

Finding Purpose Through Philanthropy

SUMMER 2023

# LINCOLN

F O R E V E R

## CELEBRATING OUR PARKS

Generous Endowments  
Support Outdoor Spaces



Lincoln Community  
FOUNDATION

# Greetings:

Summer brings a certain charm to our community – don't you think? Here at Lincoln Community Foundation, we have the privilege of proximity to a longstanding summer tradition. Every Wednesday at noon, local live music fills our halls and brings folks away from their desks and into the Barbara Bartle Garden to enjoy the LCF Garden Performance Series.

Our team also recently had the opportunity to venture out of office and visit the Intertribal Medicine Collective at the Lincoln Indian Center for a tour of the spirit-led wellness community's new space and apothecary. The apothecary opened in April 2023 and provides a space to share resources and knowledge of traditional plant-based medicines with the community. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect, enjoy some herbal iced tea and learn how they are fulfilling their mission in our community.



*LCF team members learn about local plants from Intertribal Medicine Collective Co-founder Erin Poor (Cherokee) at the Lincoln Indian Center.*

I hope our summer magazine finds you in a more relaxed state, maybe with some extra time to spend outside in our parks and neighborhoods. This issue highlights two endowments held at LCF that are dedicated to enhancing our public spaces. You'll also read about residents coming together to inform local data and support our neighborhoods. There is much to celebrate in Lincoln this summer!



Cheers,

Alec Gorynski

## Contributors



### KELLY BURKEN

Kelly is LCF's Creative Manager as well as our resident photographer. She specializes in weddings, family and senior portraits and lives with her husband Kurt, their baby Rye and standard poodles, Banks and Birdie.



### JANE HOLT

Jane is a retired high-school journalism teacher and school librarian. These days, she often can be found outdoors, enjoying nature, or laughing on the pickleball court.



### MARY KAY ROTH

Mary Kay Roth served as the director of communications at Lincoln Public Schools for 20 years and as a reporter at various publications including the Lincoln Journal Star. She now writes as a freelancer, hikes, travels, plays with her granddaughters, and attempts to catch as many sunrises as possible.

**Special thanks to our playground friends: Madison, Jordann, Jayceon, Ja'layeh, Joelle, Jaelani, Dream, Charlie and Larry.**





## Culinary Kitchen Emerges from Legacy of Korn Popper

History meets innovation, that's how the new owners of Culinary Kitchen describe the transition of the old Korn Popper building into a test kitchen featuring a luscious menu of breakfast, brunch, and lunch waffles.

Kevin Knudson, the new owner, said he fully understands the meaningful legacy of the Korn Popper at 14th and N streets – the official entryway into the timeless Lincoln Community Foundation Barbara Bartle Garden.

“It’s a Lincoln tradition, it’s Lincoln history,” Kevin said. “We look upon this as a new story that starts now, a contemporary Lincoln tradition, the old meeting the new.”

And that “new” is a different sort of downtown offering called Heavenly Waffles, a distinctive waffle that serves as the basis for all types of meals, from waffle sliders (such as smoked ham, pepper jack cheese, avocado and tomato) to delectable dessert waffles topped with fresh strawberries and blueberries, sprinkled with powdered sugar and maple syrup, or lemon zest waffles topped with passionfruit sorbet.

Bob Haney, founder and executive chef for Heavenly Waffles, described his “revolutionary waffle mix” as a modified waffle recipe with yogurt making up 40 percent of the dry mix. This creates a unique, light and fluffy texture and adds only 110 calories with 8 grams of protein.

“This is definitely not your hotel waffle. In fact, we will completely change your concept of a waffle,” Bob promised.

“I love Lincoln, this is a foodie town with people who love the opportunity to try something new,” Kevin said. “This is a different taste they’ve never had before. And what a perfect venue and location! I believe they call Foundation’s Garden the people’s park, so we are located in paradise.” ♦



**Visit the Culinary Kitchen Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Enjoy your lunch with live music from the Lincoln Community Foundation Garden Performance Series – every Wednesday at noon through September 13.**

## LCF Supports Strong Neighborhoods Grants

Lincoln Community Foundation and Civic Nebraska along with members of the Community Builder Coalition recently unveiled the Strong Neighborhoods Grants program to support neighborhood-based, resident-led programs and projects across Lincoln. LCF granted \$25,000 to support and equip neighborhood stakeholders to achieve their neighborhood development goals.

Civic Nebraska will serve as the fiscal agent and distribute the funding at the discretion of the Community Builder Coalition, a group of community builders and organizers from local organizations that formed via Prosper Lincoln’s Strong Neighborhoods initiative.

“This grant opportunity is very unique,” said Allie Christianson, a senior community organizer with Collective Impact. “It demonstrates how neighbors and neighborhoods are already vital. These grants can put money back in people’s pockets and help neighbors continue to drive positive change.”

Strong Neighborhoods grants may include neighborhood events that bring neighbors together and strengthen relationships in the community, projects that enhance the safety, beauty or social connections within a neighborhood or develop leadership skills and roles of neighborhood residents. Each project

may receive a grant of up to \$1,000. The first round of grants included funding for sustainable landscaping in the Near South neighborhood, a free community workshop day on rewilding yards with the South Salt Creek Community Organization, and a community art space and screen-printing studio at Proyecto Cultural – a nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of local Hispanic Culture. ♦

**To learn more about the Strong Neighborhood Grants program, visit [CivicNebraska.org](http://CivicNebraska.org).**



## A Lovely Day

### Community Raises More Than \$7.5M For Local Nonprofits

The 12th annual Give to Lincoln Day on May 24th raised more than \$7.5 million for 456 local nonprofits. The funds are designated to help support charitable organizations that serve Lincoln and Lancaster County. All participating nonprofits received a proportional share of a \$500,000 match fund based upon the organization's percentage of the total dollars raised, provided by LCF and sponsors, including Presenting Sponsor West Gate Bank.

"Year after year, Give to Lincoln Day offers us the chance to give back to the organizations that are near and dear to us," said Alec Gorynski, LCF president. "Organizations that provide art and cultural experiences, teach and guide our youth, support those who are experiencing hard times, care for our four-legged friends and much more."

Nearly 25,000 donations were received for this year's giving day. The event has raised more than \$57 million for local nonprofits in its 12-year history.

"The collective impact of 25,000 individual acts of generosity, along with the \$500,000 matching fund, will empower the missions and fuel the critical work of 456 nonprofits for the year ahead," Alec continued.

"We are thrilled with this year's successful results that demonstrate the awesome power of philanthropy. When neighbors come together on Give to Lincoln Day, we provide everyone in our community the opportunity to thrive."

For more information and to see gifts received for each nonprofit, visit [www.GiveToLincoln.com](http://www.GiveToLincoln.com). ♦



Interested in playing a BIG role in Lincoln's One Big Day of Giving? Contact Vice President of Development – Legacy Planning, Chip DeBuse, at 402-474-2345 or [chipd@lcf.org](mailto:chipd@lcf.org) about becoming a 2024 match fund sponsor.



## Thank You, Match Sponsors!

Thanks to these generous match fund sponsors, gifts on Give to Lincoln Day go even further for participating nonprofits.

West Gate Bank (Presenting Sponsor)

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Bill & Mae Whitmer Family Fund and ABC Electric

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## NOTES FROM NONPROFITS



*When I helped start Nebraska No Kill Canine Rescue back in 2010, I never really considered how it might help me find my life's purpose. I've been a volunteer for more than a decade, and in March of this year the organization hired me as a full-time employee. Now, thanks in part to Give to Lincoln Day, I get paid to do what I do best every day!*

*It's taken a lot of hard work, but Give to Lincoln Day helped us start to dream bigger. It helped us survive and thrive during the pandemic. And by breaking all our Give to Lincoln Day fundraising records this year, it helped me prove to our Board that having a full-time staff person who finally has the time to commit to properly promoting our involvement in this event, we are on the path to an even brighter future.*

*How rewarding it must feel to have seen Give to Lincoln Day grow over the years. The whole LCF team should feel extremely proud! Though we may try, the huge impact this event has made on our community simply cannot be measured.*

*Executive Director/Co-founder, Karl Skinner*

# A Happy Future for Lincoln



## Endowments from Forward-Thinking Donors Support Parks and Public Spaces

The Trust for Public Land recently reported that 90 percent of Lincolniters live within a ten-minute walk of public green space. That may be surprising, until you reflect on the supporting statistics:

Lincoln has 136 city parks, 134 miles of trails, 9 city pools, 5 public golf courses, 4 dog runs and 4 disc-golf courses . . .

Clearly, this city and its residents value Lincoln's parks and public spaces.

"People in Lincoln love their parks," said Lincoln Parks Foundation Fund Development Specialist Susan Larson Rodenburg. "They take ownership of their neighborhood parks."

LCF grants have helped support and create those valued outdoor spaces since 1955, when the founding board of directors made its very first grant for \$539.70 to Pinewood Bowl for the purchase of a movie and slide projector.

Long after that first grant, green spaces in the Lincoln area continue to receive boosts from LCF donors. Kenneth J. Good and Sheila Dickinson Dinsmore Graf both established significant endowments that have enhanced and helped create public spaces, large and small.



Sheila Dickinson Dinsmore Graf, who at one time was a single mother of five, was a lifelong volunteer who found her joy in serving others, often with a focus on helping the environment and those in need. She kept her endowment's focus broad, trusting that the foundation would use it to make Lincoln a better place to live.

Kenneth J. Good grew up exploring the hilly woods around Peru, Nebraska. He studied Agronomy at UNL and spent the next 30 years working for the Soil Conservation Service. His beloved dogs, gardens, travels, and friends filled his days. When he died, he took care of those communities through endowments, including one at Lincoln Community Foundation.

"Their endowments have allowed us to do transformational projects," said Michelle Paulk, LCF's vice president for community development and outreach.

One of those transformational projects – Union Plaza – is a six-acre urban green space in Antelope Valley. A generous grant from Graf's endowment helped fund the Union Plaza amphitheater, where residents can enjoy live music and community activities.



*Union Plaza amphitheater. Photo courtesy of Lincoln Parks and Recreation.*

“We wanted to make Union Plaza a place for gathering, celebration and discovery,” said Susan. “Our vision really did become reality. It’s been a great catalyst.”

In addition, that green space tucked into the Antelope Valley floodplain project acts as a trail hub and has helped spur development and widespread neighborhood revitalization in the Telegraph District and beyond.

“It changed the transition between downtown and the rest of the city,” said Randy Gordon, who became executive director of the Lincoln Parks Foundation last October.

By way of their endowments, both Graf and Good recognized that robust public spaces can help enhance the quality of Lincoln. And ensuring a happy future for Lincoln was something each of them wanted to support.

“Lincoln Community Foundation is here to carry out our donors’ wishes,” Michelle commented. “We’re fortunate that Graf and Good were forward-thinking and considered the future in broad ways, so that we can respond as Lincoln’s needs change.”

At times, grants from their endowments have helped in the early stages of projects that are new to Lincoln, such as the creation of Lincoln’s Bike Share program, BikeLNK, or the Southern Heights Food Forest.

“These grants can help bring public focus to ideas that are new to the community,” Michelle said. “Having the Foundation make a grant to a project can add legitimacy to it. And if the grant comes early in the process, it can give the project a lift and additional public exposure.”

“  
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- Michelle Paulk

”  
Susan Larson Rodenburg said that these grants can have reverberating effects within the larger community. “LCF grants have been so important for so many projects—not only financially but also because they add credibility to the projects,” she said.

One of the longest ranging projects that both the Graf and Good endowments have supported is the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch. This tallgrass prairie corridor will eventually stretch 12 miles from Pioneers Park to the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, southwest of Denton.

Grants from these endowments helped lay the groundwork and purchase trailside easements and will provide maintenance funds for long into the future.

“I’m especially proud of the Prairie Corridor because it’s long term and an important project locally,” said Michelle.

The Prairie Corridor is an environmentally important project.

“We have an opportunity to help preserve some of the last remaining tallgrass prairie and to make sure that the land between Pioneers Park and Spring Creek Prairie remains a prairie,” said Susan. “Such an undertaking requires leadership from all kinds of groups.”

*Continued on page 8*



Visitors to Prairie Corridor learn more about the remaining tallgrass prairie. Photo courtesy of Lincoln Parks and Recreation.

“It is all about partnerships and collaboration,” Randy agreed. “When you tie together what the Lincoln Community Foundation, the Parks Foundation, private donors and others can do, things succeed.”

Additional significant grants from Good and Graf have supported LCF’s Tower Square, the airport entryway corridor, maintenance at Rudge Park, the South Haymarket Park development, and the new Lincoln youth baseball/softball complex. Grants have also funded smaller local projects, including the Beal Slough disc-golf course, Ballard Park pickleball courts, and an ADA-accessible boat and fishing dock at Holmes Lake.

“I think some of these small grants can be really powerful. Disc golf and pickleball are taking off, and the Holmes dock is up and running,” said Michelle. “When the need arises, these groups can come to us and seek support.”

Another project Michelle points to is the Air Park Recreation Center in northwest Lincoln.

“We helped finish the fundraising for the Air Park Rec Center,” she said. “It’s an underserved neighborhood, and, during the pandemic the costs of completion had gone up, so it was great to be able to help out in this growing area of Lincoln.”

Randy pointed to the city’s commitment to improve parks and recreation areas throughout Lincoln. That commitment has a profound effect on people’s lives.

“Parks are the great equalizer,” he said, “There’s a real commitment towards equity in Lincoln, including in its parks. All of our neighborhood and larger parks are well maintained, which helps keep the community connected. And that’s what gives Lincoln its small-town feel.” ♦



**Are you interested in making a lasting gift for Lincoln? Contact Vice President for Philanthropy Services Tracy Edgerton, at 402-474-2345 or [tracye@lcf.org](mailto:tracye@lcf.org) to learn more.**





President/CEO Alec Gorynski shares highlights from the past year at the event.

# Celebrating Leadership & Generosity

## LCF's Annual Event Adds New Civic Leadership Award

Nearly 300 community members gathered in early May at the Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center for the Foundation's annual donor recognition event. This year the event included two awards that celebrate extraordinary displays of generosity and leadership.

Presented to Bill and Marilyn Cintani, the Charity Award recognizes the outstanding philanthropic contributions of an individual or couple in our community. And this year the Foundation added a new award, the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award, presented to Dr. Mae Colleen Jones, which recognizes and celebrates exemplary community leadership. The honorees for both these awards were selected by the Foundation's Nominating Committee from an extensive list of worthy leaders in our community.



Marilyn Cintani and family with the 2023 Charity Award.

## The Charity Award

Bill and Marilyn Cintani became the 12th recipients of the Charity Award. Bill and Marilyn are known for their generous contributions to so many areas of the community, and for their work in partnership with the Lincoln Community Foundation.

With the help of Tom and Lisa Smith, the Foundation approached Bill and Marilyn about the award before Bill's passing in December.

"We are honored they accepted, and that we have the opportunity to celebrate Bill's legacy as a community leader and philanthropist and as our trusted advisor and friend," said LCF President/CEO Alec Gorynski. "His deep love for Lincoln is carried on through Marilyn, their children, and their grandchildren, who are here with us today."



*The Charity Award (left) by artist Larry Roots and the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award (right).*

Bill brought his vision and leadership to the Foundation's board from 2012-2017. During this time, he saw the positive influence matching gifts can have in encouraging donations via Give to Lincoln Day. Inspired by this concept of leverage, Bill and Marilyn pledged matching dollars from their personal fund for new donor advised funds established at the Foundation.

Bill and Marilyn's son, Brian, shared that leverage was often something Bill would consider with his charitable giving.

"It was important to him that there be a multiplier effect on the some of the donations he'd make," said Brian. "He felt like if he could use the money at the Raikes school to fund a summer internship, it would function as an investment and not just a grant. He wanted to see it grow and multiply."

By contrast, Marilyn's heart guides the issues she supports, focusing her philanthropy on children and young families by extending resources to support those enduring challenging situations.

"My dad had passion in philanthropy, and so does my mom, but they varied," said daughter Laura Frantz. "My mom's main passion in her life is her family so I think that trickles down to where she's passionate about giving."

Bill and Marilyn's understated approach to philanthropy has been steady and caring, emphasizing new opportunities for those who might not otherwise have them. They epitomize what it means to give, act and lead.

"The Charity Award was really established so the community had a way to thank an individual or a couple for their wonderful leadership, their philanthropy and their service," said former LCF President Barbara Bartle. "When I think about those criteria, I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Bill and Marilyn. They fit in every category."

## **The JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award**

The JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award was established to recognize an individual who has demonstrated a strong commitment to civic leadership. The Nominating Committee defined this as an individual who possesses servant leadership qualities and expresses their servant leadership through volunteer service to our community, including leadership service with nonprofit and civic organizations.

A group of community leaders, including leaders from Ameritas and NRC, first approached the Foundation about presenting this award to JoAnn Martin shortly before her passing in 2021. NRC also created an endowed fund at the Foundation to sustain JoAnn's leadership legacy. This endowment will grow and sustain the Women in Business Leadership program in partnership with the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

JoAnn Martin was a member of the Foundation Board of Directors and was to serve as board chair in 2022. For this reason, and in recognition of the Foundation's emphasis on community leadership, the award founders and the Martin family agreed that the Foundation's annual donor recognition event was the perfect backdrop for the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award.

Now retired, Dr. Mae Colleen Jones devoted her career to academia, serving most of those years at UNL. Dr. Jones' legacy of leadership throughout her professional career as well as her extensive history of extraordinary community service qualified Dr. Jones as the ideal candidate for this award.



*Dr. Mae Colleen Jones accepts the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award.*

The Nominating Committee identified nearly 20 unique instances of Dr. Jones' formal community service, including volunteer leadership roles with the United Way, Leadership Lincoln, Friendship Home, the Sheldon Art Museum, the Lied Center, and the Lincoln Community Foundation.

"In fact, in early conversations about Dr. Jones as the potential recipient of this award, we would often hear folks exclaim, 'Of course, Colleen is involved in everything,'" said Alec.

Colleen is a founding chapter member and officer with her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and President of UNL's Melvin W. Jones Scholar Community, named for her late husband. Cynthia Milligan, who served as Dean of UNL's College of Business Administration when Colleen was a faculty member in the Management Department, commented on her impact and her influence.

"I think her major contribution was the Jones Scholars," Cynthia said. "I suspect if one had the opportunity to talk to those students, they would say that she was one of the major people in their lives giving them the impetus to stay and do well at the University and to move on."

As Dr. Jones became the second recipient of the JoAnn Martin Civic Leadership Award, she reflected on the journey

that brought her and Melvin to Lincoln. They had both decided early on to support one another's professional paths and "bloom where they were planted."

"When Melvin died, I was reminded of a Maya Angelou quote, 'You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them,'" she said. "It was not difficult for me to step up and become more visibly active in Lincoln – because the perspectives of Black people, women and 'transplanted' new Nebraskans are essential to the health, growth, and future of this community."

Colleen's sorority sister, Karen Williams, commented on how Colleen's leadership mirrors that of the award's first recipient and namesake.

"I believe one of the things that JoAnn Martin said was that it only takes one person to volunteer to make things happen, and Colleen is definitely proof of that," Karen said. "The philosophy that she shares with so many people, the hard work that she's done for so many organizations and just the woman that she is with the biggest heart and the kindest spirit – I can't think of anyone more deserving." ♦

# Lincoln Vital Signs Data Walks

## Inspiring Collective Action Through Community Feedback

Strong communities use data to make collective changes that ensure everyone has the opportunity to succeed and thrive. Lincoln's ongoing data report, Lincoln Vital Signs, informs residents about trends affecting our city and invites collaboration across all sectors of our community to address the findings.

Utilizing a new research method to share data and center community members with lived experiences as co-experts in the process, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (PPC) and the Foundation recently hosted multiple data walks in different neighborhoods throughout our community.

Modeled after a tool developed by the Urban Institute Housing Opportunity and Services Together (HOST) initiative, the objective of the data walks was to share and discuss local key data findings with community residents to help inform both the strengths and needs in our community as it relates to race and equity.

At each of the four data walks, community residents and stakeholders were invited to share a meal, engage with other residents, and provide their thoughts on



*Residents react to data findings presented by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center at a recent neighborhood data walk.*

Lincoln's community information. Eight key data points were presented on large posters as facilitators helped explain the data, answer questions, and engage participants while taking notes on discussions.

The process was well-received and educational for participants and facilitators alike.

"It is important to be aware of the different issues and disparities we have when it comes to minorities in our community," said Sandra Rojo of Lincoln Literacy.

Sandra assisted the process as an English/Spanish translator and interpreter for each data walk. She found the

innovative approach to increased awareness and understanding of our community data very promising.

Having an accessible conversation around data and receiving buy-in from community members with lived experience was exciting for PPC Research Director and data walk coordinator, Dr. Janell Walther.

"One participant exclaimed they initially thought looking at data would be dull," she shared. "However, they quickly realized it was interesting to learn and talk about our local data."

Data points covered six areas of findings: Financial Well-being and Work, Housing and Neighborhoods, Safety, Education, Health, and Local Governance. Insights from these conversations will help inform an upcoming special issue of Lincoln Vital Signs focusing on race and equity in Lincoln.

**To learn more and stay up to date on the upcoming special issue of Lincoln Vital Signs, visit [LincolnVitalSigns.org](https://LincolnVitalSigns.org).**