The mission of your community foundation is to Engage People, Connect Resources and Build Community. In 2023, the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation hopes to live out our mission in a BIG way via a brand-new project called Boost Up Sauk Centre.

In March of 2022, nearly 50 local leaders gathered for a Civic Summit in Sauk Centre. Our goal was to map out every community activity each organization makes possible annually and explore the ways we could work collaboratively to better serve our community. That conversation helped SCACF leaders see how rich our community is in volunteering and hometown pride. However, it also helped us see how much we could benefit from having a resident led, coordinated plan for our community. SCACF took that information and huddled up with the Sauk Centre Rotary Club and the Sauk Centre Chamber to think about how to create that plan. Together, we pitched a project to the Blandin Foundation as part of their Rural Revival Boost initiative. Our goal was to secure grant funding to initiate a grassroots, community led engagement and collective visioning process for the community of Sauk Centre. The Rural Revival grant process was VERY competitive with hundreds of rural communities applying and requesting four times more funding than Blandin had available, but we had faith in our proposal. Despite that stiff competition, SCACF’s proposal was selected to receive full funding of $45,000 to engage in the Boost Up Sauk Centre project!

What does the Boost Up Sauk Centre project mean for you?

SCACF, along with our partners at the Chamber and Rotary, will be helping to create a Design Team of interested residents from all perspectives, ages and interests this summer. That Design Team will explore what makes Sauk Centre’s civic life work and how we can work together to strengthen it now and for the future. We will explore the critical issues facing rural communities like housing, childcare, transportation, diversity, and welcoming newcomers to see what unique approaches we could bring to our community to make progress on those issues. We will ask you all to be generous with your thoughts when we approach you at events, activities and via surveys or focus groups so we can hear from as many people and perspectives as possible. "Rural communities face challenges that are unique. We need to grow next generation leaders and ensure our community is welcoming to those that want to join us here. We cannot simply let the forces beyond our control dictate what happens here. Communities that will thrive well into the future will do so by taking control of their own fate, harnessing the power of our people, and dreaming about what we can be tomorrow. Sauk Centre is well positioned to be successful because our people care about this place and are willing to help shape it for themselves and the future. SCACF is pleased to be able to help that visioning process begin via this funding," notes Sara Carlsson, Executive Director of the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation.

Boost Up Sauk Centre is resident led and your perspectives are invited. If you’d like to get involved, contact us at scacf@communitygiving.org to learn more. Watch for the Boost Up Sauk Centre team to be out and about in Sauk Centre this summer, asking for your input and seeking your thinking for our future. Together, we can make our community what we need it to be for ourselves and those that will call it home in the years ahead!

The initial Boost Up Sauk Centre meeting had close to 50 community members in attendance. It was held May 17, 2023, at Fellowship Hall of First Lutheran Church.
Intentional giving with local in mind

Giving to community through donations is of utmost importance to Sue and Gary Kuefler. That’s why Sue and Gary have recently found a new way to give that fills them well.

“We see a newspaper ad that told about the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation and we thought, ‘Oh, that’s interesting; we should check that into this,’” said Sue. “Gary had close ties to Sauk Centre, so we thought maybe we should go with it, and we did.”

Gary grew up on a dairy farm near Elkon in 1951 and moved to Sauk Centre as a young adult to work for the highway department. He found himself accepting a position in Waite Park and moving to St. Cloud while in trade school. Gary found ways to become involved in the community.

“When I was in Sauk Centre, I belonged to the Jaycees,” Gary said. “I was pretty active in that, which was part of doing things that help in the area. He also did the paperwork for Holy Family School bond fundraisers. Gary said he liked being part of the Sauk Centre community.

“We get together with a bunch of people and play cards quite often.” He also played in the Victoria softball league and the Sunday basketball league that Sauk Centre had then.

Sue grew up in Owatonna, but many years later she also spent time, about nine months, living in Sauk Centre when she was an intern at a nursing home in St. Joseph selling quickly and not yet having purchased their home in Avon. “I liked the idea of being convi- nent (in Sauk Centre) and the small-town experience,” Sue said. “I also liked the Outpost Mercantile store and the different art that’s available there, which is so unique.”

Gary and Sue met and married has contributed to their intentional giving. Sue said she was raised in a mixed media production specialist, living in Sauk Rapids, and worked as a retail manager through Waite Park, where both separately, but simultaneously, experienced the same kind of sorrow and loss.

“Our first spouses died in 2004,” Sue said. “We both belonged to the same group. That’s kind of a different way to meet, but that’s how it happened.”

They married in 2006, and together they continued contributing but with more thoughtful gifts to which causes they gave in and how they did so.

“We both (experienced) having spouses pass at a young age, so we always kind of had it in the back of our minds that we should have a plan,” Sue said. “What do we tell people that we want for the future?”

They preferred giving locally where they could see the results and know how their donations would be handled. To- gether they have contributed to things like half a dozen construction, five depart- ment fundraisers, donations to local teach- ers, and funds to build a senior center.

“There always seem like there are (needs) that come up,” Gary said.

They also kept looking for a way to set up a long-term structure for giving, but many larger nonprofits or charitable groups didn’t seem transparent or specific enough. Many, as they’ve had the experience of sending many flyers with appeals and other information.

“We get all the marketing materials in the mail, and it just doesn’t seem as efficient,” Sue said. “We thought there had to be a better way to do this.”

After looking at different possibilities throughout the next years, they settled on the Sauk Centre Area Community Founda- tion, specifically its Donor Advised Fund. “We liked the way the board was set up and how it was run,” Gary said.

There are a number of people on it, it’s more di- rect, and it has different options for how you want to participate,”

The Kueflers set up a meeting in their home with Sara Carlson, SCACF’s execu- tive director.

“Sara explained the different options and then gave us time to figure things out as to what direction we wanted to go,” Sue said. “Then we came up with a plan and signed the paperwork to initiate our fund. She explained how we could do the granting side of it. It was about a year after that we set this up, and we’ve been making a few grants along the way through that portal.”

Both Sue and Gary said using the portal has worked well for them.

“It’s an intentional and efficient way to give,” Sue said. “You can always look at your dashboard on your portal to see that you’re doing this or that and plan ahead, and you can make a matching donation if you wish, so it’s more efficient than just giving a check here, there, dollars there.”

Gary agreed. “It’s a good tool to have,” he said. “You have the way to see (where your financial contributions) are going.”

Today, Gary and Sue winter in Texas and live the rest of the year in Avon. They enjoy biking, walking, camping and gardening. Sue especially likes growing zinnias, Gary tomatoes.

“To do flowers; he does vegetables,” Sue said.

They also continue to give their time to other causes for which they have been active in the past on Wheels. However, they also know that their financial donations to local community needs are in good hands through SCACF.

“I would just encourage others to check it out,” Sue said. “If this is what’s that is easy to set up and helps you look at what your goals are for giving. It’s more of a planned, intentional giving and also an efficient way to do it all at one end.”

Gary said it feels good to check their portal to see where their money is specifi- cally provided

“Don’t seem like you’re doing that much, but you can look at the report and see how much, it surprises you.”

Jeanne Bushard

Outline of your Education: Graduate of Sauk Centre High School and Sauk Centre Community College Minnesota–Twin Cities – a 2 years and Associate of Applied Science degree, in Accounting Alexandria Technical & Community College - Bachelor of Science Administration, Community Education/Leadership.

Employment: I have been the Owner/Accountant at Modern Farm Topography, Inc., since 1996.

Family and where you live: I live in Grey Eagle with my husband Mike. We have a grown children; Mihir J, Darin, Julie and Sarah.

Hobbies/personal interests: I enjoy spending time with family, boating on the lake and traveling.

Community Involvement: I am a member of First Lutheran Church in Sauk Centre. I have served on the Sauk Centre Sports Boosters, Sauk Centre Elementary PTA and various church committees. I am currently the president of the Sauk Centre Dollars for Scholars, treasurer of the Lisa Fiedler Foundation for Families and a member of the Sauk Centre Community Education Advisory Board.

Why did you want to join this board/committee? I want to be involved in SCACF because it benefits the city and surrounding areas as a whole. It is different from the other community organizations that I have been involved with or have been aware of.

Those are all very specific than the community as a whole for all areas or groups but this one serves areas or groups but this one serves

Get to the basics

New SCACF Board Members

Brent Lieser

Outline of your Education: B.S. in Criminal Justice and Primary Licenses, Masters in Educational Administration, Community Educa- tion Licensure, Bachelor of Science in Social Studies Education. St. Cloud State University

Employment: ISD#35/Director of Community Education; 4 years

Family and where you live: Re- side in Sauk Centre with wife, Ton, two young boys, Krew and Koy, and daughter, Kora.

Hobbies/personal interests: Being outdoors, going to sporting events and concerts, helping on the family farm(s), and listening to audiobooks on leadership and inspiration.

Community Involvement: Chamber of Commerce Board Mem- ber; Economic Development Au- thority (EITA) Board Member; Com- munity Education Advisory Council; First Lutheran Church member; Lions Club member.

Why did you want to join this board/committee? When I first moved to Sauk Centre, SCACF caught my attention and it became apparent to me that there was an energy on the com- munity and its initiatives. Over the last four years, I often took time to read the printed flyer, visited the website, and become more cognizant of the board members and the initia- tives. My goal for myself to look, listen and learn from members of the board and the SCACF’s network of vested stakeholders.

Sue and Gary Kuefler

Establishing a fund is easy and allows you to give to any 501(c)3 nonpro- fit organization.

A Donor Advised Fund of $20,000 can immediately begin to make grant distributions. The IRS allows for that contribution. To receive a 2023 tax deduction for new gifts to a donor advised fund, be sure to visit the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation Fund, to other funds at SCACF or to open a new fund, your gift must be postmarked by Dec. 31, 2023. Transferred gifts, such as stock, should be completed by Dec. 20. Please call our offices to discuss your options.

Donor Advised Funds (DAF)

Gifting

Visit www.saukcentreareacommunityfoundation.org and make your gift to the SCACF General Fund to- support the current work of SCACF. Mailed checks can be sent to the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation at 1601 E Hwy 22, Suite E Willmar, MN 56201.

Most assets can be charitably gifted to your Donor Advised Fund including cash, stock, real estate and life insurance.

Businesses are able to make a corporate advised fund for one tax deduction without the red tape. If you decide to give multiple gifts from this fund, call our office for more information.

Donations

SCACF Giving link: www.saukcentreareacommunityfoundation.org

GETTING TO THE BASICS

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Jim Umhoefer has been a fan of the community foundation since before it was an official organization. Jim was part of the conversations that ultimately led to the creation of SCACF, has served as a Founding Board Member, Vice-Chair and Chair of SCACF during the past eight years. As Jim’s term concludes, we want to thank him for his years of service and wise counsel to SCACF and extend our best wishes for his travels!

Neil Linscheid-Chair
Chris Johnson-Vice Chair
Brenda Jennissen-Treasurer
Sheila Flatau-Secretary
Nick Adams
Tim Borgmann-Past Chair
Jeanne Bushard
Abby Henderson
Rick Jennissen
Mark Klaphake
Brent Lieser
Mark Raitor
Alise Sjostrom
Amanda Tegels
Jim Umhoefer Completing final term

STAFF
Sara Carlson • Executive Director

A Glance of your Foundation
Established in 2005

$13,800

SCACF Invests
Into the Sauk Centre Arts Community

Sauk Centre Public Schools
$7,800
Upgrades to Shelby Theatre sound and video system

510 Art Lab
$5,000
Support Youth programming & expanded two-day art fair during Chalk in Sauk

Sinclair Lewis Foundation
$1,000
Support 2023 Winter Writers Conference on October 7, 2023

SCACF Community Impact
Grant Round Supports

EIGHT Local Sauk Centre Organizations

Sauk Centre Public Schools
$7,000
Social Emotional Learning Initiative - curriculum and books

Holy Family School
$2,300
Little World Changer - curriculum and DJ party

Sauk Lake Senior Fishing and Boating
$3,000
Pontoon rides/operating support

Sauk Centre Dollars for Scholars
$1,000
Scholarship for Sauk Centre graduating senior

Sauk Centre Historical Society
$4,000
Matching funds for oral history project

Sauk Centre Middle School
$3,000
5th and 6th grade “Streets to Success”

Sauk Centre Community Education
$2,200
Pickleball equipment upgrade

Sauk Centre Sports Booster
$2,500
Support to expand into fine arts and pay to play

Dollars for Scholars
$1,000
Scholarship for Sauk Centre graduating senior

$2.6 M TOTAL ASSETS
$4 M GRANTS SINCE FOUNDING

TOTAL FUNDS $13,800

Farewell and Thank You Jim!

Jim Umhoefer has been a fan of the community foundation since before it was an official organization. Jim was part of the conversations that ultimately led to the creation of SCACF, has served as a Founding Board Member, Vice-Chair and Chair of SCACF during the past eight years. As Jim’s term concludes, we want to thank him for his years of service and wise counsel to SCACF and extend our best wishes for his travels!
Tell us about your family. Jill and I are a family of four with two sons, Eli and Jack, and one daugh- ter, Karly.

What brought you back to Sauk Centre? Although both Patrick and Brenda grew up in Sauk Centre, his family moved away and he was raised in St. Paul. Jill was raised in Sauk Centre and lived in the west metro area. They both had close friends and family in Sauk Centre (very likely some better than he did). They both knew they wanted to return and live in the west metro area where they could stay close to their parents operating their trad- e and building business together. The stress, fun and partner- ship they have been able to have and always been interested in joining the community of central Minnesota (no idea if my spouse wanted to be there too). We had many conversations with my parents and brother, and in- site in how deciding to move to Sauk Centre opened the challenge of building a new home and all that it required.

Why do you consider this area to be home? We grew up here so there is a lot of personal history for me. After moving back to Sauk Centre nine years after high school gradua- tion, our family took root and strengthened. We have a strong support system made up of family, friends, volunteers and incredible neighbors who make us feel at home.

Why did you start a fund with the foundation? Our family had been part of the Sauk Centre community for many years. We knew the opportunity for making a greater impact on our community was here. By starting a fund with the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation, we know it was something that would fit us well based on our values and beliefs.

Why do you choose to invest in the community? Why did you start a fund with the foundation? SCACF has the resources to handle complex giving strategies. The early days of SCACF crossed over with tax legis- lation changes and created an opportunity for a win-win. There was an opportunity to invest in the community and also streamline making a gift. SCACF created a fund for us so we do not need to think about the administration of the fund or who we give to. SCACF does all of the work. It’s just a convenient avenue to give back to the community.

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Why do you consider Sauk Centre home? Our family has been connected to Sauk Centre for generations. My family has been in the community for over 50 years. We have a strong support system and a close network. We feel at home and are invested in making our community the best it can be. We’re happy with our decision and we look forward to a long working relationship with the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation in the future.

Tell us about your experience working with SCACF/CG. Working with the SCACF team has been fantastic. They have been knowledgeable and extremely helpful, and we look forward to a long working relationship with the Sauk Centre Area Community Foundation in the future.

Tell us about your family. We have three children: Peyton, Carter and Brynn.

What brought you back to Sauk Cen- tre? We enjoyed growing up and attending school in a smaller community, and we want- ed our kids to have the same experience.

Why do you consider this area to be home? Our family, our friends, our neighbors, the wonderful people in the community — that’s what makes Sauk Centre home.

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Tell us about your family. Our family has three children — Hailey, Jack, and one daugh- ter, Eli. We have lived in the area since 2000.

What brought you back to Sauk Centre? We were interested in finding a smaller town with a strong community and close-knit school district. Sauk Centre offered that for us.

Why did you start a fund with the foundation? SCACF is a great tool for us to manage and connect with our community. We feel it is a way to give back to the community and make a difference.

Why do you consider Sauk Centre home? We consider Sauk Centre home because it is a great place to raise a family. The community is close-knit and supportive of one another. The education system is excellent, which was important to us.

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