

Finding Purpose Through Philanthropy

SPRING 2022

LINCOLN

F O R E V E R



WHERE THE HEART IS

Gorynski Returns Home
to Lead Foundation

LINCOLN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Greetings:

Home holds a similar yet unique meaning to every one of us. Comfort, warmth, family: all terms that ring true when we think about our home. For others, home reflects so much more. Home can mean a fresh start and a new beginning; home can signal a bright future and the opportunity to build wealth; home can mean the first chance to call something yours and make it your own; home can mean a safe and secure place to rest; and home can simply mean stability.

At LCF we are proud of the work we do with our community to make home a reality, and how we help others realize all that home means to them. Whether it's the sense of home that quality childcare provides to our little ones and their families, Lincoln's city-wide affordable housing efforts, or neighbors coming together to improve their community spaces, we are pleased to share the stories of impact in our Spring magazine.

Together we are working to create and support the tools, programs, and systems that unlock potential and meaning throughout this community. I am inspired and humbled to continue this important work, and am excited to call Lincoln my home, again.

With Gratitude,

Alec Gorynski



CONTRIBUTORS



KELLY BURKEN

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



MARY KAY ROTH

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



CHUCK WILLIAMS

Chuck is the Marketing Coordinator for the Lincoln Community Foundation as well as our Veteran Liaison. He is a podcasting enthusiast and amateur voiceover talent. When he is not in his recording studio, Chuck is active in his church community.

Upcoming Events



SERIES BEGINS WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

LCF Garden Summer Concert Series

The annual Lincoln Community Foundation Garden Performance Series is back for another season! Join us downtown for live and local music **every Wednesday from May 25 through mid-September**. Produced by Arts Incorporated, the performances will be held from 12:00-1:00 PM at the Lincoln Community Foundation Garden, 1415 N Street.



THURSDAY, MAY 26

Give to Lincoln Day

Lincoln Community Foundation's annual day of giving is back! Choose from more than 450 local nonprofits to support. If you have a donor advised fund at LCF, make your Give to Lincoln Day grant request at LCF.org through the donor portal before May 15 (please specify that it is for Give to Lincoln Day). Gifts may also be made online via credit card at GiveToLincoln.com starting **May 1**.

New and Noteworthy



Excellence. Accountability. Impact.™

LCF recently received re-accreditation with the nation's highest standard for philanthropic excellence. **National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations®** establish legal, ethical, effective practices for community foundations everywhere.

The National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations® program requires community foundations to document their policies for donor services, investments, grantmaking and administration. With more than 500 community foundations accredited nationwide, the program is designed to provide quality assurance to donors, as well as to their legal and financial advisors.

"When donors make a charitable bequest or establish a fund, they are putting their trust in us," said Alec Gorynski, LCF president. "They are counting on us to manage the investment wisely and honor their charitable wishes. This accreditation says our house is in order."

The National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations® program was established in 2000 in cooperation with the Council on Foundations. For more information about National Standards, visit www.cfstandards.org.



In late 2021 LCF joined **Nebraska Competes**, a non-partisan coalition of businesses committed to achieving nondiscrimination policies at the community and state levels in order to attract the best talent, to increase and enhance business-to-business and business-to-consumer relationships, and to grow Nebraska's economy.

"Signing on as a Nebraska Competes coalition member reaffirms our nondiscrimination policies and organizational values," said Tracy Edgerton, vice president for strategic giving. "We welcome our LGBTQ community and continue to encourage our best and brightest to call Lincoln home."



HOPE FOR LINCOLN'S LITTLE ONES

Generous Community Raises More Than \$670,000 for Early Childhood Education

The fourth Lincoln Littles Giving Day, held on February 9, raised \$670,123. Hosted by LCF, the annual giving day raises funds for tuition assistance, allowing more children in need to access quality early childhood education. This day augments the Prosper Lincoln Early Childhood community agenda goal of increasing access to affordable high-quality early childhood education.

"Year after year, Lincoln Littles Giving Day harnesses the awesome power of philanthropy" said LCF President Alec Gorynski. "This community sees the critical need for all children in Lincoln to receive the quality early childhood education and care that they deserve."

This year the City contributed \$100,000 via Community Development Block Grant funds to the Lincoln Littles effort. Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird once again issued the "Mayor's Big Challenge for Lincoln Littles," encouraging additional community support, and matching sponsors provided backbone funding for the giving day.

"We extend our gratitude to Mayor Gaylor Baird for her support of Lincoln Littles," said Alec. "And our generous matching fund sponsors and community answered the call. These funds will serve working families and enhance their children's success, stability, and development."

Since 2019 the giving day has raised nearly \$3.1 million for the Lincoln Littles Early Learning Fund. Grants from the fund are distributed to early childhood education providers in Lincoln that serve children in need and have advanced to Step 2 or higher of the Step Up to Quality state guidelines. Since LCF launched Lincoln Littles, there has been a 146% increase in early childhood education providers participating in Step Up to Quality, and more than 500 families have received tuition assistance through the initiative.

"The meaning of Lincoln Littles Day can be summed up in one word: Hope," said Kayla Johnson, assistant director at



Photos by Stacy Ideus Photography

Lincoln Littles provider Kids First Inc. “We can offer hope that families in our community are able to find a childcare center that is rich in quality and care. We can offer hope that our families will have peace of mind in knowing their children are being loved and well cared for – so they are able to work and support their family.”

“I honestly don’t think we could have stayed enrolled at my current provider, let alone any

other childcare facility, if it weren’t for the help of this program,” said one parent. “Being a single mom and not qualifying for any other type of assistance, the Lincoln Littles opportunity has been very helpful and lifted quite a bit of stress off my shoulders.”

You can still support Lincoln Littles and other Prosper Lincoln initiatives. Contact Tracy Edgerton, vice president for strategic giving, at 402-474-2345, or tracye@lcf.org

Lincoln Littles Giving Day Matching Sponsors include:

The Buffett Early Childhood Fund

Acklie Charitable Foundation

Harbor of Dreams, Inc.

Mae Whitmer Early Childhood Fund

Bettenhausen Family Foundation

Drs. Bob & Stacie Bleicher

Rosalind K. Carr in memory of Professor James D. Carr

Shirley & Jerry Daugherty

Barbara Hoppe Johnson & Bruce Johnson

Kile & Virginia Johnson

Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp.

U.S.A. Good Times Foundation

Kidwell Electric, Inc.

Lincoln Industries

Robert & Cynthia Milligan

Drs. Marilyn & David Moore

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Drs. Bob & Lisa Rauner

Sue & Al Saathoff

Rhonda Seacrest

Dr. Bob & Dottie Shapiro

Tom & Lisa Smith

Tom & Susan Tallman

Temme Family Foundation

Sue & Ed Tricker

Dr. Eileen & Richard Vautravers

Ross & Judy Wilcox

LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION Building



WHERE THE HEART IS

ALEC GORYNSKI RETURNS HOME TO LEAD LCF

Before he leaves his house in the morning, the new president of the Lincoln Community Foundation drinks an entire pot of coffee – then pours a couple more cups when he arrives at work.

“That may be where my energy comes from,” laughed Alec, who officially became the new president and chief executive officer on the cusp of 2022. “Or perhaps it’s because I go to bed pretty early. Or because one of my major Gallup strengths is ‘achiever’.”

Something must be working.

Four months into the job, and Alec Gorynski (pronounced GOR-EN-SKI) is

feeling inspired and optimistic.

“I’ve said that my whole job right now is meeting people, listening, and learning – and that’s what I’ve been doing. And wow, what a welcoming and warm reception to this community,” said Alec. “In many ways this part of the job will never stop. Building relationships will always be fundamental to my role. But the conversations will evolve over time.”

Meanwhile, Alec and his wife, Laura, and their three children – Jamie (8), Ben (6), and Claire (4) – officially moved from Omaha to Lincoln this spring, just in time for fourth quarter at Sheridan Elementary.

“There was a day when my wife dropped off kids at school, painted our daughter’s bedroom, and then wrote a grant,” Alec mused. “I was in awe of her.”

“So, yes, it has been chaotic. But it honestly feels like we’re coming home. Lincoln is the city where I was born and raised. It’s kind of fun to drive around and see things that are familiar to me, see things from when I was a kid,” Alec said. “We grew up in Eastridge neighborhood and spent a lot of time at the St. Teresa parish, volunteering, doing service.”

In fact, Alec believes many of the fundamental values that he brings to LCF originated in those early years. “It is how

I developed my sense of the world, how I developed the values that continue to guide me professionally and personally,” he reflected. “A belief in equity and equality, opportunity and hope, trust, transparency, and accountability. These are the values that guide how I live, how Laura and I raise our children.”

Earnest and conscientious, Alec possesses a seemingly endless supply of energy and a bedrock sense of the values that guide his life. “I have always been focused on civic and civil service,” he said. “In my undergraduate years, I wanted to be a police officer. In fact, I have a degree in criminal justice.”

Most recently he worked in Omaha serving as vice president of community development and corporate philanthropy for First National Bank of Omaha.

Why change?

“Somewhere along the line, your heart steps in. This job just felt right.”

Alec believes Lincoln is quite unique in how it has approached the concept

of public good. “Everyone here – the business community, civic institutions, the universities, philanthropic organizations – they all come together collaboratively in what’s best for the community. They ask questions in a unified voice: Where are our needs? What does the data tell us? How does that inspire change?”

He also believes Lincoln Community Foundation is unique in the way it maximizes the power of every donor. “The Foundation here serves and meets a donor where they are, no matter how much they have to give. That doesn’t happen everywhere,” Alec emphasized.

What’s important now, he said, is to step up as a steward of the community, listening and learning.

So, what has he learned so far?

“I am seeing three dominant themes emerge,” Alec said.

ONE

“What I hear, more than ever, is the strong and favorable reputation of the

Lincoln Community Foundation. There is a fondness for the organization, an appreciation for who they are. Everyone I meet – board members, donors, strong and capable staff – is doing everything possible to set me up for success. They are in my corner. I believe everyone wants the Foundation to win, because then the entire community wins.”

TWO

“Second, and just as important as the first, folks love the people of the Lincoln Community Foundation. There is such respect and appreciation for everything they do and the stewardship they provide.”

THREE

“There is an incredibly solid base of community giving in Lincoln, and our work is to maintain that momentum while also looking ahead to the next generation. I believe we need to consider how we grow the practice of philanthropy in our community and think more broadly.”


Alec is up for the challenge, and his professional and educational experience to date have prepared him for this role. With an undergraduate degree from Peru State College and a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Alec has 15 years of experience in community development, working across the private, nonprofit, and government sectors.

“I believe the Foundation is well positioned to navigate into the future. Our work ahead is to build a Foundation for long-term growth and impact,” Alec said. “We will define and develop our playbook going forward. And we will work together to develop a strategic plan for the next five years, growing our ability to serve our donors and expanding our role as a community leader and convener.”

First, Give to Lincoln Day lies ahead. So do more community conversations. And probably a lot more coffee.



From left to right: Jamie, Laura, Ben, Alec, and Claire Gorynski



give
TO LINCOLN DAY
MAY 26, 2022

LINCOLN'S ONE
BIG DAY
OF GIVING

AN ABSOLUTE WIN-WIN

*Couple Supports Nonprofits on Give to Lincoln Day
Through IRA Distribution*

Craig and Devon Ames both grew up amidst a spirit of generosity – always aspiring to an “attitude and heart that are open to helping others.”

“Devon and I believe you find joy in giving, seeing how you can use your time, talent and treasure to support your community,” said Craig.

In fact, Craig remembers his mother sitting down on a Saturday night, stuffing cash into an envelope for the offering plate on Sunday morning.

“Devon and I have been married for 50 years, but we both grew up in

households that modeled the spirit of philanthropy, and we have never forgotten how our parents showcased those lessons,” he said.

Craig stressed that one person can do so much with a simple contribution. “No, I cannot change generational poverty, but I can give money to an organization like City Impact,” he emphasized. “I can’t cure cancer, but I can give to the American Cancer Society, knowing they are working on a cure.”

Craig and Devon are drawn to the Lincoln Community Foundation’s

annual Give to Lincoln Day each May because it is such a meaningful opportunity.

“It is a great event, and its success has grown so much in the amount raised and number of participating organizations, and the match that the Foundation provides,” Craig said. “Our family has been blessed with a certain amount of disposable money, and we see it as the Lord’s money. Give to Lincoln Day offers a chance to use it where it makes an impact.”

Devon and Craig first met as college students at Wheaton College, just outside Chicago. Eventually Craig enrolled in the Army ROTC and served in Vietnam, while Devon taught high school.

After returning from service, Craig used the GI Bill to earn his master's in hospital administration. After first working in Minneapolis, the Ames' moved to Lincoln, and Craig took a position at Bryan Hospital in 1988.

Craig and Devon had two children when they moved to Lincoln, and they found Lincoln to be a wonderful place to balance family and work. "Lincoln's such a big-small town, a state capital, with a university, parks, cultural events."

He served as Chief Operating Officer at Bryan until his retirement in 2009 but wasn't ready to play golf every day. Instead, Craig volunteers, serves on a variety of community boards, and has focused on giving back to the community.

Devon and Craig encourage people to support Give to Lincoln Day by exploring all the possible philanthropic tools available now. He and Devon have chosen to distribute a portion of their Individual Retirement Account (IRA) for the giving day, using what is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

Craig explained that the federal government requires you to withdraw and pay taxes on a portion of your IRA when you reach a certain age. However, by using a QCD, those funds can be transferred directly to charitable organizations without paying taxes on the amount transferred.

"It's kind of a no-brainer," Craig said. "You support something you care about and reduce your tax burden. We give money to charity, and we save on taxes, and we also support a cause dear to us. It's an absolute win-win, such a great deal."



Participate in Give to Lincoln Day via IRA QCDs

When you reach age 72½, the federal government requires you to withdraw or distribute a portion of your IRA investment and consequently pay taxes on the amount withdrawn. By using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to support a qualified charity, those funds are transferred directly to that charitable organization, tax-free.

Craig Ames has used a QCD for Give to Lincoln Day. "When you get to a specific age, you must take the money whether you need it or not, so it just makes sense. It's kind of a no-brainer," he said.

Join Lincoln's one big day of giving by using Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from your IRA to support your favorite registered nonprofits. It is as easy as 1, 2, 3...

- 1 Contact your IRA administrator about your annual distributions. Decide your total donation for Give to Lincoln Day this year.
- 2 Request your IRA administration distribute an IRA QCD directly to Lincoln Community Foundation, mailing the distribution to the Foundation at 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68508. Please request your IRA administrator to include your name on the check.
- 3 Complete the LCF form for IRA QCDs gifts, listing the amount for each nonprofit you wish to support, and return it to the Foundation by Thursday, May 12. This form is available on the LCF website, or by contacting the Foundation.

For more information and other examples of ways you can use a Qualified Charitable Distribution to achieve your charitable goals, contact Diane Mendenhall at 402-474-2345 or dianem@lcf.org.



The CenterPointe Outpatient Clinic's former location on 13th and E will be the site of a new development including affordable housing units.

Making Lincoln a More Affordable Place to Live

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION MOVES THE NEEDLE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS

True to the collaborative spirit of our great city, Lincoln's affordable housing story is the product of public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit partnerships. Over the past few years, these entities have come together to develop a shared understanding of the affordable housing problems in our community and work towards potential solutions.

The Lincoln Community Foundation has been a common thread throughout these partnerships. Collaboration began with the 2017 Lincoln Vital Signs report, a partnership between LCF and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center to identify our community's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The 2017 Vital Signs and other data concluded that a high percentage of Lincoln residents were housing cost-burdened – paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing. This paired

with low homeownership rates, a decline in residential construction, and overall, not enough affordable units to meet current and future housing demands. The alarming data lead to Affordable Housing becoming a focus area as of the Prosper Lincoln community agenda in 2019.

“One of the things that became very obvious was that we weren't going to solve all of the problems, but we could start,” said Tom Smith, local investor, and board president of the South of Downtown Community Development Organization.

The City's Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan further documented Lincoln's future housing needs and added to the conversation a target of 9,000 affordable housing units over the next 10 years. This, in conjunction with the Lincoln Vital Signs findings, has created a common affordable housing goal across our community.

This shared goal guides LCF's affordable housing leadership and mission investment work (see side bar), which includes partnering with nonprofit organizations like the South of Downtown and NeighborWorks, who are focusing their affordable housing work in targeted neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty, low home-ownership rates, and an aging housing stock.

LCF's affordable housing efforts are made possible because of partnerships with – and investments from – local financial institutions. Funds were raised from 11 local banks who supported LCF's affordable housing initiatives due to the documented need as well as their trust in LCF's leadership.

Affordable housing goes beyond brick-and-mortar projects. LCF also invests in the tools our community needs to systemically increase affordable housing development. One such tool is a Community Development

Financial Institution (CDFI), a nonprofit organization that exists to provide technical assistance and financing to support community development activities.

Throughout 2020 and into 2021, LCF led an effort with affordable housing professionals to explore, design, and launch a CDFI to provide financing to future affordable housing projects. As a result of this work, Community Development Resources, an existing nonprofit CDFI dedicated to small business lending, announced plans to expand its mission to include affordable housing.

Another available tool in the affordable housing toolkit are funds used to support the construction of single-family owner-occupied units. Catalyzed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2020, urban communities can now access grants to support financing for workforce housing development. NeighborWorks, South of Downtown, and Nebraska Housing Resources each were awarded workforce housing grants through this legislation.

When combined with local match funds provided by LCF and their partners, such as local foundations and the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, these organizations collectively have \$6 million to be used for single family housing development.

“Because of the pandemic, grant programs have really played into our ability to move the needle,” Tom said. “When you get the City, the state and the federal government all saying the same things and local entities and organizations ready to take action – progress starts to happen.”

This progress represents just a few pieces in a complex affordable housing puzzle, with much work still ahead. Of all the progress made to date, including the development of brick-and-mortar projects and the creation of housing financing tools, the most important outcome has been raising the awareness of affordable housing needs in our community.



Wayne Mortensen, CEO of NeighborWorks and Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird at the dedication of 1105 E Street in October 2020.

Mission Investing

LCF INVESTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Lincoln Community Foundation is committed to providing leadership and resources when it comes to the City’s affordable housing goals. One resource that has moved several affordable housing projects forward has been LCF’s Mission Investing.

Most of LCF’s endowment assets are invested in a diversified mix of equity funds and bonds. The Foundation’s Mission Investment Committee looks for opportunities to invest a portion of the endowment locally in projects that provide a market return and help to achieve a mission.

LCF’s first mission investment for affordable housing was a loan to the South of Downtown Community Development Organization (CDO) to renovate an abandoned property on **1105 E Street**. An excellent example of public-private-philanthropic partnership, the property was donated to the CDO through private philanthropy, the City covered the teardown costs for the existing structure, and NeighborWorks constructed the new 4-bedroom home on the property. The property is the state’s first to be governed by a community land trust.

In 2021, the CDO purchased a property at **13th and E**, currently occupied by the CenterPointe Outpatient Clinic. The clinic is moving to their new location on 11th and South St., and the CDO’s plan for the current property is to tear down the existing structure and develop more units of affordable housing in the neighborhood. LCF partnered with a local bank for the acquisition loan on this project.

More recently, LCF’s mission investment fund provided a short-term loan to NeighborWorks for a mixed-income housing development at the old Community Crops location at **4618 Pioneers Boulevard**.

These projects demonstrate LCF’s commitment to partner with a variety of organizations to make Lincoln a more affordable place to live.

LCF Open Door Grants: Shedding Some Light on South Salt Creek



*Photo courtesy of
Partnership for a
Healthy Lincoln*

LCF's Open Door Grants support efforts by nonprofits in Lincoln and Lancaster County to meet current needs or address challenges and opportunities facing our community. These grants provide flexible and critical funding to nonprofit operations, programs, and capital projects. One such capital project making our community healthier and safer is in the South Salt Creek neighborhood.

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln (PHL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health, wellness, and fitness of communities, thousands of people at a time. PHL recently received an Open Door Grant to support their Streets Alive! campaign.

PHL identified a Streets Alive! project in the South Salt Creek neighborhood to improve the condition of the railroad

tunnel on 3rd and F Street. BNSF Railroad owns the tunnel, one of only three safe pedestrian passageways across the railroad tracks in the neighborhood.

The maintenance of the tunnel had been severely neglected over the years, with overgrown landscaping, leaking walls, and poor lighting. When the tunnel became an unsafe option for residents, the Salt Creek Neighborhood collaborated with others to improve the passageway.

After the City improved the retaining wall as part of another project, BNSF repaired the tunnel walls and ceiling. Local artist Micah Mullins was then selected to create a new vibrant mural in the tunnel, reflecting the history and culture of the neighborhood through colorful graffiti. LCF awarded an Open Door Grant to PHL to help fund the project.

"The Open Door Grant we received almost perfectly matched the cost of upgrading the lighting in the tunnel," said Veronica Cockerill, PHL program coordinator.

Veronica hopes projects like this will shed some light, not only on South Salt Creek but on what people can do to improve their own neighborhoods. She feels projects like this can generate positive attention and have a snowball effect.

"This neighborhood doesn't get much economic development or positive attention," said Veronica. "We hope this project inspires other potential funders and partners to see what was done and think about what they can accomplish in other parts of the city."

For more information on Open Door Grants, visit LCF.org/helping-nonprofits/open-door-grants.

SUPPORT NONPROFITS WITH DAFS

Open A Donor Advised Fund and Support Your Favorite Nonprofits on Give to Lincoln Day

If you have a donor advised fund at Lincoln Community Foundation, fees are waived when you support nonprofits on Give to Lincoln Day through your fund. Make grants to your favorite participating organizations, and they will receive 100% of your gift. Use the My LCF Login button on LCF.org to access the online donor portal or email Michelle Paulk at michellep@lcf.org to request grant distributions by May 15. Minimum distribution is \$100 per nonprofit.

There's still time to open a donor advised fund with the Lincoln Community Foundation before Give to Lincoln Day! Contact Chip DeBuse, vice president for development, at 402-474-2345 or chipd@lcf.org to create your fund by May 15.

