg Future Fund to provide a home for donations. As of October 2009,

**"Without the foundation already being here, with all the funds that came in, it just would have been chaos."**

it has provided Greensburg with more than \$1.14 million in grants.

"I know without a doubt that without the foundation already being here, with all the funds that came in, it just would have been chaos," Hesser says. "We were faced with making \$1 million decisions and it just was overwhelming. The foundation gave us some really solid tools so we were able to use the monies we got in the most effective way."

**“I believe it made our organization stronger to work together for each of these challenges.”**

**Janie DeVore Gillis, Executive Director**  
*Coffeyville Area Community Foundation*

## Flood tests Coffeyville's foundation

When the GROW program helped start the Coffeyville Area Community Foundation in 2001, no one could have foreseen the struggles that the town would face over the next decade.

The foundation gained strength in its first few years by exceeding fund-raising goals, selecting skilled and dedicated leaders, broadening its donor base and forming partnerships with other foundations and nonprofits.

It was in place and ready to meet the community's needs when a 500-year flood and oil spill wiped out hundreds of businesses and homes in 2007, destroying one-third of the city's tax base.

“Within hours, our community was forever changed,” says Janie DeVore Gillis, the executive director of the foundation who lost her own home in the flood. “People were not allowed to re-enter their contaminated homes. The entire community was without water. Immediately, funds were coming in to the community foundation from all over the

United States. The experience affirmed our ability to step up to the plate in a community leadership position.”

For the past two years, the nation's struggling economy made fund-raising a real challenge for the foundation, but the board and staff members rolled up their sleeves and met the requirements for each phase of GROW. “I believe it made our organization stronger to work together for each of these challenges,” Gillis says.

The foundation's asset base has grown to nearly \$4 million, and over 10 years, it has given almost \$700,000 in grants to the region.

**Within hours, our community was forever changed. The experience affirmed our ability to step up to the plate.**

“We truly appreciate the opportunity the Kansas Health Foundation provided to our community through the GROW I program,” Gillis says. “We remain involved and poised to respond to needs in the community.”

# FLOURISH

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## The Future

We know that we have a good thing going with GROW. So as this program begins its second decade, we've dialed up the intensity and we're determined to break new ground and continue to spread the benefits of strong community foundations to many more areas of our state. We're privileged to keep funding this initiative that holds so much promise for Kansas.

## A new chapter opens

After 10 years of success with the GROW Healthy Kansas program, the Kansas Health Foundation is deepening our commitment to forming a network of local community foundations that are dedicated to improving the health of the people they serve.

We're delighted to assist the development and prosperity of Kansas community foundations, and

our work with the original GROW participants has helped us shape the second chapter of this program. By investing an additional \$30 million in GROW II, we are continuing the program's momentum. We intend to help even more community foundations build permanent resources that will measurably improve the health of local residents.

Our second main goal for GROW II is to foster collaboration and alliances among community foundations to ensure a well-managed and self-sufficient community foundation field in our state. As a part of this effort, we are providing funds and technical assistance to the Kansas Association of Community Foundations so that an infrastructure is in place to offer long-term support to community foundations statewide.

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With GROW II, we intend to help even more community foundations build permanent resources that will measurably improve the health of local residents.

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## Why is this so important?

Sometimes people wonder why the Kansas Health Foundation focuses a portion of our resources on community foundations. There are three main reasons why we feel this funding is crucial for Kansas and the health of its residents.

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**1** We believe that strong communities are healthier communities. They have the resources to quickly deal with local concerns that affect their residents' quality of life, but their plans also look down the road so that future generations will be able to lead happy and healthy lives there. They bring people together to tackle problems or make improvements as a team. Strong communities care about what's best for everyone and take a wide range of needs and opinions into account. Community foundations give residents opportunities to make a lasting difference by contributing time and/or money to the towns that they're proud to call home.

**2** Many of the grants awarded by community foundations benefit health-related projects. Some help hospitals, medical clinics and mental health facilities. Others come to the aid of the hungry, the elderly or children with special needs. Many community foundations support efforts to encourage more physical activity. They fund blood drives, health fairs, drug education programs and advocacy for abused children. As individual gifts and resources are pooled together and invested, they become a powerful force for good now and in the future.

**3** GROW II is important for the financial health of our state by providing more Kansans opportunities to make donations that will help their hometowns in the long run. According to a Wichita State University study, a huge amount of money will be transferred from one generation to the next. There's great potential for some of that wealth to go to community foundations through estate planning. On the other hand, if we don't do something, there is potential that all of that money will leave Kansas because so many younger people who grew up here are now living in other states. See this study at [www.kansascfs.org/tow](http://www.kansascfs.org/tow).



Helping Kansas become a healthier place to live requires strong partnerships with many agencies and organizations across the state. Without our partners and grantees, we could not accomplish our goals. Working with community foundations statewide helps us create future partnerships with groups that aim to improve our state's health.

The first 10 years of GROW helped give Kansas foundations the tools and resources to plant and nurture healthy changes in their communities. Many of those efforts are already sprouting positive results, and we can hardly wait to see the harvest that comes from GROW II.

## Find out more

To find out how your community foundation could be a part of GROW II, please visit [www.khf.org/grow/grow.html](http://www.khf.org/grow/grow.html).

## Get involved

Here's a list of contact information if you're interested in learning more about a past or current GROW foundation's goals, grants and projects in your area.

Coffeyville Area Community Foundation  
(620) 251-4769  
[coffeyvillefoundation.org](http://coffeyvillefoundation.org)

Greater Manhattan Community Foundation  
(785) 587-8995  
[mcfks.org](http://mcfks.org)

Community Foundation of Dickinson County  
(785) 263-1863  
[communityfoundation.us](http://communityfoundation.us)

McPherson Community Foundation  
(620) 245-9070  
[mcphersonfoundation.org](http://mcphersonfoundation.org)

Community Foundation of Greater Butler County  
(316) 733-0230  
[communityfoundationgbc.org](http://communityfoundationgbc.org)

Russell County Area Community Foundation  
(785) 445-3611  
[www.rcacf.net](http://www.rcacf.net)

Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas  
(620) 231-8897  
[southeastkansas.org](http://southeastkansas.org)

South Central Community Foundation  
(620) 672-7929  
[southcentralcommunityfoundation.com](http://southcentralcommunityfoundation.com)

Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas  
(620) 225-0959  
[communityfoundationswks.com](http://communityfoundationswks.com)

Thomas County Community Foundation  
(785) 460-9152  
[thomascountycommunityfoundation.com](http://thomascountycommunityfoundation.com)

Douglas County Community Foundation  
(785) 843-8727  
[dccfoundation.org](http://dccfoundation.org)

Topeka Community Foundation  
(785) 272-4804  
[topekacommunityfoundation.org](http://topekacommunityfoundation.org)

Golden Belt Community Foundation  
(620) 792-3000  
[goldenbeltcf.org](http://goldenbeltcf.org)

Western Kansas Community Foundation  
(620) 271-9484  
[wkcf.org](http://wkcf.org)

Community Foundation of Johnson County  
(913) 451-7171  
[gkccf.org/about.aspx?id=384](http://gkccf.org/about.aspx?id=384)

Wyandotte County Community Foundation  
(913) 371-7174  
[gkccf.org/about.aspx?id=388](http://gkccf.org/about.aspx?id=388)

Legacy Community Foundation  
(620) 221-7224  
[legacyregionalfoundation.org](http://legacyregionalfoundation.org)



We've always believed that GROW would create meaningful changes, but until we recently crunched a decade's worth of numbers, it was hard to pinpoint just how constructive this project has been for Kansas.

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It's awe-inspiring to see that our initial \$30 million investment has afforded GROW foundations the ability to give back more than \$33 million to their communities so far, and they have a long and prosperous road ahead. We hope that everyone involved in GROW will truly take pride in this legacy.

**“A man does not plant a tree for himself,  
he plants it for posterity.”**

— Alexander Smith



**Kansas Health Foundation**

Dedicated to Improving the Health of All Kansans

309 East Douglas • Wichita, KS 67202-3405

316-262-7676 • 800-373-7681 • [kansashealth.org](http://kansashealth.org)