Pam Baker Retiring After More Than 23 Years at WCF, Tom Woods Selected as Executive Director

This February, WCF Executive Director Pam Baker will retire, after serving for more than 23 years with the Fund. Pam was hired in 1988 as the Fund’s first Lincoln-based staff person. Over $26 Million in grants have been awarded since her start date.

Tom Woods has been selected to succeed Pam as the Fund’s Executive Director, starting March 1. Tom has worked for the Fund since 1999. He currently serves as Senior Program Officer. He received both a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and a Certificate of Non-Profit Management from the University of Pittsburgh. Tom came to the Fund after serving as Program Associate at the Community Foundation Serving Coastal South Carolina (Charleston).

A Look Back on Pam’s Time with the Fund

Pam was hired with the Fund after working in Human Resources and Data Communications & Marketing for Lincoln Telephone Company. She also once taught at Lincoln Public Schools. She holds a Master’s Degree in Adult & Continuing Education from the University of Nebraska.

At the time of her hire, WCF was unified with now-Woods Fund of Chicago. Board meetings were often held in Chicago, and grant dollars were divided between the cities. In 1994, WCF formally split into the two foundations (Lincoln/Chicago) that operate today.

Since her start in 1988, Pam has witnessed major technology changes. “When I began here, I used a Panasonic word processor and reviewed paper applications. Now we use online applications and most of our information is accessed via website or social media. Technology has made us more transparent,” said Pam.

In the past two decades, Pam has noticed nonprofits’ public funding sources diminishing.

José Soto Completes Board Term

This year marked the end of José Soto’s board term that began in 2006. José is an attorney who serves as Vice President for Access, Equity & Diversity at Southeast Community College (SCC). He previously worked for then-called Lincoln Action Program.

Grants totaling nearly $9 Million were awarded during José’s 6-year term. For his parting allotment of $25,000 in director-designated grants, he applied half of the funds toward health education materials and staff training, including cultural competency, at Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, and half of the funds to provide direct support for low income minority students at SCC.

“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They’re not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can’t do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do,”

- Apple Inc.
Community Nonprofit Loan Fund Extended

The Community Nonprofit Loan Fund (CNLF), a partnership between Woods Charitable Fund and Community Development Resources (CDR) since 2010, continues to offer no-interest loans to Lincoln nonprofit organizations facing temporary financial emergencies.

Since its creation, the CNLF has made five loans totaling $89,000, ranging from $5,000 to $20,000. Of the $89,000 loaned to date, nearly $40,000 has been repaid.

At WCF’s November board meeting, directors approved changes to the CNLF’s operation that will raise the maximum amount of lending from $20,000 to $30,000 per organization and will extend the loan repayment period to up to 36 months.

For more information on eligibility requirements and the application process, contact CDR Executive Director Rick Wallace at (402) 436-2386 or visit www.cdr-nebraska.org.

Organizations Awarded or Paid Grants in 2011

- ACLU Nebraska Foundation
- Arts Are Basic
- Asian Community and Cultural Center
- Boys & Girls Club
- Bright Lights
- BryanLGH Foundation
- CASA for Lancaster County
- Cedars Youth Services
- Center for Legal Immigration Assistance
- Center for People in Need
- Center for Rural Affairs
- CenterPointe
- Child Advocacy Center
- Child Guidance Center
- Community CROPS
- Community Development Resources
- Community Justice Center
- El Centro de las Americas
- Family Service Association of Lincoln
- Flatwater Shakespeare Company
- Foster Care Closet
- Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools
- Girl Scouts-Spirit of Nebraska
- Good Neighbor Community Center
- Habitat for Humanity
- Human Services Federation
- Indian Center
- Legal Aid of Nebraska
- Lighthouse
- Lincoln Arts Council
- Lincoln Association for the Traditional Arts
- Lincoln Community Playhouse
- Lincoln Housing Charities
- Lincoln Literacy Council
- Lincoln Medical Education Partnership
- Lincoln Municipal Band Association
- Lincoln Public Schools
- Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra
- Lincoln YWCA
- Malone Community Center
- Meadowlark Music Festival
- Manning Hope
- Nebraska Art Association (The Sheldon)
- Nebraska Appleseed
- Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children
- Nebraska Housing Developers Association
- Nebraska Wesleyan University
- Nebraskans for Civic Reform
- Nebraskans for the Arts
- Northeast Family Resource Center
- Planned Parenthood of the Heartland
- Senior Services of Nebraska
- Southeast Community College
- Educational Foundation
- St. Monica’s Home
- The Angels Theatre Company
- United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster Co.
- University of Nebraska Foundation
- UNL-African American and African Studies Program
- UNL-Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies
- UNL-Lied Center for Performing Arts
- Voices for Children in Nebraska
- Voices of Hope Lincoln
- Willa Cather Foundation

WCF Partners on Diversity Initiative, Board Training

The goal of the Board Diversity and Training Project is to enhance the ethnic diversity of area nonprofit boards of directors. It aims to recruit, train and match potential board members with area nonprofit organizations seeking increased diversity. The project received seed funding from WCF ($18,500), the Lincoln Community Foundation ($10,000) and the Community Health Endowment ($5,000).

The project will specifically:

- assess the current diversity of area nonprofit boards;
- develop and implement recruitment strategies for cultural centers, businesses, colleges and faith-based organizations;
- train participants on the role of board members and functioning of a board of directors;
- provide training to participants on the need for volunteering via Volunteering 101;
- implement a “Board Bank”, a web-based system that matches participants with area nonprofits; and
- conduct a post-test board diversity survey.

According to Volunteer Partners (VP), the point agency managing the project, Volunteering 101 has trained 35 participants to date, with 17 more applicants pending. Five nonprofits recently contacted VP seeking diverse board members and two agencies since added new board members selected from the Board Bank.