As we celebrate the launch of our newest giving circle, the MyVillage Project Fund (see page 5), I’m struck again by the power of collective giving. Community foundations are, by definition, the embodiment of collective giving. It was Frederick Goff who envisioned a community trust structure to replace the philanthropic void left when John D. Rockefeller moved Standard Oil from Cleveland to New York. The result: the first community foundation, created in 1914, by and for the people of Cleveland.

Fast forward to 2016: we have more than 480 funds housed here at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. One percent of each gift to an advised or designated fund here goes to the Foundation’s Community Endowment Fund to support local grantmaking in perpetuity. The collective giving model is further amplified through our five giving circles: Women’s Giving Alliance, the Quality Education for All Fund, the LGBT Community Fund for Northeast Florida, the Beaches Community Fund, and now the MyVillage Project Fund. In each case, like-minded donors unite around a common cause with specific goals for grantmaking and social change. They understand that collectively they have far more influence than they would have individually. And that their efforts are enhanced by having assistance from The Community Foundation in their funding and their grantmaking. From our perspective, we are grateful for the power of collective giving.

Giving circles are just one way we can help you fulfill your philanthropic vision. Charitable giving should be meaningful, effective, and a joy! We would be happy to help you design or refine your charitable giving strategy so that you can enjoy your philanthropy to the fullest.

Nina Waters, President
Q: What drew you to the work of The Community Foundation?
A: I was part of TCF’s first Philanthropic Initiative class in 1999. Now known as the Weaver Philanthropic Initiative, it educates next generation donors about hands-on grantmaking. It was a great education in philanthropy vs. charity, and helped me think more strategically about giving. The program piqued my interest and created opportunities to connect with people in the community who had like-minded philosophies on the importance of giving back. Next thing I knew, TCF Trustees Judge Harvey Schlesinger and Laurie DuBow were in my office, asking me to join the Board, which I did in 2008.

In 2009, Deborah became the first chair of the newly formed Programs & Initiatives Committee, which vets all the field of interest and discretionary grantmaking at the Foundation before it goes to the Trustees for approval. She served for six years, until December 2015.

Q: What was the most eye-opening thing you learned about TCF’s grantmaking during your leadership of the P&I Committee?
A: How many areas The Community Foundation touches—big fields like education, neighborhoods, social services, the elderly—down to some very small areas of focus, like support for visual arts in St Augustine. Even though I was a member of the Board, I wasn’t aware of how many different areas and agencies the staff is constantly monitoring and engaging. I was also amazed to learn the stories of some of our most generous donors and how heartfelt they were in setting up sustainable support for causes they were passionate about. I also came to really appreciate The Community Foundation’s steady focus on honoring donor’s intentions—it’s very reassuring to know that every single grant has to measure up to that benchmark.

Martha Baker succeeded Deborah, and is now chair of the P&I Committee.

Q: What are you looking forward to during your term as Chairman?
A: Continuing to bring awareness to our community about how The Community Foundation helps donors. TCF can assist individuals and families to clarify their philanthropic values and make grants that reinforce those values and make a real impact. TCF can also research relevant nonprofit agencies, and if desired, negotiate grants on the donor’s behalf. If a donor wants to remain anonymous, TCF can make the grant with the desired discretion. An exciting benefit that TCF can bring is the ability to gather multiple donors around a single focus area, or to bring multiple areas of a donor’s interest under one grant. Most importantly, if donors want to invest in our community long term—not just today, but forever—TCF can help them secure their legacy.

In addition to our core work of helping fundholders achieve their philanthropic goals, we continue to be very active in the area of civic leadership. Thanks to our 2015 Strategic Planning work, plans are underway to determine how to best use our many forms of capital to strengthen neighborhoods in a multi-year initiative. 2016 will be a pivotal year that will establish essential partnerships and define a scope for this work going forward.

Thank you, Bill Brinton
After a very full two years, Bill Brinton stepped aside as chairman of The Community Foundation Board of Trustees at the end of 2015. Current and former trustees applauded his contributions at a recent gathering at the Museum of Science and History, and President Nina Waters presented him with a piece of original artwork from Kathy Stark, a previous Art Ventures Fund grantee.
In light of some recent news reports about questionable charities, you may ask, ‘how can I be sure my dollars are being used wisely?’ One solution is to make your charitable donations through a donor-advised fund at The Community Foundation. Our due diligence will let you rest easier, so that you can enjoy the full satisfaction of giving.

HOW WE “DO” DUE DILIGENCE FOR DONORS

Our dedicated team understands the impact $30+ million in grants year over year has on a community, and each staff member takes her/his role in due diligence and processing of grants seriously. We place a high priority on getting grants in the hands of grantees quickly, using our knowledge and experience to make sure the process accurately reflects the donor’s philanthropic goals. That said, if at any time we identify a ‘red flag,’ the process is paused until it is resolved.

Charitable organization verified for 501c3 tax exempt status.
Charitable purpose verified for compliance with IRS and the fund agreement.
Address and mailing information of recipient confirmed.
Letter to charitable organization on behalf of the donor.
At least 3 staff members review check and letter prior to sending.
Check & letter sent, normally within 5 business days.
Confirmation letter sent to donor.
Donor’s account updated.
Quarterly fund statement generated.
Annual income tax documentation provided for IRS.

GRANT REQUEST ARRIVES at The Community Foundation.

Our newest giving circle is the MyVillage Project Fund. Created by Imani Hope, Darryl Willie and Ronnie King as they learned about strategic philanthropy as part of our Weaver Philanthropic Initiative class, the MyVillage Project Fund will support nonprofit organizations serving or headed by African Americans in Northeast Florida. They held their first friend-and-fund-raising event at the Jessie Ball duPont Center in February. If you’d like to participate in this effort, contact Joanne Cohen at jcohen@jaxcf.org.

GRANT REQUEST ARRIVES at The Community Foundation.

Pictured left to right: Imani Hope, Nina Waters, Darryl Willie, Joanne Cohen, Ronnie King

WGA – Voices of Hope

Women’s Giving Alliance continues to build momentum for its work—it unveiled its third major research project at the Member Forum in March, attended by more than 230 members and guests. The research team, led by WGA Past President Sandy Cook, focused on the status of women and girls in NE Florida, and the highlights are contained in a new publication, Voices of Hope: Cracking the code on some complex issues, written by WGA member Scott McGhee. A wealth of easily accessible research data now resides on the WGA website, so be sure to read the daunting statistics as well as the windows of opportunity at wganefl.org.

2015 EXHIBIT: ART VENTURES

The Community Foundation’s 2015 Art Ventures Award recipients were honored with a special show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in December—as the wrap-up to our Art Ventures Fund 25th Anniversary.

Artists such as Kate Garcia Rouh and Roy Albert Berry got a chance chat informally about their work with Art Ventures grantees, past and present, as well as long time Art Venture Fund donors who were in attendance.

In addition to Kate and Roy, featured artists included Fabricio Farias, Patrick Barty, Tony Walsh, Ana Paula Habib, Darryl Reuben Hall, and Hiromi Moneyhun.

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GRANT REQUEST ARRIVES at The Community Foundation.

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WHAT’S “NEXT” FOR THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Like nearly every organization, The Community Foundation operates with a Strategic Plan. It serves as a guidepost for how we make decisions, set priorities and respond to opportunities. We review and recalibrate it at regular intervals. In 2015, we examined a particular part of our plan: our foundational goal to “build a better community.” Why?

1. Our 10-year Quality Education for All (QEA) Initiative financial commitment was complete, although we continue that work through the QEA Fund.
2. We experienced exponential growth in the diversity of our grantmaking, adding services to private Foundations, expanded support to large donors, and co-investing through giving circles (QEA Fund/LGBT Fund/Beaches Community Fund). Our work crosses many lines and involves far more collaboration—both internally and externally—than ever before.

WHAT WE DID IN 2015:

» Engaged a 18-member task force (TCF Trustees/Staff/Consultant)
» Held 6 Task Force Meetings
» Consulted 75 community leaders and advocates via focus group or personal interview

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Redefine and expand TCF’s focus on strengthening neighborhoods, consistent with focus group feedback and in partnership with others.
2. In both new and existing work, TCF should choose roles to play that play to its strengths and are consistent with its mission.
3. TCF’s grantmaking budget should provide sufficient resources for the expanded neighborhoods initiative as well as its other bodies of work.
4. TCF should continue to expand its grantmaking, knowledge and relationships in surrounding counties.

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE:

A select committee comprised of Deb Pass Durham, Judge Brian Davis, Martha Baker, Madeline Scales-Taylor, Barbara Harrell, and Jim Van Vleck will engage in a series of six learning sessions with local experts and leaders to learn about needs and assets of Jacksonville neighborhoods, current efforts to strengthen neighborhoods, and promising strategies for Foundation investment (of time, attention, and money). This committee will recommend a course of action to the Foundation Board of Trustees later this year.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

AGENCY ENDOWMENTS

World Affairs Council

When your focus is the world, you naturally think big. And the World Affairs Council of Jacksonville is doing just that with their growing Innovations in Global Education Endowment Fund, housed here at The Community Foundation.

It was established in 2014 with a $200,000 gift from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, honoring the retirement of Admiral Jonathan T. Howe, USN (Ret.). With 100% participation from the Board of Directors, a campaign was launched to grow the endowment. The effort has been actively marketed, including the creation of a brochure explaining its purposes, and donors have been adding to the endowment on a regular basis. Today, the agency is nearly ¾’s of the way toward its $1 million goal.

The endowment focuses on three education programs: the Great Decisions program for high school students, a scholarship program for college students and a Global Teacher Enrichment Program which combines local workshops with an international experience for educators.

“It’s been a lot of work, but it’s been a lot of fun. The best part is getting to work with the students and the teachers. They are very excited about what we are doing with the endowment,” said UIl Deckar, Director of Education and Community Outreach for the World Affairs Council of Jacksonville, noting that the endowment is already actively making grants to support the education programs.

Deckar went on to say that having a defined purpose and strong board support from the get go have been critical to leveraging the endowment to members and the community at large and ultimately, the campaign’s success.

“If you are planning for an endowment campaign, communicate a strong case,” she noted. “Really help your donors understand why they are giving, maybe even on top of what they have already given. Stress the long term value, making programs more sustainable beyond the current fiscal year.”

For more information about the World Affairs Council of Jacksonville, go to worldaffairsjax.org.