



2020

Philanthropy

Review



## 4th FASTEST

Community Foundation  
Research and Training  
Institute listed Mankato Area  
Foundation as the fourth  
fastest growing community  
foundation in the country  
from 2014-2018.

Together, giving looks

good on us.



# Dear Friends in Philanthropy

A LETTER FROM NANCY ZALLEK, PRESIDENT AND CEO



We are finally nearing the end of 2020 and boy, have we earned it. Both locally and nationally, we were thrown more curveballs in this one year than we typically face in a decade. It has been unexpected, challenging and admittedly exhausting.

However, I can say without hesitation that there is nowhere I would rather have spent 2020 than in the Mankato area. No matter the surprise, pivot, calamity or complication we faced this year, the people of this community and the surrounding region consistently stepped up to the challenge. And while I have always been proud to call myself a Mankato native, nothing has ever affirmed my affinity for this place and its people quite like 2020.

Inside this edition of our Philanthropy Review, you will find examples of community members who rose to the occasion to creatively meet the needs of Mankato and the surrounding area: Laura Stevens and Melanie VanRoekel, who saw and seized an opportunity to establish a women's giving circle in the area; Priscilla Roos, who led the charge to provide face masks to frontline workers and the public during the COVID-19 crisis; and the staff of the Greater Mankato Area United Way and the Mankato Area Foundation, who coordinated efforts to establish a Community Response Fund during the pandemic—just to name a few. Each story highlights the power of committed individuals working together toward a common cause—the betterment of their community.

Of course, none of the initiatives described in this review would have been possible without another group of caring individuals who consistently step up: philanthropists just like you. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Mankato Area Foundation was able to disburse over 500 grants totaling \$1,700,000 to regional projects and programs in the last year.

While we are very proud of these accomplishments, we have no plans to slow down any time soon. We promise to continue to be responsive and adaptable for our nonprofit partners as they answer the region's most critical needs and as they attempt to recover from the challenges of the pandemic.

I want to thank our nonprofit sector for their commitment to this region and especially to those so dramatically impacted by COVID-19. I also thank all of our donors for their ongoing support of our communities and the nonprofit organizations serving on the frontline of this pandemic. The generosity and compassion I see every day as we respond together to the crisis gives me so much hope.

No one can predict what 2021 will bring. We can only imagine what adversity, opportunities or adventures we will face. But one thing is for certain: this area will continue to be a shining example of how communities come together to creatively tackle whatever comes our way.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Zallek".

Nancy Zallek  
President and CEO  
Mankato Area Foundation



# Quaran-Team Effort

It's amazing what a shared space can do.

For the Mankato Area Foundation (MAF) and Greater Mankato Area United Way (GMAUW), a shared physical space spawned a partnership that would shape the Mankato area's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Nancy Zallek, MAF President and CEO, recalls, "One morning in mid-March of 2020, I was walking down the hallway of Shared Spaces in search of Barb Kaus, GMAUW CEO, and she was doing the same looking for me," Zallek said. "We had each been reading the news about the governor's upcoming announcement of a Stay-at-Home order, and we were both concerned about the dire situations our local nonprofits would soon be facing. We knew we had to do something, and we quickly realized it would be so much more powerful to do it together. Within days, our two organizations co-established the Community Response Fund."

The goal of the Community Response Fund is to respond swiftly to the Mankato area's escalating needs during such an unprecedented time, shaping philanthropy's response in support of the nonprofit organizations serving our community. The combined expertise of MAF and GMAUW staff in mobilizing community partnerships, resources and connections has enabled our community to respond as quickly and effectively as possible.

"It was meant to be," Kaus said. "We are two strong teams coming together to keep our community strong."

As the pandemic progressed through March and the needs of the community began to grow exponentially, Zallek and Kaus knew it was essential to stay ahead of the curve.

"We didn't know how things were going to go, but we knew we had to be proactive," Zallek said. "We could see how stressed everyone was becoming, and we knew it was crucial to simplify charitable giving as much as possible for both donors and recipients. We reached out to other funders in the community—family foundations, other regional foundations, philanthropic organizations and businesses—and asked if they would participate in the fund."

The goal was to create a "one-stop-shop". Nonprofit organizations could apply for grants from a single source, as opposed to preparing proposals in multiple formats to multiple funders. In turn, area funders and individual community members could give to a single fund and know their dollars were being put to use in the most efficient and effective ways to help local organizations in need.

Within weeks, the fund had reached over \$400,000 through the gifts of local philanthropists, some of whom created their own unique ways of fundraising.

Mankato Brewery developed and began distributing the Community Response Fund Berry Blast Beer. The Mankato Playhouse streamed a fundraising cabaret on Facebook Live. The Mayo Clinic Health Systems Civic Center developed virtual concerts and a cooking series featuring digital donation opportunities and Coldwell Banker Commercial Fisher Group made a donation for every person who visited their offices wearing a mask. All of these creative fundraisers contributed to a fund that continues to grow and make an impact.

The fund allows both organizations to ensure there is a distribution of charitable dollars going toward the greatest needs in the community. As Zallek and Kaus quickly learned, this can change from week to week during a pandemic. "Particularly in the early stages, we never knew what was going to happen next. As the needs of our community and its nonprofits changed, we stayed in constant communication with them so we could adapt our giving accordingly," Zallek said.

Every tier of the MAF and GMAUW staff works together to make this possible. For example, MAF's Community Grants and Nonprofits Specialist, Sarah Beiswanger and GMAUW's Community Impact Director, Elizabeth Harstad spoke to over 150 area organizations within the first two weeks of this initiative to provide support and to gain a better understanding of the needs to be addressed.

"So many groups we spoke to told us what a relief this process was. I have heard that over and over," Kaus said. "They appreciate knowing there is strong support and that they are at the forefront of our minds. They can trust we will work toward addressing their increased needs."

For Zallek, the Community Response Fund is a shining symbol of the power of partnership and the power of our Shared Spaces building. "You wouldn't think a physical space would make such a difference, but there is no doubt it was the secret to this fund's success," Zallek said. "This building created a collaborative environment that allowed us to develop a cooperative approach to serving the needs of community."

As Kaus puts it, the fund has been and continues to be a beautiful thing. "I wouldn't have it any other way," she said. "I am so thankful we were able to unite and make a huge impact to keep our community moving forward during this trying time."

And as far as the Community Response Fund is concerned, it will continue to provide support as long as the fund remains viable.

"Of course, no one can guess what the future will look like," Zallek said. "But as long as there are needs, I know our community will continue to step up, give generously, and do the work. That's just how we do it here."



We are two strong teams  
coming together to keep our  
community strong.

MANKATO BREWERY DEVELOPED AND DISTRIBUTED THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND BERRY BLAST BEER

For more information on the Community Response Fund or to make a contribution, go to [mankatoareafoundation.com/programs-and-initiatives/community-response-fund](https://mankatoareafoundation.com/programs-and-initiatives/community-response-fund).



# Sew Important

A year ago, "PPE" meant nothing to a lot of people.

Today, personal protective equipment (PPE) is required for all Minnesotans in public spaces, and every day tens of thousands of Mankato area residents don reusable face masks they received for free, thanks to the work of Priscilla Roos and Get Mankato PPE.

"When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit the U.S., I was glued to the television, horrified, for two solid weeks. Finally, I said, 'That's enough. I need to do something.' But I wasn't sure where to start," Roos said.

Roos talked to her friends and neighbors, asking what she could help with. She planted tomatoes to aid the local food supply. She researched the greatest needs in the area. Eventually, Roos discovered five separate local groups who were beginning to sew masks for healthcare providers, but she realized these masks were not CDC-compliant.

It felt like a sign.

"I could see there was determination and people wanting to help, but there was no focal point—no single driving force providing direction," Roos said. "I decided I could be that driving force."

Initially, Roos thought she would start her own 501(c)(3) nonprofit; PPE had become required for all healthcare employees, but the shortage was dire. However, Roos quickly realized that creating a new nonprofit would take way too long. She needed to meet the needs of the community now.

"It would have taken months and tons of effort just to get started," Roos said. "A friend told me that I should instead look for a fiscal sponsor like Mankato Area Foundation because I could benefit from their 501(c)(3) status. It was the best advice I ever received."

Roos met with MAF President and CEO Nancy Zallek and quickly wrote up a business plan for what would soon be called Get Mankato PPE.

"Within 36 hours, I had a signed contract with MAF because they saw the immediate need and our potential to help. I don't know of any other community where that would have happened."

Over the next several days, Roos recruited a network of dedicated volunteers who would help her create CDC-compliant face masks, headbands and gowns for healthcare workers. Hundreds of people volunteered to sew. A local manufacturer cut all the fabric with his laser cutter. Kato Moving and Storage offered to store all of Get Mankato PPE's fabric and supplies for free.

"It was mind-boggling how many people were willing to step into the breach and say yes!" Roos said. "This really is an incredible community."

Roos and her team of volunteers worked day and night to meet the needs of the area.

"When you start something like this, it takes dogged determination. You have to be willing to be married to it," Roos said. "For the first six to eight weeks of the pandemic and Get Mankato PPE's existence, I was working the equivalent of two and a half full-time jobs. But I knew just how important and necessary it was because if our healthcare workers got sick, we would all be out of luck."

Soon enough, CDC requirements and recommendations began to expand. When healthcare facilities started requiring face masks for anyone who entered their buildings, the demand for PPE skyrocketed.

Roos expanded her efforts as far and as wide as possible. She marketed Get Mankato PPE's cause, stayed on top of all the latest research, developed an efficient supply chain, delivered masks and headbands daily to local facilities and stayed in constant communication with volunteers.

"I would post videos on Facebook, and volunteers would pick up whatever supplies they needed from Kato Moving and Storage or even from my van," Roos said. "The volunteers came out of the woodwork, and we began to create a stockpile of PPE. We produced over 3,500 masks in a single week."

Within a few short months, Roos and her team were providing masks for our regional healthcare clinics and hospitals as well as over 40 senior and long-term care facilities.

"There were days when the responsibilities of this role could be overwhelming, but the commitment of our volunteers is what kept me going," Roos said. "One woman in her 80s has single-handedly produced over 10,000 headbands. Another woman has produced over 4,000 masks. A local high schooler learned to sew just to make masks. Our youngest volunteer, a four-year-old, helps remove pins as her mom makes them."

And while the power of her volunteers cannot be overstated, Roos also recognizes the essential role of MAF's fiscal sponsorship as well as generous funding from the community. Without these resources and donations, Get Mankato PPE would not be here today.

"Without the Foundation, we wouldn't exist. It's just not possible," Roos said. "MAF stepped in and said, 'Hey, this sounds important. Let's go for it.' And thanks to their unique relationship with the community



and local donors, we were able to bring so many important key players to the table—including both cities, area counties, Greater Mankato Growth and Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center.”

In addition to a fiscal sponsorship, MAF provided access to significant funding for Get Mankato PPE.

“Because of their visibility and support of this project, we had tens of thousands of dollars donated to our cause,” Roos said.

In the first five months since its inception, Get Mankato PPE raised or was granted over \$70,000 to purchase all the supplies needed to create masks and headbands for the community while maintaining a 100 percent volunteer workforce. As of September, Get Mankato PPE had produced over 40,000 masks for the region.

“I think it’s unfortunately easy to not understand the value of a community foundation until you witness something like this,” Roos said. “But because they exist, we were able to provide these life-saving tools to our community for free.”

Looking to the future, Roos and Get Mankato PPE are continuing to grow and adapt as necessary.

“When I first wrote the business plan, I had very optimistic goals of sun-setting at four months,” Roos said. “But we know now the need will be with us for a long time. We have shifted to helping local schools and kids’ organizations, and who knows what our next focus will be?”

Ultimately, the success of Get Mankato PPE is incalculable.

“I do not believe we will ever truly grasp what we have accomplished, because the success of our efforts prevented something far worse from occurring,” Roos said.

And other communities have taken notice. Roos has made her business plan public so other groups can replicate her efforts, and she has heard over and over again how uniquely supportive the Mankato community has been when it comes to this cause.

“No one predicted something like this would happen in a million years, but MAF, our volunteers, and our community collectively responded by saying, ‘We’ve got this.’ All it took was a few people asking, ‘What am I willing to do to make a difference?’” Roos said. “And then they did just that.”



What am I willing to do  
to make a difference?

PRISCILLA ROOS, GET MANKATO PPE FOUNDER

## What is a fiscal sponsorship?

Through a fiscal sponsorship, MAF partners with mission-driven groups looking to advance innovative projects and programs or those finding solutions to unique community challenges. This formal relationship allows MAF, acting as the fiscal sponsor, to provide tax-exempt status to select groups engaged in activities that align with the Foundation’s mission. Most often, fiscal sponsorship is used by organizations, individuals or collaborations who are facilitating a short-term project but want an alternative to becoming their own nonprofit organization. Other groups may partner with MAF as they begin the process of becoming a nonprofit. Under those circumstances, the Foundation provides the infrastructure and financial oversight—allowing the groups to jump-start their initiative while they take the necessary steps to qualify as their own nonprofit organization. Fiscal sponsorship is a temporary relationship in which MAF supports an initiative until the project or program is complete OR the group has received its own nonprofit 501(c)(3) designation.

# A Mankato Masterpiece

PHOTOS BY SARA HUGHES



It's not every day you drive by 135-foot-tall children.

Unless you're a Mankato resident, that is.

The Ardent Mills grain silos in downtown Mankato, home to the newest of internationally-renowned artist Guido van Helten's enormous original murals, feature the likenesses of elementary school students. This way-larger-than-life masterpiece is a celebration of Mankato's past, present and future; it features local children and adults learning, playing and dancing at the Mahkato Mdwakanton Association Powwow.

"The silos truly capture the diversity and inclusion that's here, which van Helten wanted to highlight," said Antje Meisner, a board member

of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. "He kept telling us, 'Mankato is such a special and unique place. We need to honor that.'"

The concept of turning the Ardent Mills silos into a work of art came out of Envision 2020 and the City Center Renaissance Plan. CityArt—a collaborative partnership between Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and City Center Partnership championed the opportunity to bring the dream to fruition.

"This community has a history of supporting the arts and we felt the silo project would highlight that commitment," said Shannon Sinning, board chair of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. "But it wasn't until we came across this artist's work that we really kicked the initiative into high gear." ►



VIEW OF SILOS FROM NORTH MANKATO



The silos truly capture the diversity and inclusion that's here.



VIEW OF SILOS FROM RIVERFRONT DRIVE, MANKATO

In 2018, Sinning emailed van Helten after discovering his artwork online, and van Helten responded by the next morning. The artist, who is based out of Australia but lives wherever his work takes him, happened to be working in the U.S. and offered to visit Mankato to learn more.

"van Helten loves the Midwest," Meisner said. "He loves the history, the people and the culture. And as soon as he saw the silos, he wanted to take on the project."

"When we realized he was interested in working with us, we needed to figure out how to pay for it," Sinning said. "We reached out to Nancy Zallek at the Mankato Area Foundation and asked her opinion on whether Mankato would have the interest and capacity for supporting this initiative. I've worked with Nancy on other projects and if you know her, you know how much she believes in the generosity of this region. She gave us the confidence to start planning while agreeing to share this opportunity with donors who would want to be involved in this amazing initiative."

We knew partnering with

MAF would be crucial

to making it a success.

Within months, van Helten was preparing to begin his largest silo mural in the U.S. He is known for his large-scale installations, but each is unique to the culture and identity of its home area. Before a single drop of paint falls, van Helten spends months immersing himself in the local community.

"van Helten was immediately intrigued by both the negative history and thriving future of the area," Sinning said, referring to the "Mankato 38" of 1862, which involved the hanging of 38 Dakota men and remains the largest mass execution in U.S. history. "He attended the Powwow in 2018 and again in 2019, and this became his inspiration for the silos."

van Helten captured photos of fifth graders on a field trip to the Powwow, which he then turned into 3D models and eventually the subjects of his mural.

"It became an amazing collaboration between the artist, the Powwow, the school district and the families of the children," Meisner said. "We tracked down the families, received permission to feature their kids in the mural, and van Helten got to work."



ARTIST, GUIDO VAN HELTEN

In the fall of 2019, van Helten began painting the silos. Unsurprisingly, people took notice.

"It was surreal when he actually started," Sinning said. "Watching him work is mesmerizing. He stands in a basket on a giant boom lift, glances at his phone to see his digital model and spray-paints at an arm's length. It's truly remarkable."

By the spring of 2020, after a brief hiatus back to Australia, London and Iceland, van Helten was putting the finishing touches on the Ardent Mills silos.

"Guido resumed work just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit," Meisner said. "But watching him finish the project was truly a bright spot in such a dark time."

Of course, van Helten could never have stepped onto that lift in the first place if this massive project had not been funded.

"We are so grateful for the enthusiastic support we received from the Mankato Area Foundation and the numerous donors who embraced this significant undertaking. This was the biggest project CityArt had ever taken on, and we knew partnering with MAF would be crucial to making it a success."

Undoubtedly, every dollar put toward the silo project was money well spent.

"This has put Mankato on the map," Sinning said. "People are coming here just to see the silos, and they're learning about the meaning of it and the culture of our community in the process. It's incredible."

As for Meisner, the silos represent so much more than paint on concrete.

"This region is so special, I don't think anything else could ever capture the heart and soul of this community so well," Meisner said. "Ultimately, I view this as a gift to the people of Mankato, and I hope it is treasured for years to come."



## Artist Statement

This artwork specifically addresses the existing diversity as a source of pride for the Mankato community. The concept was derived from a summary of experiences and discoveries in colour and culture as part of the Mankato Powwow and Education Days in 2018 and 2019.

This mural brings together the shared ideals of community, diversity, inclusion, and participation. In consultation with various Native and non-Native community representatives, the artwork took shape and allows for an open interpretation as the viewer takes in all angles in one of the largest murals completed by the artist to date. The artwork is part of a growing trail of monumental murals painted by the artist throughout the Midwest including works in Faulkton, South Dakota and Fort Dodge, Iowa.



# Power in Numbers



We wanted women to feel  
the power of giving.

LAURA STEVENS AND MELANIE VANROEKEL, WOMENS GIVING CIRCLE FOUNDERS

"And to think it all began over a cup of coffee."

This is the tagline on the emails from Women's Giving Circle (WGC) leaders Laura Stevens and Melanie VanRoekel, and it speaks to the power of a single conversation between two friends looking to make a difference in their community.

Indeed, it was a simple cup of coffee that brought Stevens and VanRoekel together at the Coffee Hag in the fall of 2018. The two

women chatted about their kids, families and work, but soon the conversation shifted to giving back to a community they care about. Stevens had attended a conference the previous year focused on women in philanthropy, and she still had a pamphlet from the event, which explained the concept of women's giving circles. VanRoekel took the pamphlet home, did some research and soon called Stevens to say, "I get it. I love it. Let's do it."

And thus, the Mankato WGC was born.

Giving circles are designed to create power in numbers. Through regular contributions, giving circle members are able to generate a large pool of funds to grant to nonprofits in the community. The members nominate deserving organizations and then vote on the groups who will receive the funding.

For Stevens and VanRoekel, it was clear from the start they wanted their giving circle to amplify women's philanthropy.

"There are not a lot of women's voices brought to high-level philanthropy decisions, and we wanted to change that," VanRoekel said. "We also really wanted women to feel the power of giving and to understand that you don't need a million dollars to make a difference."

Having served as a Mankato Area Foundation (MAF) board member, VanRoekel knew their first step toward making the WGC a success was to partner with MAF.

"I knew the Foundation would be a perfect partner, so we met with Nancy [Zallek] and the team and asked if they could support us," VanRoekel said. "From then on, the process was seamless."

"Having MAF as our partner made everything easier for us," Stevens said. "MAF is the go-to group for philanthropy in Mankato. Aligning with the Foundation gave us credibility, resources and connections we would never have had otherwise."

By the spring of 2019, the WGC was up and running. Through grassroots efforts, networking and utilizing MAF's connections, the WGC reached a wide audience and attracted a variety of women to jump on board.

"We had a fear that people wouldn't embrace the idea or understand the impact of it," VanRoekel said. "But, Mankato women always show up."

Soon enough, there were 100 women in the WGC. "We made sure this was accessible to as many philanthropic women as possible," Stevens said. "We didn't want the members' charitable contributions to be a financial constraint, so we created an option for women to pool their resources together to create a team under one membership." Individuals or teams commit to a \$125 contribution per quarter (or half that amount for women under 40).

Every quarter, WGC members have the opportunity to nominate a local nonprofit organization focused on serving women or children to receive a grant from the group's pooled funds.

"We focus on women and children's organizations because we know that when you lift up the women and children in your community, the whole community benefits," VanRoekel said.

After the nominations are collected, each member or team gets to vote for their favorite, and the top three ranking organizations receive a grant.

"We tried to make the entire process as simple as possible," Stevens said. "We didn't want a complicated, draining nomination process and we didn't want an exhausting review or voting system. We wanted to make it simple and fun for all parties."

And fun it is. Before the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything, the WGC gathered quarterly with beverages and hors d'oeuvres to learn about the nominated organizations and hear from previous recipients about how the funding benefited their group.

"We have a blast," VanRoekel said. "And when you spend time with 100 other kind, generous, and strong women, you will always leave feeling inspired."

Although the WGC cannot gather in person during this season of quarantine, this has not slowed the momentum of the group.

"This fall, we will host our Zoom party, and we are providing goodie bags to all of our members and teams so we can try to replicate the fun we had in person," Stevens said. "And our members are excited to keep the cycle of giving going because the nonprofits in our area need our help now more than ever."

Just like all forms of philanthropy, the WGC has adapted and evolved during these unprecedented times, and their goal is to continue to do so moving forward.

"We want to grow in whatever way is best for our community," VanRoekel said. "We are continuing to learn and to work toward making the WGC as diverse and inclusive as possible."

Ultimately, VanRoekel and Stevens hope to inspire the next generation of philanthropic leaders.

"We have visions of spin-off groups," Stevens said. "Maybe that's a young women's group or a group dedicated toward funding other types of organizations. Our goal is to create and inspire philanthropy in all forms in the community."

Twenty years from now, Stevens and VanRoekel hope to look back and see the impact the WGC has had in the area, and it's safe to say that impact will be extensive. In less than two years, the WGC has already given over \$57,750 to 21 projects or programs within this region.

"As an accountant, I can say with confidence that the numbers speak for themselves. Your dollars can do so much good when you utilize the power of many," VanRoekel said. "We hope women in the area will continue to engage in philanthropy in this super unique way, because trust me, you won't find a more fun way to give."

To learn more about the Women's Giving Circle and to join as a member or team, go to [mankatoareafoundation.com/programs-and-initiatives/womens-giving-circle](https://mankatoareafoundation.com/programs-and-initiatives/womens-giving-circle).

# A Home for Philanthropy

Nancy Zallek never anticipated her job would involve endless conversations about plumbing, flooring and electrical wiring.

It wasn't really in her job description, but that's just what happens when you build and later expand upon a successful nonprofit center. "I now know more about HVAC than I ever cared to," Zallek said, laughing. "But it's all for a great cause."

Zallek's foray into the world of property renovation and management began back in 2012. During a Mankato Area Foundation (MAF) Board of Directors retreat that year, the board made it part of the Foundation's strategic plan to lead the concept of creating a nonprofit center in Mankato—if and when the right space became available. In 2014, the Blethen Gage and Krause law firm decided to move out of their space in the old Michael's restaurant building, and the building checked every box on MAF's wish list.

"It was centrally located, it provided ample parking space and it could fit at least six nonprofits' office and storage needs," Zallek said. "It was meant to be."

Thus, MAF's strategic plan was set in motion. The idea was to create a nonprofit hub—a space in which organizations could share resources, easily connect and interact with each other, host volunteers and stakeholder meetings in large conference rooms and raise the visibility and professionalism of the nonprofit sector in Mankato.

Of course, realizing a dream like that would cost money.

"Our board readily accepted the challenge of raising the necessary funds to purchase and renovate the space," Zallek said. "I approached long-time community leader and MAF board member Denny Dotson and asked if he thought the concept would resonate with other potential donors at that time. He said, 'Let's call on a few people and see.'"

They called eleven and bought the building with the support of nine of those donors. Thanks to their enthusiasm, other donors and regional foundations stepped up to help us implement this cutting-edge initiative for the nonprofit sector, providing cash, in-kind contributions and expertise.

By 2015, Shared Spaces was open for business with six tenant organizations and about 25 employees housed in the building. It quickly became an epicenter for nonprofit activity, welcoming dozens of nonprofit colleagues and thousands of volunteers through its doors annually.

"Shared Spaces is even more successful than we dreamed," Zallek said.

"Recently, one of our nonprofit partners described it as the place to go if you want to make things happen in Mankato."

Within a few short years, it became evident that Shared Spaces tenants were already outgrowing the building. Total staff counts grew to more than 40 employees, and each organization needed additional office space and access to community rooms.

In 2018, just when we were wondering how we could possibly address those needs, Tony Frentz and Rob Else offered to donate the only adjacent real estate into which Shared Spaces could expand: the building next to the back half of Shared Spaces and behind Tandem Bagels.

"We were so fortunate to have everything fall into place like it did," Zallek said. "Once again, our generous donors stepped up and made it possible to create the Shared Spaces Philanthropy Center (SSPC), allowing the nonprofit tenants to realign and utilize all of the offices and meeting rooms in our original Shared Spaces next door. Because we share expenses rather than charge rent and we pool our resources, our tenant organizations are able to put their savings from overhead costs toward their programming."

In January of 2020, construction and renovation began on the SSPC annex. The goal was simple: to dedicate a community space to charitable giving.

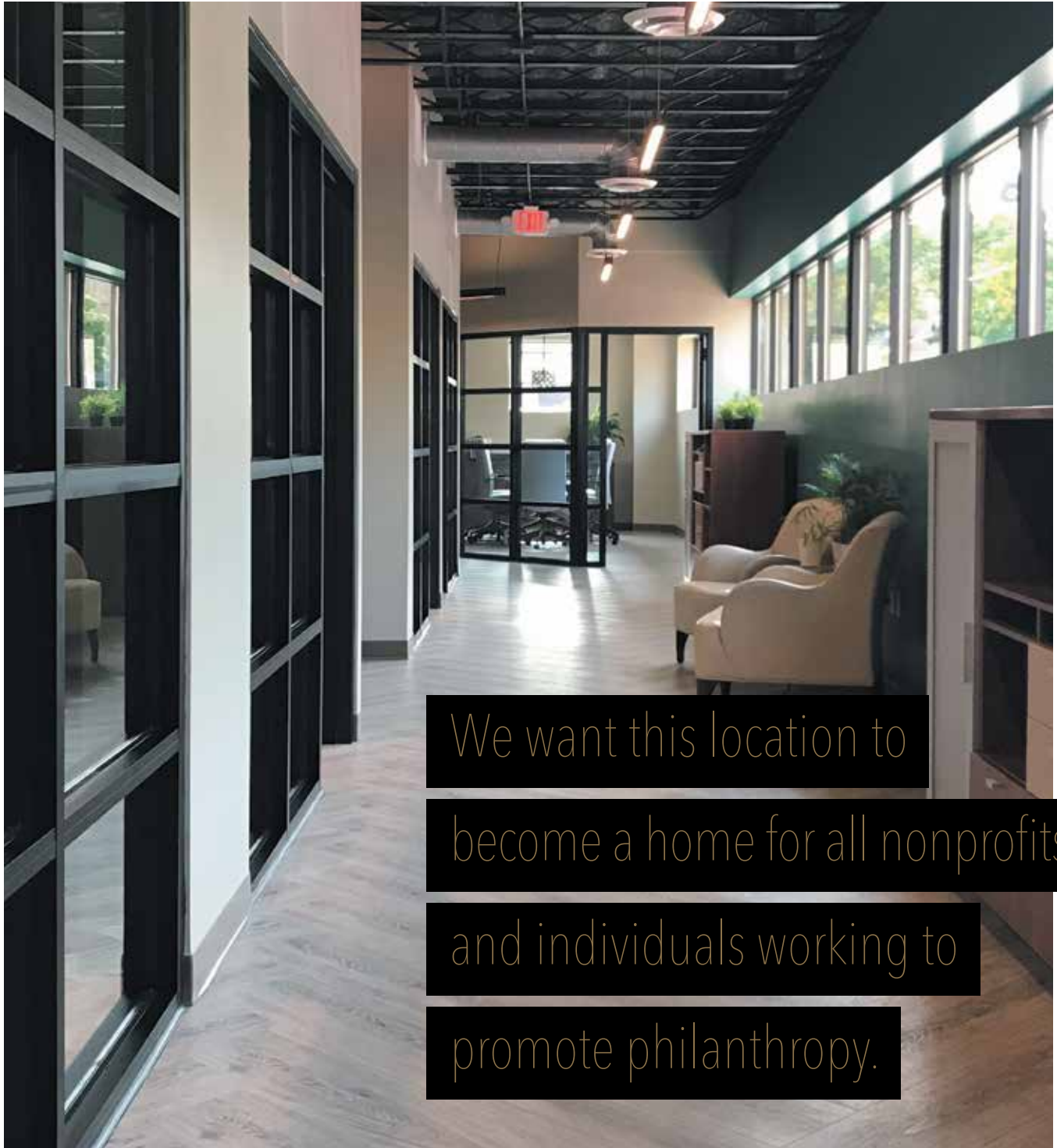
"We want this location to become a home for all nonprofits or individuals working to promote philanthropy," Zallek said. "We want to create an atmosphere that strengthens an understanding of how important charitable giving has been and continues to be for our community."

The SSPC features new office space for the growing MAF staff and a conference room open to anyone hosting conversations about giving. "The concept of philanthropy has often felt formal and intimidating," Zallek said. "We want this space to change that. We want giving to be fun, creative and accessible."

In September 2020, on the fifth anniversary of the original Shared Spaces opening, the Shared Spaces Philanthropy Center welcomed its first guests.

"We would have loved to have had a big open house to celebrate this space, but of course, that wasn't possible during the COVID-19 pandemic," Zallek said. "The people who have stopped by to see the new area have all admired its innovative concept and design. So many have said, 'I would love to meet with you here. It feels like I'm in your living room!' And that was precisely the goal—to make philanthropy feel warm, creative and welcoming."





We want this location to  
become a home for all nonprofits  
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MANKATO AREA FOUNDATION SHARED SPACES PHILANTHROPY CENTER

MAF's donors recognized that an investment in this expansion was an investment in the greater good of the community. MAF and the other tenant organizations on our Shared Spaces "campus" are putting that investment to good use.

"We are all relishing the hard work by so many people that went into this space. And you know what? All of those days of hardhats and

blueprints were worth it," Zallek said. "It is so much fun coming to work here every day. All of Shared Spaces is filled with incredible people doing incredible work, and to me, there is no better celebration of the power of philanthropy in Mankato."

# Community Impact Grants

**\$89,400** 2018-2019 GRANTS

**VINE Faith in Action**

Donor Software, Strategic Planning and the Legacy Room, \$35,000

**Leisure Education for Exceptional People (LEEP)**

Strategic Planning, \$5,600

**SMILES Center for Independent Living**

Strategic Planning, \$5,600

**YWCA Mankato**

Bridge Funding, \$10,000

**Arts Center of St. Peter**

St. Peter Sculpture Park on the Minnesota River, \$5,000

**ECHO Food Shelf**

Refrigeration Equipment, \$5,000

**MN Council of Churches, Mankato Refugee Services**

Staff Support, \$3,000

**Partners for Affordable Housing**

Strategic Planning, \$7,500

**St. Peter Area Food Shelf**

Food Distribution, \$1,700

**CityArt**

CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour, \$2,000

**Region Nine Development Commission**

Equity Summit, \$5,000

**St. Peter Recreation Department**

River Valley Dog Park, \$3,000

**410 Project**

Youth Programming, \$1,000

**\$57,000** 2019-2020 GRANTS

**Habitat for Humanity**

Strategic Plan, \$5,000

**St. Peter Community Free Clinic**

Dental Care, \$1,000

**Arts Center of St. Peter**

St. Peter Sculpture Park on the Minnesota River, \$5,000

**S.S. Boutique**

Quick Access Room, \$5,000

**Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration**

Educational Programming, \$6,000

**Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration**

K-6 Interactive/Distance Learning, \$5,000

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

Regional Science Fair, \$5,000

**South Central College**

Scholarships, \$10,000

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

STEM Scholarships, \$5,000

**The Ace Mentorship Program of Southern MN**

Program Start Up, \$5,000

**Children's Museum of Southern MN**

Powered by Play Exhibit, \$5,000



# Scholarships

\$59,500 2019 SCHOLARSHIPS

## Ogden W. and Jane M. Confer Scholarship Fund

Payton Keech

## Elks Charitable Scholarship Fund

Sarah Best  
Madison Ceminsky  
Grace Dehen  
Ian Dittmer  
Katelynn Erickson  
Sara Gartner  
Brayton Matuska  
Jacob Prybylla  
Carlyn Roering  
Lauren Senden  
Maggie Taylor  
Hannah Weng

## Marlyn R. Heintz Scholarship Fund

Madison Ceminsky  
Whitney Fowlds  
Payton Keech  
Hannah Weng  
Katelyn Wilde

## Dustin Lemke Memorial Scholarship Fund

Qali Abdi  
Maggie Taylor

## Florence Nightingale Scholarship Fund

Jeffery Anderson, South Central College  
Sasha Lynch, Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Gao Ja Yang, Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Pha Yang, South Central College

## Jenny Schugel Memorial Scholarship Fund

Kyle Domeier  
Michael Rahall  
Kolton Smith

## Gary W. Stroup Memorial Scholarship Fund

Erin Hanson  
Auna Koenigs

## Virginia and Martin Krause Scholarship Martin Luther High School

Sutton Bohlson  
Marah Engel  
Alexys Flohrs  
Zachariah Flohrs  
Mariah Geistfeld  
Wyatt Luhmann  
Colter Meinert  
Trevor Rosburg  
Anna Schultz  
Caleb Schultz  
Emily Sokoloski  
Lance Stevens  
Jacob Taylor

\$71,000 2020 SCHOLARSHIPS

## Ogden W. and Jane M. Confer Scholarship Fund

Matthew Wedzina

## Elks Charitable Scholarship Fund

Kolin Baier  
Kelsey Goettl  
Marina Kerekes  
Jennie Lim  
Lauren Mages  
Jack Norris  
Leah Preisinger  
Alex Prochaska  
Emily Sellner  
Mikayla Stanley  
Olivia Starkey  
Matthew Wedzina

## Marlyn R. Heintz Scholarship Fund

Kelsey Goettl  
Emily Sellner  
Mikayla Stanley  
Olivia Starkey

## Dustin Lemke Memorial Scholarship Fund

Kolin Baier  
Katelyn Flatgard

## Jenny Schugel Memorial Scholarship Fund

Aimee Kotton  
Lauren Mages  
Greta Morton  
Leah Preisingere

## Gary W. Stroup Memorial Scholarship Fund

Hope Dion  
Reece Popenhagen  
Peyton Schmitz

## Virginia and Martin Krause Scholarship Martin Luther High School

Tyler Berkland  
Sutton Bohlson  
Josie Clow  
Zach Flohrs  
Mallery Geistfeld  
Mariah Geistfeld  
Jade Kitzerow  
Alexis Lawton  
Wyatt Luhmann  
Brianna Petrowiak  
Michaelah Petrowiak  
Trevor Rosburg  
Brooke Rossow  
Jake Singleton  
Emily Sokoloski  
MaKenzie Weihe
















# Donor Advised Fund Grants

\$761,478

2018-2019 GRANTS

















 <b>\$5,975</b> ANIMALS & NATURE	 <b>\$25,693</b> MISCELLANEOUS
 <b>\$36,660</b> ARTS & CULTURE	 <b>\$31,150</b> RECREATION
 <b>\$135,000</b> CAPITAL PROJECTS	 <b>\$80,910</b> RELIGIOUS/MINISTRY
 <b>\$15,500</b> DIVERSITY	 <b>\$34,750</b> SCHOLARSHIPS
 <b>\$88,875</b> EDUCATION	 <b>\$89,660</b> SOCIAL WELFARE
 <b>\$30,485</b> FOOD INSECURITY	 <b>\$94,310</b> YOUTH
 <b>\$92,510</b> HEALTH & WELLNESS	

\$1,184,415

2019-2020 GRANTS



 <b>\$11,191</b> ANIMALS & NATURE	 <b>\$34,575</b> MISCELLANEOUS
 <b>\$74,400</b> ARTS & CULTURE	 <b>\$53,918</b> RECREATION
 <b>\$164,600</b> CAPITAL PROJECTS	 <b>\$165,540</b> RELIGIOUS/MINISTRY
 <b>\$16,500</b> DIVERSITY	 <b>\$67,000</b> SCHOLARSHIPS
 <b>\$82,503</b> EDUCATION	 <b>\$194,858</b> SOCIAL WELFARE
 <b>\$27,665</b> FOOD INSECURITY	 <b>\$46,079</b> VETERANS
 <b>\$75,935</b> HEALTH & WELLNESS	 <b>\$169,650</b> YOUTH

# Funds We Hold

The Mankato Area Foundation continues to help individuals and organizations achieve their charitable goals by offering a variety of giving strategies and funds. Our donors have the opportunity to shape their donations by choosing from flexible funding vehicles including unrestricted, designated, donor advised or scholarship funds.

## THE MANKATO AREA FOUNDATION CURRENTLY MANAGES 103 FUNDS:

### Endowed Funds

Elks Charitable Endowed Fund  
O.P. and E.A. Confer Fund  
Ogden P. Confer Endowed Fund  
Senior Citizen Endowment Fund  
Thin Film Technology Fund

### Designated Funds

Albert Fallenstein Fund  
Brad and Ann Hendricks Fund  
Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota Fund  
Community Fund for Youth  
Community Response Fund  
Curt and Debbie Fisher Fund  
Jane and Michael Kearney Fund  
Women's Giving Circle

### Donor Advised Funds

Andy and Christine Nessler Fund  
Barbara Carson Fund  
Biederman Family Fund  
Bob and Linda Sanger Legacy Fund  
Bradley and Kathy Brozik Fund  
Brian and Mary Duehring Gifting Fund  
Bryan and Tami Paulsen Charitable Fund  
Category One Fund  
Chris Larson and Michelle May Charitable Fund  
Community Vitality Fund  
Consolidated Communications Community Fund  
Consolidated Communications Community Fund for Youth  
Cunningham Family Fund  
Curt Fisher Fund  
Darlene and Allen Weckwerth Charitable Fund  
David Christensen and Jill Evans Fund  
Dennis and Sue Hood Fund  
Devenport Educational Fund  
Dobson Charitable Fund  
Dotson Family Fund  
Elks Charitable Fund  
Gene Biewen & Noel Van Tol Fund  
Glen A. Taylor Fund  
Gwesyn and Gloria Griffiths Fund  
Helen and Eldon Jones Fund  
Huebsch Family Fund  
James and Shannon Gullickson Fund

### (Donor Advised Funds cont.)

Jean and Tim Bye Family Fund  
Jim and Jennie Ward Fund  
Jim and Sheri Fedson Fund  
John and Jackie Bauernfeind Fund  
John and Wendy Kind Charitable Fund  
Jonathan Zierdt Cancer Fund  
Joyce and Gerald Roust Fund  
Kay and Lyle Jacobson Family Fund  
Kendall and Rod Meyer Fund  
Kenneth and Lori Smith Fund  
Lawton Family Fund  
Lorentz Post 11 American Legion Fund  
Michael and Lisa Montag Fund  
Nathan and Sarah Kerich Fund  
Page Jones Richards Family Fund  
Pat and Kristin Duncanson Family Fund  
Phil and Margie Slingsby Charitable Fund  
Polly and Bill Webster Fund  
Rstom Family Foundation Fund  
Ruth and Larry Mikkelson Fund  
Ryan and Jill McKeown Fund  
Ryan McKeown and Danielle Mehia Financial Advisory Team Community Fund  
Schooff Community Fund  
Schott Family Fund  
Steven and Kathleen Burnett Fund  
Sugden Family Fund  
Surprenant Family Fund  
The Adela Rindal Foundation Fund  
The Kristine Lindvall Fund  
The Marva and John Harding Charitable Fund  
The Norland Charitable Fund  
The Ten Haken Charitable Fund  
Veterans Memorial Fund  
Yunkers Family Fund

### Scholarship Funds

Charles Ingman LMA Scholarship Fund  
David and Michelle Schooff Scholarship Fund  
Dustin Lemke Memorial Scholarship  
Florence Nightingale Scholarship Fund  
Marlyn R. Heintz Scholarship Fund  
Ogden W. and Jane M. Confer Scholarship Fund  
Schugel Scholarship Fund  
Virginia and Martin Krause Scholarship Fund

### Agency Funds

Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society Agency Fund  
Educare Foundation Agency Fund  
Feeding Our Communities Partners Agency Fund  
Mankato Clinic Foundation Agency Fund  
Mankato Youth Place Agency Fund  
Minnesota Valley Action Council Agency Fund  
United Way Planned Gift Agency Fund  
VINE Faith In Action Agency Fund  
YWCA Mankato Women's Fund

### Fiscal Sponsored Funds

Central Freedom School  
Child and Family Advocacy Center  
Get Mankato PPE  
Greater Mankato Hockey Day Minnesota  
Hope in Healing  
Leave A Legacy  
Mankato Regional Airport Park  
Mankato Youth Place  
NicBluCares Fund

*Funds that choose to remain anonymous are not listed.*



## MEET OUR TEAM

At the Mankato Area Foundation, we are a team of people who love where we live and love what we do. We believe that our employees are our greatest asset.

Pictured left to right:

- Nancy Zallek**, President and CEO
- Sarah Beiswanger**, Community Grants and Nonprofit Specialist
- Maureen Gustafson**, Donor Relations and Programs Director
- Tricia Lewis**, Marketing and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
- Joan Untiedt**, Finance Director



## FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

**\$22.5M**  
TOTAL ASSETS

**108**  
NUMBER OF CHARITABLE FUNDS

**\$1.7M**  
TOTAL GRANTS  
AWARDED IN 2020

**530**  
GRANTS DISTRIBUTED

## WHO WE ARE

Since 1974, the Mankato Area Foundation has been dedicated to building a community of individuals that believe in the strength of giving. We continue today to shape Greater Mankato through connecting acts of giving with our community's needs.

Learn how you can start to make an impact today.

[mankatoareafoundation.com](http://mankatoareafoundation.com)

## BOARD MEMBERS

- Tom Lentz** (Chair), Market President, West Bank
- Jim Santori** (Vice Chair), Retired, Greater Mankato Growth
- Andrew Willaert** (Secretary), Partner, Gislason & Hunter LLP
- Andrew Thom** (Treasurer), Chief Financial Officer, LJP Waste Solutions
- Heidi Boyum**, President and CEO, Jaraff Industries, Inc.
- Melissa Bradley**, General Manager, Snell Motors
- Jessica Buchert**, Shareholder, Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
- Kristin Duncanson**, Partner/Owner, Highland Family Farms
- Seth Ferkenstad**, Chief of Finances, Smith Lawn and Landscape, LLC
- Shannon Gullickson**, Leadership Programs Director, Greater Mankato Growth
- Steve Jansen**, Tax Principal, CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP
- Brian Koch**, First Vice President - Financial Advisor, RBC Wealth Management
- Fred Lutz**, Retired, Northland Beverages
- Nathan Mullikin**, Executive Leader, Taylor Corporation
- Jennifer Pfeffer**, Sr. Regional Director of Operations, Ecumen
- Todd Prafke**, City Clerk/Administrator, City of St. Peter
- David Schooff**, President, Coldwell Banker Commercial Fisher Group of Mankato
- Mark Sharpless**, Senior Manager, Access Engineering, Consolidated Communications
- Todd Stromswold**, Wealth Management Trust Advisor, US Bank
- Buster West**, Owner, Minnesota Business Center

## INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS

- Christina Bohlke**, President, BankVista Mankato
- Leah Davis**, Partner, Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP
- Sarah Richards**, President and CEO, Jones Metal
- David Wittenberg**, Associate Vice President/Investments, Stifel