

A close-up photograph of a bright yellow sunflower head against a blue sky with light clouds. An orange triangle is in the top-left corner.

GROW



KANSAS HEALTH
FOUNDATION

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TIME HAS BEEN TAKEN TO SOW SEEDS OF GENEROSITY AND GIVING.

There is an optimism with Kansans.

When things get tough, we get tougher. We do it with a sense of hope.

Kansas has changed rapidly in the past few decades.

Different demographics. Different problems. Different people being in charge.

We are a land of extremes.

Seventy percent of Kansans now live in metropolitan areas.

Some rural counties are classified as frontier counties. In Smith County, almost 90 percent of the 3,331 residents are 65 years or older.

In the 83,000 square miles of Kansas, some of us struggle with a disappearing water aquifer and a 30-minute drive or more to buy a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread. We struggle with almost non-existent services, especially when it comes to internet services and cell phone ranges.

At the same time, others of us are on the cutting edge of technology and services. The world is literally at our fingertips. We have our favorite neighborhood Thai restaurants, coffee shops and natural foods grocery stores; even our favorite hiking trails and gyms.

The changing dynamics create disconnects, particularly among those who grow up in deeply urban spaces and their extended rural family members.

It creates a detachment politically, socially and even economically.

So, what does the future Kansas look like? What can we hope for it to look like?

We get glimpses of a bright future through the work of local and regional community foundations. Today, these community foundations are setting the stage for a state growing toward a healthier, more diverse and more prosperous tomorrow. Small community foundations are growing in assets. More grants are taking place. More needs are being met.

But, how did we, as a state, reach this point?

While many factors, such as dedicated individuals, generous communities, clear planning and visioning, have played a role, a defining turning point in the effort to build



philanthropic assets in Kansas came in the late 1990s, as the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) began looking for ways to keep local resources local.

This led to the 1999 launch of the Giving Resources to Our World (GROW) community foundation initiative. With a 10-year, \$30 million commitment, KHF worked with a group of community foundations to establish matching challenges and to grow assets, create special health and wellness funds and become trained in philanthropic leadership.

Funding allowed these community foundations to make grants locally for children's health, to purchase technology and software to help administer the grants, and to provide technical assistance to help with foundation operations.

The effort quickly produced fruit, as at the end of 10 years, the initial community foundations involved in the GROW initiative had grown their collective assets from a starting point of \$19 million to more than \$95 million. Most importantly of all, these organizations distributed \$33 million in grants back into their communities.

This success led to another 10-year, \$30 million KHF commitment, this time working with 39 community foundations to create a self-sufficient foundation field in Kansas supporting collaboration and idea-sharing, as well as preparing these foundations for the complexities and challenges awaiting a changing Kansas.

During this second phase, participating community foundations have,

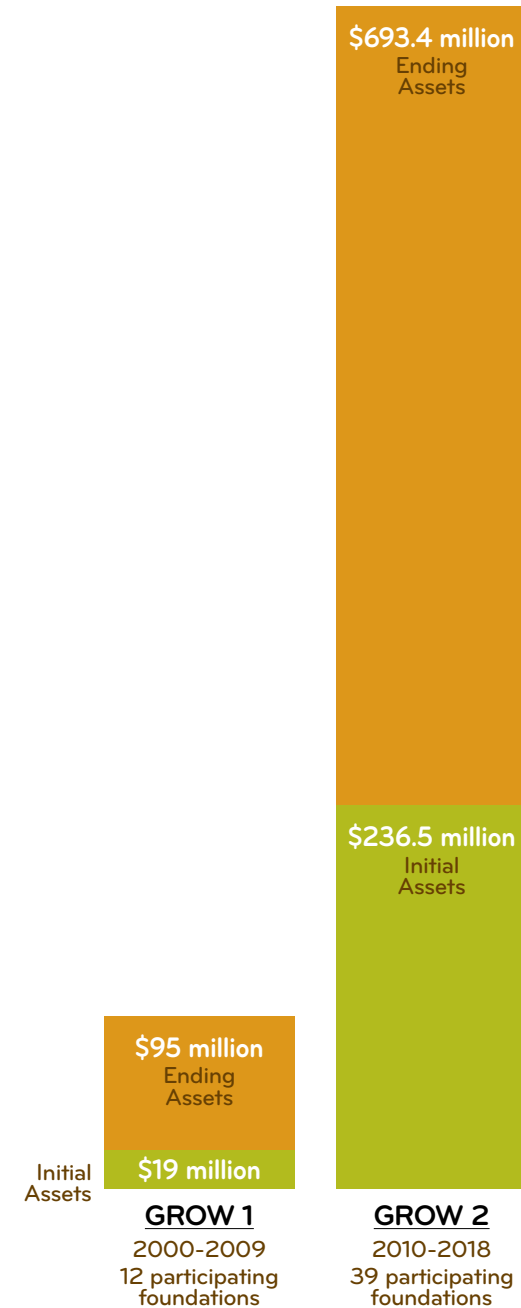
- Increased the number of size of their endowed funds
- Engaged in more strategic, community-based grantmaking
- Hired additional professional staff and presented a trusted, professional image to their communities
- Inspired new donors and spurred more people to think about giving.

Most importantly, none of this could have been accomplished without the people of Kansas.

During the past two decades, KHF has watched as GROW funds acted like booster shots – helping foundations grow their assets and turn some of that money into healthy options for local residents.

And that's when and where jaw-dropping results truly began to happen.

Hutchinson is building housing for moderate-income families; Emporia's Kent Schnakenberg is traveling the nation educating people about Type 1 diabetes and Manhattan is offering discounts to senior citizens who shop at the local farmer's market.



In Dodge City, a 13-year-old girl is baking cookies to help raise money to buy coats and supplies for less fortunate school children.

Meanwhile, throughout the state longtime families are leaving trusts at local foundations. Kansans – both rural and urban – are doing their best to give back.

At times, some of us may feel a bit overwhelmed with these changing dynamics. But, with the help of the community foundation field in Kansas, the challenges and difficulties Kansans may face in the years and decades to come should be all the more manageable.

Time has been taken to sow seeds of generosity and giving.

For us, it's simply harvest time.

We're Kansans.

And, there are plenty of reasons to hope.

■ **While 39 foundations participated in the final phases of GROW, this publication reflects 38 stories. The Community Foundation of Greater Butler County was merged with the story for the Central Kansas Community Foundation.*

■ *** "Total Assets when joining GROW" refers to the assets maintained for the fiscal year immediately before the foundation became a GROW community. These numbers were collected from the "2016 Tracking GROW II Metrics Survey."*

■ **** "Total Assets Today" refers to the asset level reported on the "2018 Tracking GROW II Metrics Survey." This survey was conducted in early 2018, meaning these numbers are likely lower than the current asset levels for multiple foundations.*



BUHLER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For a young foundation, the one in Buhler is going gangbusters.

In nine years, the foundation has grown to \$1.2 million in assets. Town leaders say they have the Kansas Health Foundation to thank for that.

“The GROW II Initiative, I can’t imagine our community foundation without having had that,” said Lindsey Fields, the foundation’s coordinator. “It really provided a lot of our focus and motivation. It was a great way for us to really grow funds in a quick and effective way.”

Buhler is a community of 1,300 residents, nestled in Reno County.

Last year, was the first time the foundation was able to award more than \$10,000 in grant money.

“It was a pretty big deal,” Fields said.

Money has gone toward installing trail marker signs, bike racks and pet-way stations along the town’s hiking trail.

“That was so all our residents and the many guests we have in our community – because we have this fantastic baseball and softball complex – will be able to enjoy our park even more,” Fields said.

The foundation has also held organizational endowments for the Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community and Buhler USD 313. There are grants for classrooms projects; and, a Blessings Box to provide things for students in need. A new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) room was funded for one of the schools, Fields said.

And, it provided a TV in the town’s wellness center, so users could stream exercise videos as they workout.

“We are a lucky community. We have a vibrant downtown,” Fields said. “We work well together – we see purpose and common need – and I think that’s evident in our effort to raise this money.”

Where Based: **Town of Buhler, Reno County**

Counties Served: **Only serves community of Buhler**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$391,520****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,146,734*****



CENTRAL KANSAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The small towns and rural areas that fall under the umbrella of the Central Kansas Community Foundation provide a historically rich legacy of helping neighbors in need.

The foundation supports all facets of life that have helped make the region rich.

Health Ministries Inc. serves uninsured residents in the area and has opened the Halstead Clinic. Funds from the community foundation help support general health services, including dental care, said Angie Tatro, executive director of the Central Kansas Community Foundation.

Hillsboro uses income from the Marga Ebel fund to provide dental exams for every child entering the school system. And, money from the Kansas Health Foundation was used to buy a computer timer for their swim team so the school can now host meets with teams from several towns.

In Peabody, community health funds helped pay for EMT training when no one else would or could.

In Goessel, schoolchildren have planted and work in a garden where produce goes to the school to help feed students.

“We are a resource for donors and we are here to build stronger communities with donor funds,” Tatro said. “We are here to strengthen charitable components.”

The Central Kansas Community Foundation has six GROW matching funds.

“We are serving the rural of the rural of central Kansas,” Tatro said. “Your donor pool is smaller by nature because there is a smaller population.”

Where Based: **Newton**

Counties Served: **Harvey, Butler and Marion**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$8,557,000****

Total Assets Today: **\$22,309,267*****

COFFEYVILLE AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The numbers are what stick out to Janie DeVore Gillis.

Montgomery County is one of the lowest-ranking Kansas counties in terms of health. Its county health ranking is 101 out of 105 counties.

And, at one time, 78 percent of Coffeyville's children were labeled at-risk.

The good news is how DeVore Gillis and the Coffeyville Area Community Foundation are tackling the odds.

"The community donors are extremely generous," said DeVore Gillis, the foundation's executive director. "The need is extremely high. So, one of our roles has become connecting donors with the needs in the community.

"In Montgomery County, where Coffeyville is located, the poverty rate is 24.81 percent, and almost two-thirds of the children qualify for free or reduced lunch," according to the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

What is helping turn the numbers, DeVore Gillis said, has been two things: a sizeable donation from a Wichita donor that helped build a \$1.6 million community-wide early learning center and GROW II funds from the Kansas Health Foundation.

The Coffeyville Area Community Foundation has worked with awarding grants to improve mental health and serve single pregnant women in the county.

"The community has really come together to help those who need help," she said.

The area has a strong work force – with a refinery, two foundries, a pipe company and Coffeyville Works, which makes transmissions. It has a regional hospital and community college.

But everything comes back to the numbers, she said.

GROW II funds helped the local community foundation grow its assets.

"Because of the GROW II initiative, we were able to grow those endowed dollars across the board for our community," DeVore Gillis said. "We will sustain those funds and be able to help into the future ... Our community is forever grateful."

Where Based: **Coffeyville**

Counties Served: **Montgomery and Labette**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$5,555,820*****

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR CLOUD COUNTY

Cloud County is losing people.

In 1970, there were 13,375 residents. Now, there is less than 9,500.

It translates in a loss of not only people but services and sometimes quality of life.

Some of its residents need food and housing.

The Community Foundation for Cloud County is affiliated with the Greater Salina Community Foundation.

The foundation's director, Bob Steimel, said there are growing needs within the communities.

The history and legacy that built the county is shifting as people struggle to feed their families while working in agricultural and oil industries.

"We have a problem sometimes donating money for food," he said. "People are glad to donate money to a new roof, a new building, a new kitchen or a recreation center but we have a problem with buying food.

"It is a bottomless pit. If we gave, it would never be enough. We would rather do something about the problem."

GROW II funding has helped fund two grants for \$6,667 in Cloud County.

One grant was for a \$5,000 lab refrigerator for the Cloud County Health Department; the other was a \$1,667 grant to the Nazareth Convent and Academy for the Helping Hands Diaper Program, which provides diaper supplies and teaches families about infant and child care.

GROW II funds, Steimel said, have been used as a matching tool to raise money and is a selling point for even more families to donate.

Where Based: **Concordia**

Counties Served: **Cloud**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$742,894****

Total Assets Today: **\$6,774,960*****



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF DICKINSON COUNTY

In recent decades, the town of Herington has had its share of blows.

A community whose history encompasses railroading, agriculture and business, Herington spans the borders of Dickinson and Morris counties. As the railroad pulled away and the oil and agriculture economy fell, the residents saw businesses close and young people move away.

In August, it was facing one more dilemma – the town's only medical clinic was not handicapped accessible.

The Community Foundation of Dickinson County stepped up and was able to pull some grant money together – less than \$10,000 total – to make the clinic more open and available to everyone.

"They just needed some help," said Elizabeth Weese, executive director of the community foundation.

And, it is the type of money that can make big differences in everyday lives.

"The folks of Dickinson County are wholesome, upstanding and informed," Weese said. "They are looking to make our county into a place where people want to come to live and raise families."

The community foundation looks out for residents in the community with needs.

An example was the fund left to the foundation by Don and Eva Barber of Abilene. In 2015, \$2,500 was used to make a shop classroom at Abilene High School handicapped accessible.

"By insuring the rest of the community is staying healthy, we (the community foundation) will stay healthy."

Where Based: **Abilene**

Counties Served: **Dickinson**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$1,052,159****

Total Assets Today: **\$11,100,793*****



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SOUTHEAST KANSAS

The Southeast Kansas region is best known for its mining legacy, famous chicken restaurant feuds, rolling wooded hills and hardscrabble people.

But, it's also known as one of the state's poorest regions and whose residents have sometimes been counted among the state's least healthy and least educated, according to the 2017 Kansas Economic Report.

The Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas is working to change that.

In 18 years, the foundation's asset base has grown from \$600,000 to \$40 million.

"We struggle to get economic growth," said Kit Parks, foundation executive director. "It is always an ongoing struggle. That is at the top of our list – to have industry and jobs in the area. We want more work opportunities for individuals. That would lessen our poverty."

The community foundation serves Crawford, Bourbon, Labette and Cherokee counties and, Parks said, is always looking at ways to breathe new life into the area.

"We are always trying to look at a strategic use of charitable dollars, so we can create positive change," she said. "When you look at the challenges, you try to formulate a strategic plan of some kind of work toward a social issue or problem."

In the past, much of region's economic growth was based on abundant mineral deposits.

During the late 19th and 20th centuries, coal, oil, natural gas, lead, zinc and other natural resources were mined. The region is home to Big Brutus – the world's largest electric shovel at 16 stories tall – the last vestige of southeast Kansas' heyday in the mining industry. The shovel in West Mineral is now a tourist attraction.

But, travel along the back roads and there are glimpses of ghost towns and strip mines. Forty years after Big Brutus' engines went quiet, this area of Kansas – where the Ozark hills and hardwood forests meet prairie – still has an industrial feel.

At one time, between Cherokee County and Crawford County, there were 63 mines that produced a third of the nation's coal. It is an area of the state nicknamed "The Little Balkans" because the mines attracted more than 50 nationalities of immigrants, unions and socialists.

Beginning in the 1970s, as corporations cut back, communities were often left struggling to provide services. The per capita income for residents in Cherokee County is \$20,075

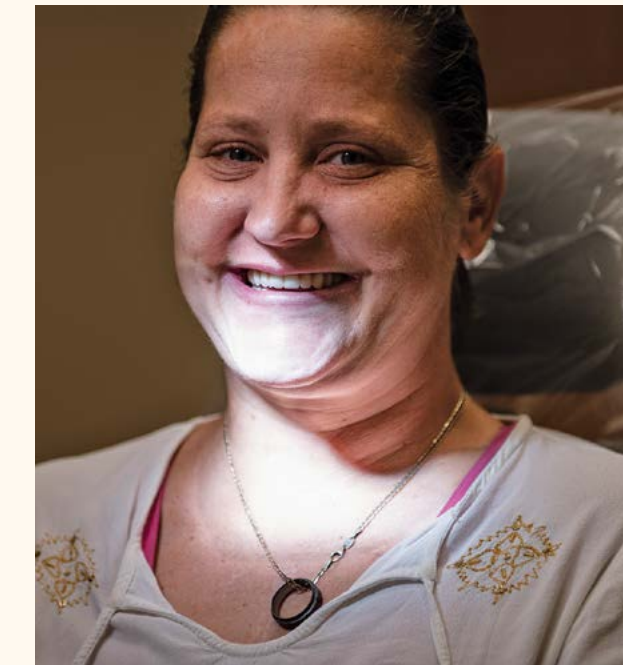
Where Based: **Pittsburg**

Counties Served: **Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford and Labette**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$36,238,883*****





and in Crawford, it is \$19,763, according to U.S. Census statistics for 2010; that compares to \$38,882 in Johnson County – the state's richest county.

Pittsburg, where the foundation is located, is the largest city in the area. In 2016, the unemployment rate was 5.3 percent – the highest unemployment rate of any region of the state. It also has the smallest population and labor force of any region.

One of the concerns, Parks said, is a growing number of homeless people.

"There is a need for a homeless shelter and transportation," she said. "We need to help people get back on their feet."

Part of the urgency the foundation has faced has been growing assets – it grew from \$19 million at the end of 2016 to more than \$35 million in 2017, and, in 2018, now has \$40 million and maintains 152 funds.

During 2017, the foundation received \$5 million in gifts of cash and stocks, and an additional \$9.8 million gift in farm land.

The land, Parks said, is located in Chautauqua County and, when sold, may potentially provide nearly half a million dollars each year in agricultural scholarships.

"When you receive a large gift such as that, it is both a blessing – I don't want to use the word sword but it can present itself with challenges in that you need to know how those things also come along with certain legalities," she said.

It was an extraordinary gift and one that Parks said maintains the mission of the community foundation.

"One of our needs is trying to help people understand the concept to keep (pride) in Kansas and give back to communities," Parks said.

The foundation has a Keep 5 in Kansas campaign which encourages area residents who can, to give back to their communities. It has helped area churches, schools and food pantries. When people leave their communities, often their inherited wealth does, too. The Keep 5 in Kansas promotes capturing five percent of an estate wealth.

Another aspect of the foundation is promoting the region's stories and shared history. It encourages people to tell those stories through iSEK (I'm a Child of Southeast Kansas).

"We all share a sense of pride," she said.

Between 2009 and 2018, the Kansas Health Foundation initiated Grow II funds to Kansas community foundations. The funds were meant to help foundations continue to build their assets, secure operating funds and allow more focus on community health.

*"We all share a
sense of pride."*

*Kit Parks,
Foundation Executive Director*



In Southeast Kansas, those funds helped the Pittsburg-based foundation grow and work toward sustainability, Parks said.

"We have a professional staff and professional image in our community," she said.

It's allowed for strategic planning.

"Our community foundation only became self-sufficient after reaching \$30 million," Parks said. "Had we not had the opportunity from the Kansas Health Foundation, we might not have survived."

So how do they make a difference?

One of the projects is the Rita J. Bicknell Women's Giving Circle which created the Smiles of Hope for Women fund. It focuses on denture and dental care. Primary recipients are the uninsured, under-insured and homeless.

It has the potential, Parks said, "on how to not only improve someone's health, but their self-esteem."

The Giving Circle created two funds – one where donors gave \$2,000 a year to grow the endowment and another set of donors, giving \$250 a year. Together, the two funds granted, in connection with GROW II funds, \$42,000 this past year, Parks said.

"With GROW II and having the money for granting for public health reasons, it is so rewarding when you know this money is going toward good agencies who are doing work to make people healthy and their lives better in the community," she said.

Written comments from some of the recipients of Smiles of Hope include one, who said, "I'm getting my dimples back."

Another, "I can smile without having fear of being picked on about my teeth. I feel beautiful."

And, still another, wrote, "My mom always told me I had the most beautiful smile. Wow! Do I look like that? I'm going to put make-up on and come back for another picture!"

Another program focuses on the hearing-impaired.

The "Can You Hear Me Now?" program is working with the Community Health Center in Southeast Kansas. It targets low-income, uninsured, and under-insured residents who are not able to afford basic hearing tests.



"Unfortunately, a lot of insurance companies don't cover that or most don't cover working toward helping people get a hearing aid if they need it," Parks said.

The challenge, Parks said, is that many residents in their service area are simply poor, elderly and/or on fixed-incomes.

At the same time, one of the area's strengths is that there are a number of nonprofit organizations providing services.

"We are not lacking services but (the organizations) always struggle for funding," Parks said. "So, it becomes necessary to come up and identify the types of projects needed. And, it is great to assist in being able to make services happen."

But, Parks said, the mission of the community foundation always comes back to the people it serves.

"I think there are many people who are so grateful for the ability to have better health and to feel better about themselves," she said. "That's how we know we have made a difference."



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SOUTHWEST KANSAS

The heartbeat of Kansas starts with people.

And, in Mariana Ausmus of Dodge City, the pulse is strong.

When she was 9, Mariana began baking cookies and selling them to raise money.

She wants to help children in her hometown who don't have what she has.

"I realized there were kids in this community and other places in the world that were less fortunate," Mariana, now 13, said. "They didn't have the privilege I had – to have food, clean water and clothes. I want to see people thrive.

"And I could see kids who didn't have new clothes for the school year or school supplies. They would come to school with thin jackets in really cold weather."

She wants to help and make a difference, if she can.

Now granted, she's growing up in a family of helpers.

Her grandmother, Gayle Ausmus is the longtime director of the United Way of Dodge City. Her father, Ryan Ausmus serves on the boards for the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas, the local hospital, Harvest America Corporation, the Credit Union of Dodge City and works as dean of work force development for the Dodge City Community Foundation. He is also an ordained minister of an independent denomination.

Mariana is a sixth generation Kansan; the oldest of three children and a go-getter who has learned to make an irresistible chocolate chip cookie.

Her desire to help is so strong, she has raised money through the "Mariana's Cookies for Good" fund with the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas. She has helped put winter coats on Dodge City children, bought school supplies and food for the hungry.

And, as people have learned about Mariana's fund, the dollars have been coming in.

"She has received funds from private individuals. People are wanting to add to her project without even buying cookies," said Margaret Hamilton, development director of the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas.

Mariana's backstory

The idea for the fund began in the living room of the Ausmus home.

Where Based: **Dodge City**

Counties Served: **Ford, Clark, Gray, Hodgeman, Edwards, and Meade**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$6,134,045****

Total Assets Today: **\$41,982,095*****



Ryan Ausmus and his wife, Elana, have always – as a family—donated to different local charities. One evening, the family was talking about charities, and Mariana turned to her father to say:

“Dad, I want to do something to help kids,” Ryan Ausmus recalled. “At 9, she was using words like ‘less-fortunate.’ I told her, we were already helping. And she said, ‘No, you are doing that. I want to do that.’ She said she wanted to help kids and see them do better.”

And so, it began with a chocolate chip cookie.

“The first thing I thought about was food,” Mariana said. “It seemed practical to make something and sell it to make money. Baking cookies came to mind to raise money.”

Her recipe came from a saved clipping in a newspaper for “Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookies.”

There are no secret ingredients – just Mariana’s determination.

Her fund at the community foundation began with \$300.

The 13-year-old currently has more than \$5,000 in her fund after baking thousands of cookies.

The power of a community foundation

The Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas is in its 26th year in Dodge City. The foundation began not long after St. Mary of the Plains College closed in 1992 and most of the scholarship money raised for the college was transferred to the community foundation, according to Pat Hamit, foundation director.

“We have probably one of the largest scholarship programs in the state of Kansas for a community foundation,” he said.

From that beginning, a founder’s fund began in which 40 people gave \$10,000 – money for sustained operation. In the 26 years, the community foundation has grown to \$40 million in assets.

The foundation serves nearly 30,000 people in communities covering Ford, Meade, Edwards, Hodgeman, Gray and Clark counties.

This region of Kansas, Hamit said, especially nurtures an independent, hard-scrabble type-of-folk.



“They have a mind of their own,” he said. “And sometimes that can make the concept of a community foundation a hard sell. But when you think about it, this is all about people doing things for other people. It is not about government stepping in. There is always a hook when government provides the funding.

“People working with our community foundation see a need. They have a passion or a dream and provide funds for us to provide for our communities. That makes it an easier sell,” Hamit said.

Such was the case with Mariana’s fund.

But her fund is only one of nearly 200 the foundation maintains.

Many of the funds address quality of life issues – such as providing funds in support of the Dodge City Depot Theater or bringing the musical concert “Tres Vidas” – celebrating the life of Hispanic people who have fought social injustice—to the Dodge City Community College.

The foundation has also funded Texas Christian University’s football and Rhodes Scholar Caylin Moore to come and speak with area students on teen suicide.

“Our toughest challenge is that most people don’t know and don’t care what the community foundation is until it somehow impacts them,” Hamit said. “It is nothing you can mass market.”

There are funds for guest speakers and concerts.

But there are also funds, such as the Circle of Hope that benefits victims of cancer and the Women of Inspiration fund that sponsors computer classes for women to upgrade their skills.

Building money

Twice in its 26-year history, the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas has benefited from funds from the Wichita-based Kansas Health Foundation.

Nearly \$1.5 million was received 16 years ago with GROW 1 (Growing Resources for Our World) money. That money, Hamit said, was used for health issues concerning children – such as, providing children’s art classes in Fowler, helping Hodgeman County with child safety seats and in Dodge City at the Mana House where funds were used to help feed families and restocking the pantry.

“Our toughest challenge is that most people don’t know and don’t care what the community foundation is until it somehow impacts them.”

*Pat Hamit,
Foundation Director*



In 2012, the foundation received another \$240,000 boost from the Kansas Health Foundation with GROW II funds.

Exercise equipment along walking trails north of Dodge City and in Meade was installed.

"The Kansas Health Foundation is responsible for who we are today," Hamit said. "We were a \$5 million organization – and that's stretching it—when the program started. They have not only dangled the carrot in front of us, they showed us how to do it."

Dodge City – long known as the Cowboy Capital of Kansas – is an ever-changing, diverse community. The largest employers are National Beef and Cargil beef packing plants. The area is culturally rich with Hispanic and Vietnamese influence.

And, there are some people in dire need of help.

"Dodge is more diverse. But the biggest thing affecting us is that we don't see the families with private wealth here in Dodge like it used to be," Hamit said. "The deep pockets are either leaving us or have passed away. We are still chasing the transfer of wealth dollars."

And that is why funds like Mariana's are becoming increasingly important.

Making every dollar count

Mariana Ausmus is the youngest donor at the community foundation.

Hamit remembers when Ryan Ausmus first came onto the community board. Mariana's dad told how his daughter wanted to have her own foundation.

"I said you can have your own foundation here," Hamit said. "She started out with a simple pastor fund but as more money came into the fund, it became apparent, we should endow this fund. Starting out at 9 years old, she has a long time to grow that fund."

In the four years that her fund has been helping clothe and feed Dodge Citians, Mariana has become active in band, has a black belt in Karate and plays piano.

She says now that as she approaches eighth grade, she wants to re-engage in raising more money on a deeper level.

"I want to engage more people in ways of helping," she says. "I want to help kids get what they need—the basic necessities."

She doesn't plan on living in Dodge City forever – she wants to become a pharmacist and someday live in New York.



She always wants to make a difference.

"What does it mean to be a Kansan?" Mariana repeats a question she's just been asked.

She pauses before answering.

"To be involved in the community. This is a tight-knit place where people know each other," Mariana said. "My family has always been about caring for people. That's had an effect on me. Moving forward, I want to build this foundation to the point where I can help any child that I see in need whether it's in Dodge or elsewhere."



DERBY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For a long time, Derby was Wichita's afterthought – a one-stoplight bedroom community that the state's largest newspaper, Wichita Eagle Columnist Bob Getz made famous by poking fun at it almost as much as he did psychic Darla McComb.

The truth is, the little town has grown.

And grown.

And grown some more.

It has big city woes – often, without the benefits.

No major Wichita public transportation buses traverse its neighborhoods. The Metropolitan Transit Authority only goes as far as 47th Street South.

That makes it tough for Derby school students who don't live at least two miles from the school to qualify for busing; or, for low-income senior citizens who need to travel throughout the city.

That is...until the Derby Dash.

The Dash is Derby's public transportation, which is funded, in part, by the Derby Community Foundation.

"We have provided grants, in addition to the summer lunch program, through the Kansas Health Foundation to the Derby Senior Center to help provide scholarships for students and low-income seniors," said Theresa Hearn, Derby Community Foundation executive director.

The Derby Dash is a by-appointment-only van that comes and picks up Derby residents. It normally is a \$2 one-way ride. And folks in Derby have to call ahead in order to schedule a ride.

But, it can be a life-saver for people having to depend on it, Hearn said.

Funding transportation for children and senior citizens came about as a result of the summer lunch program, which is also funded by the Derby foundation.

"We had 12 children whose families would love for them to access the free summer lunch program but had no transportation to get to the program, Hearn said.

It was determined the Dash needed \$1,500 to provide the needed transportation.

Where Based: **Derby**

Counties Served: **City of Derby**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$317,315****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,862,841*****



The community foundation offered a \$750 matching grant and challenged the Derby community to provide the rest.

The Derby Rotary Club stepped up with the matching funds.

"There is a lot of exciting stuff that happens with Kansas Health Foundation money," Hearn said.

And, it's just one more example of the power and impact that local community foundations have had throughout the state of Kansas.

A little town grows up

Now in its 25th year, the Derby Community Foundation has had to keep up with changing dynamics.

In the 1970s, Derby had a population of less than 7,000 residents. Now, it has tripled in size with more than 23,000 residents and is ranked by the U.S. Census as Kansas' 17th largest city.

The Derby Community Foundation service area encompasses Derby USD 260 – roughly a 50-mile square radius that goes well outside the city and includes housing at McConnell Air Force Base, the Oaklawn Community and rural areas toward Rose Hill, Mulvane and Haysville.

The little, one-stoplight town has multiplied.

Sixty percent of the Derby High School students qualify for free- or reduced-price school lunches.

There are nine elementary schools in the Derby school district; six qualify as Title 1 schools, meaning many of the students come from low-income families and over 50 percent qualify for free- or reduced-price school lunches.

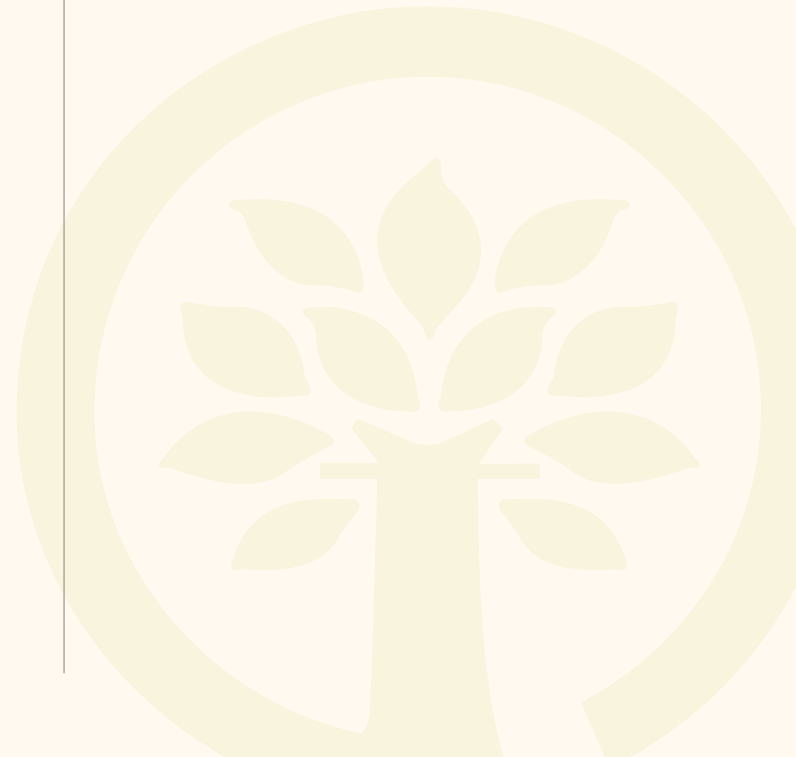
In some ways, Hearn said, there is almost a mindset in Derby, with residents thinking it is still that little town.

"We are a suburb and although we are more self-contained (with all the business development), we are still in many senses, a bedroom community," Hearn said. "It is a town sometimes plagued with a blind spot – Wichita is less than six miles away and inching closer all the time.

"Convincing people that needs exist here in our little corner of the world is often a challenge. For many people, philanthropy looks north of Derby," Hearn said. "Because

"Convincing people that needs exist here in our little corner of the world is often a challenge."

*Theresa Hearn,
Foundation Executive Director*





that's where people see the agencies that provide services that exist in Wichita. The headquarters for the American Red Cross, the Boys & Girls Clubs, and even the Kansas Health Foundation are all in Wichita.

"A lot of what I have to do is tell (people) we have needs here in Derby. There are great needs in Wichita and we are glad they want to support them – but don't forget about where you live. Live here, give here."

And that's where projects like the Derby Dash come in.

The Derby Community Foundation has awarded a total of \$2,000 since 2013 to the local Senior Center to provide Dash scholarships for residents in need of assistance.

The history of the community foundation began 25 years ago when there was a group of residents were interested in starting a community hike and bike path system.

At that time, there were matching grant funds through the Kansas Department of Transportation. Five people formed a community foundation so they could solicit contributions to raise \$200,000.

"They raised it one little segment at a time, with \$25 and \$50 at a time," Hearn said. "They did that twice – they built the first phase and then the second."

Now, 25 miles of hike and bike paths connect every corner and weave throughout Derby.

The next project was planting trees.

"We wanted to have shaded areas along the paths," Hearn said. "There was a campaign to make Derby a Tree City USA. And, in order to be a Tree City, they had to have 10,000 viable trees. There were volunteers who went out and counted all the trees."

When Hearn joined the foundation in 2004, when it had \$80,000 in assets. It now has \$2 million and oversees 32 funds.

"It has grown that much, and the Kansas Health Foundation was an enormous part of our ability to grow and prosper. Having the GROW II funds and being able to go to donors and indicate that their dollars could be matched by Kansas Health Foundation dollars, was an enormous boost," she said.

Gaining credibility through collaboration

What helps Derby now is the can-do spirit.

It is a city of volunteers.



And givers.

Two years ago, Derby participated in a free summer lunch program for the first time.

The Derby Community Foundation changed it up a notch.

"We awarded a \$2,500 grant to the school district to provide free lunches to the adults who came to the program with their children," Hearn said. "We were touched by the rationale to create a community through the summer lunch program to pull people together at lunchtime, particularly families who often don't eat together anymore."

It worked.

An offshoot of that program became the Derby Dash scholarships.

Things work in Derby because residents have learned the art of working together, Hearn said.

"Collaboration has existed as long as I remember," she said. "You can go to any community event and there are just hundreds of volunteers making those events happen. I never have a shortage of people when I do something with the community foundation.

"Whether it's an event for Veteran's Day or our big gala event in February, there are always a pool of people who step up to volunteer. A lot of communities talk about how it is the same 20 people who volunteer in their communities. That's not true here."

The community foundation has a Circles project, which is a program designed to help those in poverty transition out of poverty. The foundation is also working with Spirit Aerosystems on helping high school students – who aren't going to college – by providing them with skills and training to become future employees.

"We have scholarships and we award \$65,000 a year in scholarships for kids who are going to college," Hearn said "But, you know, there is a good group of kids that aren't or shouldn't go to college – that's not where their skills lead. But they need some sort of training."

The foundation has created a Career Technical Education fund and annually provides Derby High School students scholarships to help them pursue being an auto mechanic, aircraft mechanic, plumber, nurse and other technical certification type jobs.

"I tell people that the community foundation touches everybody," Hearn said. "If you participate in anything – hiked a trail, enjoyed the sculptures and trees in Derby, the community foundation has touched you in some way."



DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

One of the most vibrant counties in Kansas boasts a community foundation that's become a leader in philanthropic activity and nonprofit promotions.

The Douglas County Community Foundation began in 2000 with a \$4 million gift.

With a boost from the Kansas Health Foundation GROW II initiative, the foundation has grown to \$56.6 million with more than 250 funds, according to Chip Blaser, executive director of the foundation.

"We are doing a lot of work around health equity, food insecurity and several areas like that," Blaser said. "We are helping people with affordable housing and health-related wellness work.

We've made grants for all kinds of things around our community that are flourishing."

Grants include money toward the Baldwin Education Foundation, Douglas County Court Appointed Special Advocates, Just Food of Douglas County, Lawrence Anti-Trafficking Taskforce and Education Association, the Lawrence Arts Center and more.

One of the foundation's missions is to coordinate funding resources within the community, Blaser said.

"We are fortunate in that we can make grants in all aspects of our community, including helping fund things like art centers and cultural activities, as well as being deeply involved with educational opportunities," Blaser said. "There are a lot of things that are gratifying and fortunate for us."

As the legacy continues, the Douglas County Community Foundation is looking at inequities in income, housing and education.

"We have made a lot of grassroots funding for a number of different projects in the community," Blaser said.

Where Based: **Lawrence**

Counties Served: **Douglas County and surrounding area**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$4,801,669****

Total Assets Today: **\$46,232,351*****

EMPORIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Here in Kansas, it often comes down to people stepping forward to make change happen.

Sandy Knight never wants another Kansas family to worry about paying bills while their child is dying.

Kent Schnakenberg is saving lives by starting a worldwide awareness campaign for Type 1 Diabetes.

Both are making a difference at the Emporia Community Foundation.

Located in the heart of the Flint Hills, the Emporia Community Foundation began in 1995 with a \$5,000 donation from Loretta Langley and has since grown to \$23 million. It covers seven counties – Lyon, Chase, Greenwood, Coffey, Osage, Wabaunsee and Morris—and serves between 30,000 and 35,000 people.

This year, the area is in extreme drought, so pastures and ponds are drying up. Worry is drawn on the faces of ranchers.

“What drew me to this area was the ranching,” said Becky Jeppesen, Emporia Community Foundation executive director. “We have people in town all the time wearing cowboy hats, hauling trailers of cattle and horses.”

John Deere tractors are just as likely to be traveling on the streets of Emporia and Strong City as Dodge Rams and Ford pickup trucks.

But the area is also a steady mix of arts and culture, football and baseball teams, history and where the Symphony in the Flint Hills concert annually draws between 7,500 to 8,000 people for music in a pasture.

“We have this fabulous culture here and yet, in this area, 60 percent of the children who go to school in Emporia qualify for some type of assistance with the school lunch program,” Jeppesen said.

Emporia is home to Twinkies and the Dolly Madison plant that makes them; and hometown to Pulitzer Prize-winning William Allen White, former editor of the Emporia Gazette.

But it is also an area of haves and have nots – where some people are richly blessed with land and money; while others struggle to put food on the table and roofs over their heads.

And that's where people like Sandy Knight and Kent Schnakenberg are stepping up.

Where Based: **Emporia**

Counties Served: **Lyon, Chase, Greenwood, Morris, Osage, Coffey and Wabaunsee**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$12,004,387****

Total Assets Today: **\$23,040,053*****



Sandy's story

In January of 2010, Sandy's son, Adrian Lewis, complained one morning when he woke up with a migraine.

"Migraines tend to run in the family and he'd had them before," she said. "I gave him some ibuprofen and didn't think anything of it. He took it. But then, he woke up the next day with a migraine."

This time, she took him to a local pediatrician.

"I honestly thought they would give him a prescription or something," Sandy said. "But, they wanted to go ahead and do a CT (also known as CAT scan). The way the doctor described it that when a headache wakes you out of your sleep, it is a little more concerning. The doctor caught on to a few of the symptoms. They did a CT and found a tumor."

As Adrian was diagnosed and treatments began, Sandy struggled to pay the bills.

"I felt fortunate in that we are from Emporia," she said. "Our family, our church, our parents and grandparents provided a lot of support. But there were some very difficult times."

One of the hardest times was when Adrian was in ICU for four months, a month and a half of which he was intubated and in an induced coma.

"He was very sick, and I wouldn't leave the ICU unless I had to go eat or something," she said.

And that's when days melted into weeks and months.

Her bills were overdue.

"I was still employed but I was on family leave and hadn't worked and things were tight," she said. "My landlord would call and want to know where's the rent. I would have to leave my son and go out in the hallway, find reception to get ahold of him. I didn't care about the rent. But at the same time, we had to have a home to go back to.

"I didn't want to ask my parents or grandparents. You still have that pride. That was probably one of the biggest triggers."

And then, there were the utilities.

*"The support of
this community
is amazing."*

*Sandy Knight,
Mother*

She remembers calling her electric company saying she didn't have the money to pay her bill.

"And they said, there is nothing they could do, sorry," she said. "I tried the American Cancer Society wanting to know if there was any kind of help and there wasn't."

In February 2013, Adrian Lewis, age 13, died.

His mother started the "Never Let Go" fund in 2014 to help other families with children suffering from cancer. The money can be used to cover rent, mortgage payments and utilities—anything families may need.

She started with \$508 and needed \$10,000 for a community foundation fund. It now has more than \$102,000. Much of her funding comes from the Dirty Kanza bike race cyclists, who this past year donated more than \$18,000.

"I didn't have any doubts at all," Sandy said. "The support of this community is amazing."

Kent's story

Kent Schnakenberg's niece, Michelle, was diagnosed with Type 1 juvenile diabetes when she was 14.

"I care about a lot of things," Kent said. "But nobody had started an awareness campaign worldwide for Type 1 diabetes. Far too many children and young adults are dying every year because of a misdiagnosis. It's about learning what the symptoms are – which can be eerily similar to strep throat and the flu. This all starts with saving lives."

Kent, age 63, grew up in Emporia. He started a fund with the Emporia Community Foundation three years ago.

He has since built up a wardrobe of clothing that has black with lime green printing boasting his logo "Team Schnak." He has traveled the nation giving school assemblies, riding in bike competitions and carrying Team Schnak cloth bags and water bottles.

His fund has provided scholarships for Kansas children to attend diabetes camp; and money for research.

His fund now has \$19,000.

"I want Team Schnak to be a worldwide brand," Kent said. "I want people to know I am working hard to change lives."





It's about building the quality of lives

Emporia is a regional hub in the Flint Hills, Becky Jeppesen said.

The town is growing. Emporia State University and the Emporia Community Foundation are working together to create a culinary school with Johnson County. "It will rival any of the culinary schools around the country," she said.

But there's more.

"We have an arts council where you can go to events and do things."

And, Chase county has the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve where visitors can walk among a buffalo herd and see the prairie as it has always been for hundreds of years.



"But in small communities that surround us, like in Reading and Madison, unless you are a farmer or rancher, people struggle to find jobs. And there is little available housing," Jeppesen said. "If we can meet some of those needs, it can make a difference."

A few years ago, the foundation received \$300,000 from the Kansas Health Foundation as part of GROW II funding.

Half of that money was set up in the Kansas Health Foundation Fund, Jeppesen said.

Fund grants were used for the area Healthfest and for child care needs for the health center. The remainder went to establishing the Kansas Health Foundation Operation Fund and the Kansas Health Foundation Operation Fund for the Chase County Community Fund. These funds support events and grants for various needs.

The Hartford township library received \$3,200 to build a kitchen.

"It's not fancy but it is used almost as a daycare center," Jeppesen said. "People drop their kids off and they feed the kids (up to 18 to 20 kids a day). These women were so grateful they could go ahead and build a kitchen."

The Lebo library used their funding to buy a shaved ice machine and cotton candy machine.

Community foundation funds have also provided scholarships for area school children, renovating the Strong City Opera House and Grandma Betty's park in Strong City where area farmers and ranchers helped install children's playground equipment.

The Emporia Community Foundation manages between 165 and 170 funds.

"The future is growth," Jeppesen said. "It is growth for Emporia and our area. There are always going to be people who need food, shoes, clothing and roofs over their heads. We work with these groups.

"But we also help build the communities. Some of our funds don't have to be huge programs. It might mean we fund the cement under the bleachers at the fair grounds to make them handicapped accessible. We work to make a difference in people's lives."



GIRARD AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Gratitude.

It's that simple.

Had it not been for the Kansas Health Foundation's GROW II funds placed in the Girard Area Community Foundation when it was, there would not be as much hope as there is now.

"We are rather sparse in population and the biggest community we have is Girard, with about 2,900 people," said Dale Coomes, Girard Area Community Foundation president. "We are heavy on the rural areas."

The foundation started in 2010.

The county seat of Crawford County, Girard, is one of those old railroad and mining towns in southeast Kansas that struggles.

The basic services are in the communities, Coomes said.

"But a couple of these communities, like Walnut and Hepler, for example, they are on the decline," Coomes said. "The main street continues to thin out. A lot of these communities are moving toward HUD housing, which changes the demographics.

"You have people who move in that have no connection, no roots to the area, and who see it as just a place to live. So, getting them to embrace ownership and some pride is really difficult. It begins to affect the whole culture of the area – and the community has to work harder to promote and stimulate."

The GROW II money was just the right shot in the arm, Coomes said. The Girard Area Community Foundation has reached over \$1 million in assets in less than 10 years.

"When GROW II came along, it forced us to jump into high gear," he said. "Without that, we would have been much less aggressive and would have sat back and there would have been a certain element of frustration in trying to grow our endowment and fund level."

And, with more than \$1 million in assets, it allows the foundation to grant around \$40,000 a year.

Money has been used to pay for improved ball park facilities, recreation for area children and opportunities for camps.

The grants "allow the community to grow more in support of our foundation," Coomes said. "It is that simple. If we do these things – all the good things you would expect – good things will logically be behind that."

Where Based: **Girard**

Counties Served: **Crawford County, USD 248**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,343,538*****

GOLDEN BELT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Who wouldn't want a Prairie Godmother?

The Golden Belt Community Foundation has spent the past two decades working to address the needs and changes in the communities they serve.

As rural Kansas populations shift and change, people remaining in small communities often lose skilled laborers and services.

And that's where the Prairie Godmothers come in.

"What's really been special is to work with great groups of people in our communities who have wanted to work with certain segments," said Christy Tustin, executive director of the foundation.

In 2013, the foundation launched the Prairie Godmother Funds that helps Barton County women in need. Ideally, the money helps improve the health and well-being of women by addressing critical needs typically not met by other community resources.

"We had over 300 women who came together to build dollars to help women in need," Tustin said.

This is a fund created for the what-ifs.

"Like a car repair, or if you are in pain and can't go to work or school but need dental work and don't have insurance. Money can be available," Tustin said.

But there is more.

Currently, the staff and board are studying the economic development of the region.

In the past, some regional hubs of Kansas, such as Great Bend, were extremely self-sufficient. As rural populations erode, there is more reliance on larger hubs. The least-populated counties may get to the point where they may not be able to continue providing as many services.

The foundation is having conversations with residents about how they can help, Tustin said.

"We are not sure yet what this will look like, but we are asking what is holding people back from succeeding or moving up a step on the ladder," she said.

Where Based: **Great Bend**

Counties Served: **Barton, Pawnee, Rush and Stafford**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$11,685****

Total Assets Today: **\$22,596,777*****



GRANT COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Grant County resident are used to pulling themselves up by the bootstraps, working together and expressing community pride.

But the past five years have been staggeringly hard.

"We've had several challenges we've been grappling hard with," said Judy Keusler, executive director of the Grant County Community Foundation. "The biggest one – the one pressing thing – is our economy."

Since 2013, Grant County has lost more than half of its valuation. In 2017, it was 43 percent of what it was in 2013.

"Mill levies are based on valuation," Keusler said. "Therefore, the government entities have lost more than half the resources they operate on. That is a pretty precipitous drop that has left us struggling to provide anything except essential services."

Oil, natural gas and agriculture have traditionally been the pillars that have fueled the county's economy. The declining prices in gas and oil, plus the depletion of the massive Hugoton gas field underneath the county, while agriculture suffered two to three of its worst years has been overwhelming.

"Our foundation has been trying to figure out how we can do grant writing to try and bring in some of the money to help provide services that used to be provided by the city and county," Keusler said.

Grant County was used to a county-owned hospital and a county-owned assisted living and longterm care facility. That's now changed. The hospital has been leased to Centura Health, which sold off the assisted living and long-term facility.

"That has not been an easy decision and the result has been poor," Keusler said. "I understand why they did. They were supplementing those operating budgets and couldn't continue to do that with the declining resources they had."

Now, more than ever, the community foundation has been needed.

In the past seven years, the foundation has raised more than \$75,000 or more during the Grant County Gives match days. In the past six years, more than \$485,000 has been given back to the community.

Where Based: **Ulysses**

Counties Served: **Grant**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$229,406****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,686,752*****



"During the economic circumstances, we think that is a pretty strong statement of our citizens support of nonprofit groups in the community," Keusler said.

GROW II funds were used to build a walking path around the Barb Dye Park in Ulysses, and fund Snack Attack treats at the local school.

Grant County residents, she said, are all about "having a good deal of independent spirit. They like to do things in their own way and time. They have a really incredible history of banding together to get something accomplished."

The annual Grant County Home Products Dinner is a prime example. It's been going 60 years plus and is exactly as the name implies – everything on the menu is grown in the county "except the coffee," Keusler said. It raises money for scholarships.

And in these tough times, it also raises faith that things will get better.

GREATER MANHATTAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Even for some of the strongest, healthiest community foundations in Kansas, there can be an image problem.

Some people still don't know community foundations are there to serve them.

"The greatest challenge, in my mind, is to educate people of what it really is and that it is not just another nonprofit," said Vern Henricks, president and CEO of the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation.

"Community foundations are here to serve the charitable needs of any community. Their charitable intent is to help match up fund-holders with those charitable organizations, so the organizations can do what they need to. What we have tried to be is a clearing house of information."

The Manhattan-based foundation serves much of Riley County as well as its affiliates, the Dover and Frankfort Community Foundations. Its region includes a population of nearly 250,000 people.

"They wanted everyone in the county to feel connected," said Elaine Dhuyvetter, vice president of marketing and programs for the foundation, as to why staff added the word "greater" to its name.

And that's one of the challenges – Riley County is one of the population hotspots in Kansas.

Much of eastern Kansas is, really. As the Kansas population shifts and changes, more rural residents are headed to the larger metropolitan areas.

How does a community prepare for that?

"The two greatest, most significant needs are transportation and mental health services," Henricks said.

Johnson County remains the most populated county with 591,000 residents. Sedgwick County is second with 513,000. Counties such as Pottawatomie and Riley may be growing because of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility now under construction at Kansas State University's Manhattan campus.

Where Based: **Manhattan**

Counties Served: **Riley County and nearby counties if organizations serve Riley county residents**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$1,602,340****

Total Assets Today: **\$79,396,487*****



Manhattan has also been growing because of downtown and south end developments. Meanwhile, Fort Riley has also been under construction with new development and K-State added six new buildings to the campus.

"With all the populations, transportation is the biggest concern. We don't have a good public transportation system," Dhuyvetter said

And that's something the foundation is working on.

The Greater Manhattan Community Foundation supports a staff of three full-time positions and five part-time. It has a total of \$81.2 million in assets and manages more than 600 funds.

Manhattan has a population of about 56,000 people – of which nearly half are college students.

The predominately young population is one of the reasons Riley County traditionally ranks among the top three healthiest counties in the state. It also has a medical service community.

But there are disparities.

"The research will say we have 56 percent of the community living month-to-month," Henricks said. "Now, college students come here with every intention of living month-to-month. They are in college. They are not working. They are just spending."

But there is a population that is homeless or that may be in the community for a short time – perhaps because of current boom in construction, Henricks said.

"Manhattan has had a growth spurt," Henricks said. "We were selected as the county – in the nation – that was least effected by financial changes of 2013.

"So, in the last 15 years, there has been about three billion-dollar construction projects. What that has done is that it has brought in a lot of construction employees that, in some places, tend to be almost homeless. There is a large number, about 300, kids in the homeless category in the school system. Some of them don't want to be legally known."

Because of that, Dhuyvetter said, and because of a lack of mass transit transportation, there are areas in the Manhattan community that might be considered food deserts. The Area Transportation Authority is looking to expand its services in January 2019.





The community foundation has helped expand services to Riley County's most needy by doing the following:

- A local donor, Phil Howe provided funds for vouchers to help get local residents to doctor's appointments, work and other places in Manhattan.
- For the past three years, the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation has offered a program for the low-income residents to get produce at the local farmers market. Some GROW II funds were used to help finance this program.
- And, just within the past few weeks, the foundation is looking at providing scholarships for people who can't afford park and recreation activities – scholarships for people to take swim classes, etc.
- The foundation is also monitoring a Disaster Relief Fund to help Manhattan area residents recover from recent flooding in September.

"We want to say to the public that this will be for long-term recovery efforts, not just the immediate needs," Dhuyvetter said.

The idea is for the community foundation to keep its pulse on the community.

"We are the growing leader of the community," Henricks said. "We are not here to make money, we are here to give it away. We are here to support the needs of the community."

The foundation hosts an annual awards dinner to help nurture donors and create community awareness about what it's doing each year.

"We give awards for lifetime contributions, best professional advisor and trustees of the year," he said. "There is a lot of feel good stuff."

It's about the people

Andrea DeJesus is president of the Downtown Farmers Market of Manhattan.

Each year, she applied for a community foundation grant. This year, she was awarded \$6,000.

Those funds are then used to help bring healthier, fresher food to people who need it most.

"We use those funds for our Senior Matching Program," DeJesus said.

The State of Kansas provides vouchers to low-income senior citizens to use across the state. In addition, the Downtown Farmers Market provides an additional \$30 in vouchers to those citizens (in \$5 increments).

"We are not here to make money, we are here to give it away. We are here to support the needs of the community."

*Vern Henricks,
Foundation President and CEO*



"It is amazing to hear them talk and how much it changes things for them (senior citizens) by just having the extra dollars," DeJesus said.

It is fresh fruit and vegetables they might not normally get.

The funds and programs the community foundation provides, Henricks said, are also about reaching people wanting to dream for the future.

Marvin Hornbostel is excited to talk about the Flint Hills Area Experimental Aircraft Association.

In 2006, his organization began receiving grants from the community foundation. His group helps oversee middle school-age children interested in aviation. They meet on Saturdays once or twice a month.

The first grant was for \$4,300. In more recent years, grants have been closer to \$10,000.

They first used the money to buy an old airplane deemed unflyable. Each of the kids had a parent deployed in the military. Hornbostel figured it was a way to provide some bonding opportunities and get young people interested in flying.

In more recent years, the group has bought a flyable airplane and is working on building and flying it, once it's completed. He now has middle school and high school youth from Manhattan, Junction City and Salina coming to the Saturday get-togethers.

"It gives them something to work on with their hands," Hornbostel said.

The idea in each of the funds the Manhattan foundation oversees is to match people's needs with donor generosity, Henricks said.

He credits much of the foundation's growth to the Kansas Health Foundation GROW II funds. There are now more than 90 community foundations in the state, he said.

"The Kansas Health Foundation provided the inspiration to create foundations for all of us," Henricks said. "Less than 20 of those foundations have a staff. Philanthropists like to see their money work for their causes. Our goal is to lower the fees so that the charitable cause gets more money."



GREATER SALINA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

It's all about healthy endowments.

On that, dreams, hopes and legacies can be built.

The Greater Salina Community Foundation has been nurturing and caring for donor endowments for nearly two decades.

"In my opinion, having those endowments preserve cultural elements in communities," said Jessica Martin, foundation president and executive director.

More than 900 grants are provided through the foundation.

A scholarship in Oberlin is helping Quinton Cook return to his hometown and open up a much-needed diesel repair shop.

A few years ago, Dee Durham first learned of the Post Rock Community Foundation which is an affiliate of the Greater Salina Community Foundation. She has started two funds in her husband, Bob's name – one for the Garden of Eden in Lucas and another for the Lucas Community Theater.

Others help fund Child Care Aware of Kansas – providing scholarships for child care providers who want to further their education.

"Our goal with any of our nonprofits is that by working with donors, their endowments will support the nonprofits," Martin said. "Our challenge is having donors see the importance of an endowment."

In the past seven years, the March Madness program has collectively raised more than \$1 million for 80 different charity endowed funds, with match and bonus grants of \$428,000, for a total impact of \$1.6 million.

"We would not have had the resources to strengthen our nonprofit endowments without the GROW II opportunity," Martin said.

Where Based: **Salina**

Counties Served: **serves 16 counties in north-central Kansas**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$40,640,262****

Total Assets Today: **\$205,944,196*****

HALSTEAD COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For much of the early 20th century, the town of Halstead was known as the place where the “Horse and Buggy Doctor” lived.

The doctor, Arthur Hertzler, wrote his best-selling book of that title about his adventures as a frontier doctor. He died in 1946 – now seven decades later – the Halstead Community Foundation helps keep the town’s medical legacy alive by contributing grant money to the town’s medical center.

The town’s longtime medical center had closed and was sold to Health Ministries Clinic.

“A good portion of money went to Health Ministries to get the building up and running and functional for current times,” said JaLayna Carmichael, Halstead Community Foundation director.

Halstead is located in Harvey County, and has a population of roughly 2,000 residents.

Unlike a lot of small rural towns, it still has a grocery store, restaurants and new housing developments.

Main Street has a few empty buildings in its downtown and that is a concern for residents, Carmichael said.

“Some of your services like an attorney or an accountant, we don’t have local anymore,” she said.

The community foundation was formed in 2011 with a group of local community leaders. It did well, Carmichael said, but the foundation’s assets hovered around \$800,000 for the longest time. A boost from the Kansas Health Foundation’s GROW II funds took the assets to \$1 million.

GROW II funds were also used for a grant at Halstead’s Kansas Learning Center for Health, the nation’s second oldest health museum. Grant money was used to create a “Healthy Relationships” course for middle school and high school-age students – teaching them what to look for in developing health relationships.

Where Based: **Halstead**

Counties Served: **City of Halstead**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$157,451****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,006,460*****

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In big and small ways, the Heartland Community Foundation is looking to make a difference in Volga German country.

The first task has been to find good help.

“All volunteer boards are difficult,” said Bob Muirhead, longtime foundation board member and former president of the Kansas Association of Community Foundations. “Getting the proper people is really a difficult thing.”

The second thing is to not take on too much at a time.

“There are really only certain things you should spend your time on – not trying to do all of it is kind of difficult. Starting out and attempting to make an impact should be balanced with what you can do,” she said.

The most challenging needs, said Sandy Jacobs, executive director, is social services, medical and quality of life. The Heartland Community Foundation is part of several foundations in north central and northwest Kansas connected with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation – and is able to get some of its funding from it.

“Without the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, we would be giving out minimal amounts of money every year – only about \$7,000 or \$8,000,” Jacobs said. “The way it stands today, we are scheduled to award \$100,000 in each county for the next four years and another possible \$50,000 in matching funds from each of those counties.”

“We are very relevant in each of those counties because of those funds.”

This foundation, using Kansas Health Foundations funds, was able to award a mosquito sprayer to Plainville, helped fund a garden for the Ellis County Master Gardeners to teach families how to have backyard gardens; and provide summer programs for children in Rooks County. It has also helped purchase automated external defibrillators for area schools.

“The Hansen Foundation charges all these communities with strategic thinking about the future, rather than just jumping to immediate needs,” Jacobs said. “In each of our communities, that is what we have to stay focused on.”

Where Based: **Hays**

Counties Served: **Ellis, Rooks and Trego**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$355,287****

Total Assets Today: **\$2,800,000*****



HESSTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Whether it is raising money for the high school baseball team, providing the support and needs of families or helping recruit a new grocery store to town, the Hesston community responds to the needs of its people.

"It's a very progressive small town," says Shana Smith, executive director of the Hesston Community Foundation. "We have a great school district and a lot of manufacturing."

Hesston is a mix of rural and urban – close enough to Wichita for residents to travel or commute to, but far enough away to still need a grocery store.

"The majority of people are here because of the school district," Smith said.

The foundation set aside \$3,000 this year to offer 12 mini-grants of \$250 each for teachers to apply for and buy school supplies.

It is also working to help fill vacant buildings in downtown Hesston.

"It is really hard to keep retail in town because everybody can order everything online," Smith said. "We have a good mix of all ages. We have a huge retirement community but a lot of young people because of the school district."

The biggest concern is helping small businesses in town stabilize.

The foundation has awarded grant money to the Summer Food Program, Bye Bye Buggy for Intergenerational Childcare and the Senior Center Health Fair.

"I think the biggest challenge is educating the public about what our foundation does," Smith said. "One donor is great, but we can go a lot further if we have 100 donors that can reach out to others and help educate what we do."

Where Based: **Hesston**

Counties Served: **City of Hesston,**
about 4,000 people

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$78,739****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,131,708*****



HILLSBORO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Having enough labor to perform the existing community jobs and finding affordable housing are the two of the biggest concerns facing Hillsboro residents, said Cynthia Fleming, former Hillsboro Community Foundation executive director.

Hillsboro leaders formed the community foundation in 2004.

Fleming served as executive director since 2015. Bonnie Darwin recently took over.

"We have good leadership in town. Our original goal was to raise \$250,000 and they didn't know how long it would take," Fleming said. "We had that raised in a year or two."

But, Hillsboro, she said, is facing a workforce challenge.

"I talked with several of the manufacturing owners that have jobs here and one of them is talking about starting a company in Pennsylvania because he can't get enough help here," she said. "Another has started an operation in Wichita because he could get help there and couldn't here."

One of the manufacturers is Container Services Inc., which makes plastic bear containers for honey. The containers are then filled with Barkman Honey, which is also a Hillsboro-based company. Other manufacturers in town include two trailer industries that build stock trailers and other types of trailers.

Hillsboro is unique in that it is located close to major Kansas cities – Wichita, Salina, Emporia and Hutchinson.

She believes future workers can be found for the community.

"Here you have a lot of the benefits of small-town living – a nice grocery store," she said. "Just knowing the people, you get to be good friends. You don't drive down the street without waving to people. In Wichita, you may not know the people. Here, you do."

GROW II funds helped the community foundation grow immensely, Fleming said.

"We have used some of the funds for a playground project for USD 410 and senior citizen projects," she said. "We want to use it for the young and old and everybody in between."

Through the years, the community foundation has given back \$550,000 to the community.

"I think that's something to be very proud of," she said.

Where Based: **Hillsboro**

Counties Served: **City of Hillsboro**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$326,982****

Total Assets Today: **\$2,397,028*****

HUTCHINSON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Sometimes, a community foundation's mission is to light a fire.

At the Hutchinson Community Foundation, it is about re-sparking the entrepreneurial spirit that has always been reflected in the area's DNA and redefine what it means to live in Reno County.

From the Carey family and salt; the Dillon family and grocery stores; and building the Cosmosphere and Strataca, Hutchinson has traditionally been a regional hub.

But in recent years, the community has suffered from a loss of jobs, retail and a struggling agricultural economy.

Drive on some of the city's streets and there are areas of blight and poverty. It's not that way everywhere in Hutchinson – drive on most streets and there are plenty of homes with carefully manicured lawns.

But the point being, there are areas of people in need.

Aubrey Abbott Patterson, president and CEO of the foundation, says the community foundation's role is about inclusion.

"We have this legacy of entrepreneurship and innovation and a lot of people don't feel it right now," said Abbott Patterson. "A lot of people don't remember. We are trying to remind people that it is within us. We are looking at how we can spark that again and how we can take pride again."

The Hutchinson Community Foundation is one of the oldest community foundations in Kansas, having been founded in 1989.

It was founded by Dick Dillon who had a vision of creating a community endowment. Forty families, individuals and corporations came together – each donating \$10,000.

The foundation has grown now to \$73 million with more than 300 funds.

The five major areas of work include funds for early childhood, nutrition, family economic success, nonprofit capacity building and capturing and transferring local wealth.

"In the state of Kansas, we are not the largest, but, in terms of sophistication, we are one of the most mature," Abbott Patterson said. "The concept of community foundations is 104 years old.

Where Based: **Hutchinson**

Counties Served: **Reno**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$30,948,483****

Total Assets Today: **\$66,224,794*****



We are really just newbies trying to get better at it. There have been foundations ahead of us who helped and provided us with policies, procedures and frameworks. We try to do that for other community foundations. Our legacy is that we too are helping others."

And so, sometimes, a community foundation is about creating images.

A logo was created for Hutchinson underlying the importance of home and place. Icons include a salt shaker, symbolizing the Hutchinson salt mines; a wind turbine, indicating jobs created by Siemens; a rocket, denoting the Cosmosphere; a Ferris wheel, signifying the home of the Kansas State Fair; a staff of wheat recognizes the farm economy while all the symbols are on a life-line with a giant beating heart.

T-shirts were made to remind people of Hutchinson's legacy.

Rebuilding a community

For years, the neighborhood around the Dillon's store at Fifth and Adams struggled with vacant and demolition-by-neglect housing.

Affordable housing in Hutchinson is difficult to find.

Shara Gonzales, executive director of New Beginnings in Hutchinson has a poster in her office. It's a photo of a firefighter asking, "Can he afford to live in your neighborhood or city?" New Beginnings is a Community Development Organization that strives for affordable housing.

The community foundation partnered with New Beginnings, the First National Bank and the City of Hutchinson to build the Townhomes of Santa Fe Place, an apartment complex with 12 units. Dillon's/Kroger employees raised money to build a wrought iron fence around the complex.

Master Gardeners drew up plans for landscaping and the Hutchinson Tree Board planted trees.

The complex has raised plant beds and outdoor kitchens.

"For us, it is such a good demonstration of a public/private partnership that needed to get done here," Abbott Patterson said.

This past year, more than \$19,600 in funds were granted to arts and culture, \$49,533 to civic improvement and \$55,676 to health and human services.

How old foundations grow in new directions

"We all value a sense of home. Our narrative is helping the community to understand the importance of home and who we are.."

*Aubrey Abbott Patterson
Foundation President and CEO*



The Hutchinson Community Foundation serves about 60,000 people in Reno County.

Abbott Patterson says the foundation's legacy is about creating "a demonstration of community leadership and community pride ... It's about compassion and love for the place. And, I think we can also stoke investment."

The foundation's theme is about acting boldly and cultivating the spirit of innovation. One of the board members, Daniel Friesen – mayor of Buhler, is co-founder of IdeaTec Telcom, who is helping to raise awareness for the need of broadband, particularly in rural areas.

Hutchinson and Buhler were both the recipients of GROW II funds from the Kansas Health Foundation. Hutchinson received \$800,000; Buhler, \$300,000.

"That means we raised and at least doubled that in both communities," Abbott Patterson said. "We were built on a donor model from Kansas City which means donors put their money in and decide where their money goes. We are a charitable checking account or bank, but we want to be so much more than that."

Currently, the foundation is helping lead discussions within Reno County about what values are worth promoting into the future.

Their theme is to "act boldly" and spark innovation.

The community foundation is to nurture and be an incubator for people who dare to make a difference.

"Our job is to get people to working together," said Kari Mailloux, program coordinator at the foundation. "It's the exchange of ideas and the merging of our talents. It takes everybody. This is not about just a few wealthy people leaving a legacy. We can all leave a legacy at every level whether it is through donating time or through giving. We all help tell the story."

Part of the community foundation's role, Mailloux and Abbott Patterson both say, is being a good partner and engaging the community.

"By giving out mini-grants, we can support neighborhoods," Abbott Patterson said. "People are taking control of their own neighborhoods. We value knowledge and understanding, how things are working and how they can work."

"We all value a sense of home. Our narrative is helping the community to understand the importance of home and who we are."



Money from the Kansas Health Foundation's GROW II funds helped build Hutchinson's foundation.

"When we were offered the \$800,000 match, it seemed more like a carrot," Abbott Patterson said. "I thought, 'Okay, we will do it. It is not a difficult challenge. But what ended up happening is that it changed everything in how we operate. We became so much more focused on building unrestricted assets and endowment."

"It brought us back into a better balance. It helped us realize that our role is ultimately to serve the community."

Now, she said, the foundation can look at how better to invest its money as it asks area residents to invest, as well.

Donations have come from school children and sometimes, even the homeless.

"People are wanting to give back (to the community)," Abbott Patterson said.



LEGACY, A REGIONAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Twenty-one years ago, Bob Storbeck and his wife, Helen, cared enough about Winfield they wanted to start a community foundation.

The Storbecks and some other residents started Legacy, A Regional Community Foundation with an initial investment of \$2,000, according to Yazmin Wood, the foundation's executive director.

The assets of the foundation have since grown to over \$7 million.

"They recognized that Winfield does not stand alone and that the adjacent area is equally important in the success," Wood said.

That's why the foundation serves roughly 40,000 people within Cowley and Sumner counties.

In recent decades, the area has been hard hit with large businesses leaving – and with the closings, there has been a large exodus of well-paying jobs.

"We have a poverty rate of 16.4 percent," Wood said. "It has changed the complexion of the community in a great way. But we are continuing to work through and go forward."

When the Salvation Army pulled their thrift store from Winfield, the Angels in the Attic – a homegrown version of a thrift store – was opened.

The foundation was able to help with the local food pantry, renovating and moving it into a larger space, said Andrea McNown, Legacy's chief financial officer.

The foundation participated in a health initiative of walking trails and a "Get Moving" campaign.

"The things that could have knocked us down before, we keep getting back up," Wood said. "Before, we had a lot of agencies that had been working as silos. The shift is now toward working in a more collaborative manner and recognizing we each have different opportunities and strengths."

Where Based: **Winfield**

Counties Served: **Cowley and Sumner**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$23,091****

Total Assets Today: **\$6,973,241*****



MCPHERSON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

McPherson County is a healthy mix of cultures, incomes, ages and religions.

And, because it is so diverse, the McPherson County Community Foundation is working to establish programs that meet the needs of its people.

It is listening. And responding.

"We are not dictating to them what needs to happen," said Becky Goss, president/CEO of the McPherson County Community Foundation.

Granted, the county's problems are similar to those heard around the state – housing is needed, adequate funding for senior centers, and meeting the needs of the area's youth.

"McPherson County is blessed by being affluent from so many of our industries – particularly oil and a lot of manufacturing jobs," Goss said.

But, the county is also located smack-dab between Salina and Wichita – both a blessing and a curse.

"We are too close. People can live in those places (the larger cities)," Goss said. "And so, we have a tax base issue (when workers live somewhere other than McPherson) we have to wade through."

The population is close to 30,000 people. As the population ages, church congregations get smaller and smaller, Goss said. And, as more area industries offer more jobs, it means people from all over the world are coming to Kansas to live.

"We figured we needed to be a foundation that offers opportunities for donors in the community to build funds that meant something to them and help them be able to further their local programs," she said.

The foundation has grown so much that it has helped Inman and Moundridge communities form their own foundations. And, there is one forming currently for Lindsborg.

"We are meeting the needs of the residents," she said.

GROW II funds from the Kansas Health Foundation have helped fund summer art classes for the county's children, theater programs and helped the city parks department renovate playground equipment.

Where Based: **McPherson**

Counties Served: **McPherson County, eight communities within the county**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$20,996,007*****



MOUNDRIDGE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Moundridge Community Foundation is only eight years old but it has grown to an organization with \$1.2 million in assets and oversees 11 funds.

Rick Krehbiel, foundation board chair, doesn't see much wrong with his hometown.

"We have a number of nonprofits, an association of ministries, a senior center, daycare, huge clothing outlet, food pantry and Wednesday nights are filled with youth activities," Krehbiel said.

Not bad for a community of about 2,000 residents.

"A few years ago, I would have said we had a housing problem, but we had some really good things happen, so I can't say that anymore," she said.

The community foundation, he said, has mostly been concentrated on growing its assets.

"In 2010, we got some people together," Krehbiel said. "We are under the McPherson County Community Foundation. We don't have a director."

Local nonprofit organizations mostly receive the grants.

"We have a very good community. We have four doctors, a hospital and a dentist," he said. "Now, we do have a few vacant buildings on Main Street and that is a little bit of a concern. We are trying to attract new business.

"I'd say that is probably our biggest concern."

Where Based: **Moundridge**

Counties Served: **City of Moundridge**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,109,281*****

OTTAWA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The challenge for any community foundation is often in finding the right people.

For the first few years, this was true in Ottawa County.

"That was the hardest, most critical challenge," said Karen Deckert, vice chair of the Ottawa County Community Foundation. "We were having trouble getting people to be on our board, or just having a quorum every time we met."

But then, things began to change. The foundation grew its assets, projects were started and completed.

Things got done.

"What I have been most proud of is serving on the board, setting goals and ultimately hitting them," Deckert said. "We made our goal of raising the GROW II money. And then, being able to award grants to better our communities and receiving the heartfelt thanks of those awards."

The foundation has helped fund the Ottawa County Emergency Management for First Responder Automated External Defibrillators, the Ottawa County Health Center for equipment, sent USD 240 Twin Valley School children to a Body Venture exhibit, surfaced the John Hutchinson Memorial Trails in Tescott and installed a new basketball court at the Markley Grove Park.

It has also built new bleachers at the Ottawa County Fairgrounds.

"A strength in funding these grants are that they are county-wide projects impacting people of all ages throughout the county," said Amanda Davidson, president/board chair of the Ottawa County Community Foundation.

Where Based: **Minneapolis**

Counties Served: **Ottawa County, including the communities of Minneapolis, Delphos, Ada, Bennington, Tescott, Culver and Wells.**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$61,653****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,551,943*****

PARSONS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Reaching the vulnerable and underserved is delicate work.

The best way to do it, said Anne Allen, Parsons Area Community Foundation executive director, is to first address a community's quality of life.

"We always hear how negative our health outcomes are – the poverty level, drug use – (those are) the critical needs," Allen said. "I don't feel the community foundation is addressing those as much as we are trying to address other organizations. The quality of life in a small town is that we have a lot of good things going on, such as parks and recreation. There are things that are available for people to do."

Parsons is close enough to Springfield, Mo., Tulsa, Kansas City and Wichita, to have the big city amenities. At the same time, it is a good farming and ranching community.

"We are less than 10 minutes from anywhere – the hairdresser, dentist, church, grocery store," Allen said.

The community foundation has funded big projects in the 25-mile radius of Parsons. Like the health science building at Labette Community College, an expansion of the Parsons Historical Museum, a horse barn and stadium bleachers at the Labette County Fairgrounds.

Funds from GROW II, have helped create walking trails around the Parsons City Arboretum and a summer food program for school-age children.

"Reaching the vulnerable and underserved is hidden under the surface – you don't necessarily see it," Allen said. "I think the best way we reach it is to get folks to come in and get checkups for prenatal care.

We could stop so many worse things from happening if there was just preventive care. It is knowing how to reach the underserved – you are not seeing what else is out there that isn't doing so great."

Where Based: **Parsons**

Counties Served: **Labette and Neosho**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$4,360,307****

Total Assets Today: **\$6,898,762*****



POST ROCK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Post Rock Community Foundation started after a rural electric economic development meeting.

It was originally to help the local school districts.

The foundation grew and grew after the Greater Salina Community Foundation asked it to become an affiliate, said Lucille Heller, a board member.

And after it became part of GROW II funding, it grew even more.

"That was a great choice," Heller said. "We became an affiliate in 2010 with \$26,000. From 2013 to July 2017, we had grown from \$100,000 to \$603,480, with the help of GROW II funds and our campaign."

And right now, a community foundation is needed in the area.

Lincoln and Mitchell Counties face aging populations. A small Lincoln County bus helps take residents to appointments around the counties, Heller said.

But there is still need.

The two counties are hard up for grocery stores.

"Our residents can travel up to 30 minutes to get a gallon of milk," she said. "Lucas is getting a grocery store added to the service station. Lincoln has one. But Sylvan Grove doesn't have a grocery store. Hunter doesn't either."

Housing is hard to come by.

GROW II funding has helped fund Food Pantry equipment, playground equipment in two towns and youth fishing, hunting and archery events. Also, it paid for a Lions Mobile Screen Unit for sight, hearing, blood pressure and blood sugar testing that traveled throughout the communities, and funded exercise programs in Lincoln and Hunter.

Some of it even funded equipment for local firefighters and the Lincoln County Hospital.

"We have not funded large projects as our basic endowment funds are still not large enough to produce the larger returns," Heller said.

But there is hope.

"We grew," Heller said. "We used that money to grow and we felt that was the mission."

Where Based: **Sylvan Grove**

Counties Served: **Lincoln, Mitchell and school districts USD 299 and USD 298**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$42,188****

Total Assets Today: **\$603,479*****



REPUBLIC COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Steve Scofield serves as the chair of the Republic County Community Foundation in Belleville.

It's a volunteer position with the foundation maintaining 27 funds.

The county has less than 5,000 residents and like other rural counties, Republic County is struggling with declining populations, providing and maintaining services and housing.

The foundation received \$300,000 in GROW II funds from the Kansas Health Foundation.

"What a great gift," Scofield said. "To date, \$65,000 has been granted from those two funds and they have a combined value in excess of \$360,000...we can grant over \$16,000 from them annually."

Some of the larger more notable grants made from those funds have included a ventilation system at the welding stations at Pike Valley High School's vocational-ag shop; playground equipment at the city park; impact testing injured high school athletes for possible concussions; a walking trail and a grant to improve the physical and mental health of Republic County citizens.

Republic County residents struggle with finding adequate housing.

At the same time, another concern is health care.

"Right now, Belleville is the only town in the county that has physicians," Scofield said. "One is retiring at the end of the year. The other doctor has decided to move from the community. At the first of the year, we will be without a physician."

Community leaders are looking to help recruit doctors.

Where Based: **Belleville**

Counties Served: **Republic**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$349,120****

Total Assets Today: **\$2,816,950*****

ROSSVILLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The residents of Rossville have sometimes struggled with identity.

Although founded in 1871, Rossville is most often referred to as a bedroom community of Topeka. It's 25 miles northwest of the state's capital and nearly 40 miles west of Manhattan, it's next major city.

It may not get all the historical respect it deserves, in part, because of its location. The truth of the matter is, Rossville was settled in a flood plain.

"All the city and for sure much of the surrounding areas are in a flood plain. That makes it a challenge to renovate existing buildings, add new buildings and solidify home ownership," said Adrienne Olejnik, president of the Rossville Community Foundation.

But that doesn't mean pride doesn't dwell in Rossville. The folks in Rossville are all about hosting tight-knit, civic-minded and family-oriented events to build the town.

"It is really exciting to see how people come together and work around issues and still stay in the area and make investments that make sense," Olejnik said.

The community foundation was started in 2003 because the community wanted to build a pool.

The foundation is an affiliate of the Topeka Community Foundation and there have been several projects since then to help the community and foundation grow.

"We just renovated the Main Street so there is a dedication in keeping things up to date," Olejnik said.

A new park was built within the past 15 years.

These are huge accomplishments for an area with only about 2,200 people, she said.

"Our most recent endeavors (as a foundation)," Olejnik said, "have been to help us do some strategic planning. Our assets have continued to build; however, it's really a critical time to push to the next level."

GROW II funds, she said, allowed the foundation to hire a consultant for strategic planning.

Where Based: **Rossville**

Counties Served: **Serves the city of Rossville and zip code 66533**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$113,603****

Total Assets Today: **\$229,279*****

RUSSELL COUNTY AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Long known as an oil boom town and former five-term U.S. Senator Bob Dole's hometown, Russell has been hurt in recent years with plunging oil and agriculture economies.

It's seen the effects of an aging population and a community so dependent on those two economies, that when the markets shift, the community feels it.

But, these days there may be reasons to hope.

Russell County has been chosen as a pilot county to grow industrial hemp.

Granted, it's experimental, but, if successful, could make a huge difference when wheat prices sag, and agricultural tariffs reduce global demand for Kansas soybeans.

In addition, the Russell County Area Community Foundation is poised with a \$175,000 grant to jump-start economic development, said Angela Muller, executive director of the foundation.

Talk has been of promoting the area as a tourist destination because of the grassroots art in Lucas (home of the Garden of Eden concrete sculptures built by Civil War veteran S. P. Dinsmoor) or using the money to help revitalize communities along the interstate.

Already, the community foundation has provided \$30,000 in grant money to help revive Russell's ballpark and playground. And, more than \$220,000 in scholarships are awarded each year.

At the same time, Muller said the county needs more housing.

"We just need more houses," she said.

Where Based: **Russell**

Counties Served: **Russell County and the community of Natoma**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$563,545****

Total Assets Today: **\$12,915,905*****



SMITH COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The impact of a community foundation is about numbers, people and questions.

Smith County, bordering the Nebraska border, has 3,331 residents.

"Most of our funds are targeted toward senior citizens," said Joan Nech, the foundation's volunteer director. "Almost 90 percent of the people in Smith County are over 65 years old."

Nech says the future of the county is in the community foundation's ability to recruit young people, build housing for middle income families and maintain the county's two school districts.

Part of Smith County's legacy is its ability to create a sense of time and place.

Lebanon is the center of the continental United States.

Smith County is the home of the Home on the Range cabin – where Brewster Higley, a frontier doctor would write the words to one of the world's most famous folksongs.

It is a county with fiber optic internet service and whose residents are building a new hospital.

They can boast having five doctors and three physician's assistants.

In 2009, a local resident started the community foundation.

The Smith County Community Foundation now has 11 different funds.

The foundation partnered with the county health department for a Healthy Women series, an exercise and weight-control program. They have also created a fall prevention class teaching for senior citizens.

And, there is a business succession program promoting and sponsoring programs for older business owners as they turn their businesses over to younger people.

Some of the funds target residents who need health and dental care.

Where Based: **Smith Center**

Counties Served: **Smith**

Year Joining GROW: **2010**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$125,086****

Total Assets Today: **\$15,000,000*****



SMOKY HILLS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Bill Evans, a contractor and board chair of the Smoky Hills Charitable Foundation, believes affordable housing in small towns is possible.

He sees that as one of the most critical needs for his hometown of Ellsworth.

"I'm not talking low-income housing, I'm talking about affordable housing for the elderly who don't want to go into nursing homes, housing for young people who are starting a marriage and don't have a lot of money," Evans said. "We can have it here."

That's one of the projects he's hoping the Smoky Hills Charitable Foundation can work on in the future.

For now, the foundation is helping the community get a recreation health center that would include an indoor track, weights and a gym.

Other community projects include helping the Immanuel Lutheran Church and the Good Samaritan Society Ellsworth Village raise \$15,000 to purchase the first Comfort Care Dog in Kansas. Within the next few months, the city expects to have a trained Golden Retriever and handler that can be a resource for victims after disasters.

Evans said the community foundation has assisted the Ellsworth County Fair Board with money on livestock pens.

But the hardest thing for the 12-year-old foundation, Evans said, is creating awareness with Ellsworth County residents that it's there for them.

"Most people don't realize that our foundation is operating totally," he said. "We have grant money available and we do a lot. But no, people don't think of it. Some see it as charity."

"It's that being proud and not wanting to take a handout. But that's not what our foundation is about. It is about helping the community."

Where Based: **Ellsworth**

Counties Served: **Ellsworth**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$2,768,318*****

SMOKY VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Visionaries, volunteers and commitment are the necessary ingredients for making a community foundation.

At the Smoky Valley Community Foundation, it also takes patience.

"We had some very good leaders when this first started," said Cassie Johnson, foundation co-chair and City of Lindsborg administrative assistant. "They were adamant about getting out there and getting money. We are lucky to continue that."

The foundation was started in 2002 and up until 2009, when it became part of the Kansas Health Foundation's GROW II program, its asset base had only grown to \$200,000. It now has \$4 million in assets with 37 funds.

Before it began participating in GROW II, the foundation mostly did projects involving local churches, arts, playgrounds and projects of local residents' interests, said Katy Kitchen, director of regional affiliates with the Greater Salina Community Foundation.

Since then, the foundation has helped fund \$3,000 for Circles of McPherson County, a program that helps families end poverty cycles by providing child care and teaching different ways to live, work and deal with children.

It also helped fund a local suicide intervention and prevention training program.

"Right now, we are trying to figure out what the community would like," Johnson said. "There is talk of a recreation center and we want to aid in that."

For now, Johnson said, one of the greatest challenges for the foundation is finding board members willing to serve and educating the public about its existence.

"For us, it is about getting the word out," she said. "A lot of people don't know about us and that there is money available to apply for and what they can apply for."

Where Based: **Lindsborg**

Counties Served: **Northern McPherson and southern Saline**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$800,000****

Total Assets Today: **\$3,363,813*****

SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In the heart of Kansas farm country, there are families whose children go hungry, whose homes may go days without electricity or running water.

"One of our most critical needs facing most of our counties is quality daycare," said Bekki Pribil, executive director of the South Central Community Foundation. "Along with that, we still have a large percentage of the population that is going hungry. We are doing our best with these \$1,000 grants to encourage the schools to come up with food pantries so that on the weekends, those kids can go in and get a little bit of food."

But even with that, Pribil said, foods that were microwaveable dishes like Mac and Cheese and Ramen Noodles were going uneaten because families didn't have running water, microwaves or electricity.

There is a variety of reasons, Pribil said. The farm economy is down. And although some farmers and spouses have additional jobs off the farm, there is still a circle of poverty.

"We hear these things and we recognize them," she said. "But unfortunately, even with \$18 million in assets, not very much of that is unrestricted."

So, Pribil said, she is most proud of the foundation's grassroots grants.

"I understand they are not as impactful as what the Kansas Health Foundation is able to do, but it is important that we work together and collaborate. We don't all need to address the same problem," she said. "Collaboration is the largest thing that came out of GROW II."

A board of high school students from the surrounding counties. Select the grantees who receive between \$350 and \$1,000.

Her favorite "goose bump story" was a Barber County chicken co-op project.

It was proposed by a shy student who stood up and talked about how it was for individuals with developmental disabilities. It was a chance for these individuals to learn how to take care of chickens, sell eggs, and, if they became good at it, to raise quail because they are worth more than chickens. Several of those types of projects combined earned the South Central Community Foundation and their young members a trip to New York City for a Youth in Philanthropy award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Where Based: **Pratt**

Counties Served: **Barber, Comanche, Kingman, Kiowa, Pratt and Stafford**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$3,756,357****

Total Assets Today: **\$18,004,501*****



TOPEKA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Topeka is shaking it up.

It's no longer business as usual.

"We are taking a much deeper look at health and the definition of health," said Marsha Pope, president of the Topeka Community Foundation. "We are getting upstream of problems like education, transportation and community safety. What does it mean? It means we have changed our grantmaking completely."

No longer are there deadlines for grant applications.

"Good ideas don't come by a certain day on the calendar," Pope said.

Through the Kansas Leadership Center and 23 organizations earlier this year, the Topeka foundation agreed existing programs aren't working. They agreed to work together differently and be more collaborative.

"We have granted millions of dollars through the years in the name of health and yet...the score card kept getting worse," she said. "Right now, we are taking the lead and pooling our health funds to impact the social detriments of health in our community."

The foundation is funding an initiative in east Topeka, which is one of the most low-income/high-crime areas of town. There will be programs and events for children and families that include counseling, STEM education, tutors and mentors. Washburn University is supplying volunteers who will help collect data and provide education.

"This is a first," Pope said. "Never before has the university come to us and said we will help educate you. But they are seeing the need to go into the community. This is all new things we are trying."

In the past, the foundation has helped promote the arts in Topeka – hosting First Friday art walks, murals and other events. Now, the focus is on health.

"Shawnee County's health ranking is not good," Pope said. "Obesity is bad. Diabetes is bad. Smoking is bad. All those things, when you look deeper, are where the zip codes are. Poverty impacts a lot of those things. We are getting to the root cause and no longer throwing a cement pad up for bikes in the middle of a community and calling that health."

"We are doing business differently now."

Where Based: **Topeka**

Counties Served: **Shawnee**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$40,632,767****

Total Assets Today: **\$72,758,026*****



WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

It may not seem like a lot of money.

But a \$700 grant made in 2014 by the Washington County Community Foundation (WCCF) was the beginning of one of the most powerful grants in north central Kansas.

The money paid for iPods for Linn Community Nursing Home residents.

Members from the Linn High School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)– came to the nursing home and began a certified music and memory program.

Students were matched with senior citizens and music bridged the differences in age.

"It didn't stop that year," said Janell Wohler, foundation president and the nursing home's director. "The students still come once a week and work with residents. They each have a music and memory partner."

These students won a national gold medal for their project. Several have since expressed interest in working in the gerontology and dietetics fields.

"It doesn't take a lot of money to have a lasting impact in the community," said Katy Kitchen, regional affiliates director with the Greater Salina Community Foundation.

"This is one of my favorite grants of the hundreds of thousands we give away."

At the same time, the community foundation has a benefactor – Bruce Buchanan, president and CEO of Harris Enterprises which owned a chain of Kansas newspapers until it was sold two year ago. Buchanan grew up in Washington County and established the Buckshot and Christine Buchanan Donor Advised fund, named for his parents. The fund supports local projects. Each year, the foundation sends him grant applications that match his family's passions.

"This helps WCCF leverage their grant dollars to go further each year," Kitchen said. "It is a great story of how a community foundation can still keep individuals connected to their hometowns even if they no longer live there."

Where Based: **Washington**

Counties Served: **Washington**

Year Joining GROW: **2011**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$0****

Total Assets Today: **\$650,300*****

WESTERN KANSAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

For two decades, when the people of western Kansas have struggled, a community foundation has stepped up to help.

"Our job is to bring empowerment to communities," said Conny Bogaard, executive director of the Western Kansas Community Foundation. "We show people you can do it. But (sometimes) there is a lack of belief in themselves."

The Western Kansas Community Foundation covers 15 counties. Garden City is the largest city – a regional hub – in which many other residents from adjoining communities travel for groceries, medical care, and other necessities.

The foundation has grown significantly to \$32 million – aided from GROW I and GROW II funds.

"It has been a tremendous success in improving our foundation," Bogaard said. "The whole area benefited from that."

The growth of the foundation has meant it's been able to make impactful grants.

"We are lucky that unemployment is not an issue, but housing is definitely a concern – affordable housing," Bogaard said.

And, finding good daycare is a concern, Bogaard said, as much as finding fresh food.

"A lot of those smaller towns don't have grocery stores anymore," she said.

The Western Kansas Community Foundation board and staff are in the process of a long-term strategic planning session – asking residents how they can serve the 15 counties better.

It has initiated free estate planning for people within the area; and has established a Women of Purpose fund that is membership-based, in which members pay \$100 to be eligible to vote on what projects the fund will be used.

"People think you have to be wealthy to participate but that is a misconception," Bogaard said. "Our foundation serves people of moderate means – very average people."

Where Based: **Garden City**

Counties Served: **15 counties in western Kansas**

Year Joining GROW: **2000**
(GROW 1 participant)

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$1,100,000****

Total Assets Today: **\$29,656,489*****

WICHITA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In Wichita County, these things are most critical: water, keeping young people in the county and housing.

"Water. We are just trying to keep it going here," said Laura Berning, Wichita Community Foundation community coordinator. "Some people in the rural areas may be running out of water. Irrigation has been decreased a lot. But, it's a future concern – a not-so-far-away future concern...It can get dangerous pretty quick."

Retention of young people is another.

"Right now, our biggest challenges are keeping teachers at the schools," Berning said. "We had a large turnover this past year. A lot of new teachers were hired. But in our schools and our hospital – (it's about) keeping (teachers and) practitioners here. Getting them to stay. We are fortunate to even have a hospital but keeping practitioners local as opposed to agency practitioners is a concern."

And then, finding adequate housing at affordable prices is a challenge, she said.

Her words are echoed by the former community coordinator, Peggy Gillen, who stepped down this past year.

"The other thing, from my perspective, is getting the younger people to take over leadership positions on boards," Gillen said. "Sometimes that can be difficult."

It was a huge milestone this past year when the community foundation passed the \$1 million mark in assets.

"It seemed monumental in reaching that goal," Gillen said. "When we set out to apply for GROW II, we wondered if we would be able. We were on our own the first 10 years and we managed to keep it a viable organization with just volunteers and no staff. The challenges for the future will be to keep filling board positions."

GROW II helped the foundation grow. Funds were also used to help purchase exercise equipment at the recreation center and provide free dental checks at USD 467 schools.

The Kansas Health Foundation initiative "definitely helped us grow," Berning said. "It was an incentive to get out and push our residents to understand this is what we are trying to do."

The next challenge, Gillen said, "is knowing what direction they will go now. We wouldn't be where we are now if it wasn't for that grant."

Where Based: **Leoti**

Counties Served: **Wichita**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$373,750****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,153,357*****



YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (FORMERLY ALLEN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

Out of one of the poorest counties in Kansas, charity has sprung up.

Lots of charity.

"Our biggest challenge is that we have so many charitable things working," said Gary McIntosh, Your Community Foundation advisor. "We are inundated with wonderful do-gooders – I don't mean for that to sound disrespectful – but it would be better if we all worked together."

Nearly 15 years ago, the numbers showed Allen County was one of the least healthy and poorest counties in the state. The Allen County Health Advisory Committee was formed and later evolved into Thrive Allen County, which focuses on the health and wellness of the county's residents.

In 2014, the county was named the "Kansas Organizational Health Champion." And, in 2017, it won a national "Culture of Health" prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The notoriety has changed things in Allen County and created somewhat of a double-edge sword, McIntosh said.

"We are in need of economic development and houses," he said. "Right now, our long-term goal is to try and be more sustainable, so we can hire a part-time person."

But beyond that, charity has been successful in Allen county.

"We are all trying to do it," McIntosh said. "We wouldn't exist without Thrive. We also have an animal rescue and food bank.

"It is about how we coordinate all these things with our community foundation."

Where Based: **Iola**

Counties Served: **Allen and portions of Woodson and Anderson**

Year Joining GROW: **2012**

Total Assets when joining GROW: **\$12,940****

Total Assets Today: **\$1,325,493*****



FOR US, IT'S SIMPLY HARVEST TIME.

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GROW



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