

# MNSIGHTS

Creativity  
can solve  
almost any  
problem.

– GEORGE LOIS

Summer 2010

## Philanthropic Investments Pay Off for Greater Minnesota



**\$57.1** million

The total amount the Foundations approved in grants to community organizations and nonprofits across Minnesota last year.

Minnesota's smaller communities have always had to be creative in their approach to philanthropy. Lately, their challenges have increased in the face of the national economic downturn, shrinking governmental investments and population shifts to urban areas.

For more than 60 years, **Minnesota Community Foundation** and **The Saint Paul Foundation** have helped communities all over Minnesota tap their local resources to build traditions of philanthropy that invite all residents to take part in effecting long-term change close to home. In this issue of *MNSights*, we spotlight philanthropic projects that are helping to make a difference in Greater Minnesota in the areas of the arts, economic development, care for seniors and scholarships for youth.

From Warroad to Worthington, communities all over Minnesota are finding innovative ways to make great things happen—and we are proud to be part of their work.

**Carleen K. Rhodes**, President and CEO

Connecting our core strengths. Pursuing shared interests. Achieving more together.

# Small Communities, Big Ideas

Philanthropy that is anything but ordinary is making a difference all over Greater Minnesota: helping an orchestra in Bemidji expand, opening new doors for Northfield-area entrepreneurs and extending a hand to multiple generations in Warroad.

## BEMIDJI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DISCOVERS INSPIRATION IN COLLABORATION

In a report on a 2009 Bemidji Symphony Orchestra (BSO) concert, Minnesota Public Radio's Michael Barone noted that the number of people playing and watching represented 10 percent of the area's population. (A similar Twin Cities audience would be 287,000 people—enough to fill the Metrodome more than four times.)

Strong participation in the arts improves regional quality of life and economic vitality, according to a 2003 University of Minnesota study. BSO conductor Dr. Beverly Everett says that the orchestra hopes to further strengthen the area's arts sector by attracting larger audiences from the entire region. She and the BSO's board are participating in ArtsLab, an innovative program created by The Saint Paul Foundation and four other funders to help small arts organizations share ideas and increase their reach.

"ArtsLab provides grant money and training to help arts organizations get to the next level," Everett says. "One of the most important ways we've used the funds is to establish a 'virtual office' that helps us be much more efficient." And, she adds, ArtsLab training, in which the 16 grantees meet quarterly, is an equally valuable part of the process, inspiring the BSO to explore collaboration with other groups.

## WINGS HOPES SMALL LOANS HAVE BIG IMPACT

The members of Women in Northfield Giving Support (WINGS) wanted to celebrate the group's 10th anniversary with a unique project. Their idea: a microloan program to spur entrepreneurship among women and children. "We'd like to help those who need a hand starting or expanding a small business but may not qualify for a traditional Small Business Administration loan," says WINGS board member Pat Allen.

Microlending, or the granting of very small loans, has been a successful approach overseas but is still in its infancy in the U.S., so WINGS is creating its program (which will make loans ranging from \$200 to \$2,000) from scratch. The group is talking with other potential funders and working out details with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) to administer the loans and provide technical assistance to recipients.

"It makes sense for us to leverage others' capacity for this project," says Allen, since WINGS is unable to make loans directly to entrepreneurs from its Donor Advised Fund but can make a grant to SMIF to fund the program. "It's truly a unique way for us to address all three parts of our mission: expanding women's philanthropy, strengthening the community and improving the lives of women and children."

## MARVIN FAMILY INVESTS IN MULTIPLE GENERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Health says that between 2000 and 2030, the number of Minnesotans age 60 or older will more than double, while the population of those under 60 will grow just 9–15 percent. In the small community of Warroad, one family's philanthropy addresses both issues: providing for seniors' care and encouraging younger residents to further their education so they can make their own contributions to the community.

"As the baby-boom generation ages, it's very important for the community to have a viable care facility here," says Jake Marvin, chairman and CEO of Marvin Windows and Doors, founded in Warroad in 1912. The Warroad Senior Living Center, the only center north of the Twin Cities caring for people with Alzheimer's disease, has state-of-the-art facilities equipped to provide five levels of care—including care for those diagnosed with pre-Alzheimer's.

The Marvin family is also providing for the community's future through the William S. and Margaret W. Marvin Warroad Scholarship Program, created by Jake Marvin's parents to provide scholarships to Warroad High School graduates going to two- or four-year post-secondary schools. Since 2007, the program has awarded 48 two-year and 53 four-year scholarships. "Our parents always thought education is the greatest gift you can give an individual or a community, because—along with hard work—it translates into opportunity. It is the great equalizer," says Jake Marvin. "They obviously hoped that many, many of these well-educated students will make Warroad their permanent home and continue to strengthen the community."

## Red Wing Area Fund Celebrates 30 Years

On June 7, the Red Wing Area Fund celebrated 30 years of innovative investment in the Red Wing community. Since its inception, the Fund has invested **\$11 million** in local projects and institutions that help improve residents' quality of life.

## Facing Race Receives \$1.8 Million Grant from Kellogg Foundation

The Saint Paul Foundation's Facing Race initiative recently received a **\$1.8 million** grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to expand its anti-racism work from its current Saint Paul focus to all of Minnesota. Through Facing Race, Minnesotans come together to address racism at the individual and institutional levels. Check out [www.FacingRace.org](http://www.FacingRace.org) for more information.



## Nonprofits to Know™

In June, the Foundations launched a **new online video series** entitled "Nonprofits to Know™" that tells the stories of the great work of Minnesota nonprofits. Each month a new Foundation-produced video will be posted at [www.mncommunityfoundation.org](http://www.mncommunityfoundation.org) and [www.saintpaulfoundation.org](http://www.saintpaulfoundation.org). In addition, Minnesota Community Foundation partners with WCCO-TV to showcase nonprofits doing extraordinary work on the "Live Better" segment of the station's newscast.

## MN Idea Open Crowns Its First Champion

Congratulations to Christine Tubbs of Stillwater. Her idea, "**Kids Lead the Way**," won the title of Challenge I Champion in the first-ever Idea Open. Go to [www.MNIdeaOpen.org](http://www.MNIdeaOpen.org) to see her idea and the latest micro-challenge.

## Partners in Philanthropy Update

The Saint Paul Foundation's Board of Directors approved 43 grants totaling **\$1.6 million** at its April 2010 meeting. To see a full list of grant recipients, go to [www.saintpaulfoundation.org/grantrecipients](http://www.saintpaulfoundation.org/grantrecipients).

## Save the Date

The Foundations invite donors to attend a conversation about faith and philanthropy on **Thursday, September 23 at 7 p.m.** Visit [www.saintpaulfoundation.org](http://www.saintpaulfoundation.org) for more information.



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