

Press release for Guest Column County newspapers
Appeared in Chippewa Herald December 16, 2006
From Carol Gienapp, Ex. Dir., Community Foundation of Chippewa County

Stingy Givers in Chippewa County?

Various recent press releases have revealed that Wisconsinites are poor givers, ranking somewhere between 40th and 45th in the nation. We here at the Community Foundation of Chippewa County find that hard to believe! If our experience tells us anything, it is that generosity in our corner of the world is alive and thriving.

For example - response to the Community Foundation of Chippewa County (CFCC) has surprised even its Founders, that small group of community visionaries who realized the need for a community foundation that would work to support the nonprofits of Chippewa County, never compete with them. A need existed for a neutral entity that would raise awareness of philanthropic giving and provide a structure to make it easier for people from all income levels to give, both during and after their lifetime. The CFCC started in 2001 with the intent that it serve all of Chippewa County. Those same visionaries, inspiring in their own generosity, continue to lead and encourage others to become part of the philanthropic legacy that began in Chippewa County over a century ago.

Just since January 1, 2006, over 300 donors have given \$447,233.00 for their favorite charities through the Community Foundation, and the Foundation's grant-giving capacity is ten times what it was last year. The number of endowment funds created within the Foundation for the purpose of supporting Chippewa County nonprofits has grown to 58. The vision of giving For Good, Forever, IS coming true.

What a heartwarming place to work! Each day I'm impressed by the stories that are being told as people come forth to give – not because they have to, but because they WANT to. Funds are being started for so many different reasons: Many are in started memory of loved ones – a special needs child who left a legacy of love, a brother who cherished nature and parks, an orphan who became the town's favorite storyteller, a unique band director and four others whose loss impacted a nation, a dedicated mom and untiring community servant. Such inspiring generosity!

Other funds have been started to honor beloved parents, to preserve the County's agricultural way of life, to encourage youth service in their communities, to make communities more beautiful, to help the hungry, and to support many other quality of life efforts. Families are starting funds and including their children – even the tiny members - in learning about needs in their communities, and why they want to give so that grants from their funds can make things better for others. One couple is starting a fund for their community, but said “We don't need our names on it – it's for our town.”

Additionally, many of Chippewa County's fine nonprofit agencies and organizations have started their own endowment funds that are growing and yielding support dollars forever for the critical work they do. Several of these have been started by individuals within those organizations who passionately believe in what they do. Agencies and organizations in this County are impressive in what they do with limited resources; and it's heartwarming to see their donors step up and say “I'd like to help.”

Stingy givers in Wisconsin? Not in Chippewa County! Thank you – to all of you who give to your favorite charities throughout our County and who believe in making things better. Thank you for your spirit of working together so effectively. Thank you for caring so much about a place we call “home”.

If you have questions about year-end giving options, or making a difference in your community, contact your favorite charity, or call us at the CFCC. (Phone: 715-723-8125; cgienapp@comfdncc.org; or visit our website www.comfdncc.org). Your Community Foundation pledges to do its best to serve YOU – the donors and the wonderful nonprofits of our Chippewa County. May you each have a blessed and heartwarming holiday season and new year!