Woods Charitable Fund Annual Report 2019

Officers & Directors

Nelle Woods Jamison
Chair
(term began 2019)
Community Volunteer

Donna W. Woods
Chair Emerita
(term began 2019)
Community Volunteer

Candice Howell
Vice Chair
Assistant Dean for Student Success & Persistence
Nebraska Wesleyan University

Hank Woods
Treasurer
Community Volunteer

Michael J. Tavlin
Assistant Treasurer
Chief Financial Officer
Speedway Motors, Inc.

Ed Wimes
Community Volunteer

Michelle Suarez
Community Volunteer

Pablo Cervantes
Migrant Education Coordinator and Latino Youth Advocate
Lincoln Public Schools

Jay Conrad
(term began 2019)
Executive Director
Houses of Hope

Staff

Thomas C. Woods, IV
Board Secretary
President
Woods Charitable Fund

Joan Stolle
Operations Manager
Woods Charitable Fund

Kathy Steinauer Smith
Senior Community Investment Director
Woods Charitable Fund

Nicole Juranek
Community Investment Director
Woods Charitable Fund

Pictured from left: Treasurer Hank Woods, Chair Emerita Donna Woods, Chair Nelle Woods Jamison, and President Thomas C. Woods IV

Donna W. Woods retires from board

Woods Charitable Fund Board Chair Donna W. Woods retired from her position at the organization's November 2019 board meeting.

Donna was elected to the WCF Board in 2001, became vice chair in 2005 and chair in 2007. A longtime community volunteer, she will continue to serve WCF as chair emerita. During her tenure with the WCF Board, the organization awarded 1,179 grants totaling $26,710,160. Donna was married for 33 years to Thomas C. "Chip" Woods III, former Woods Charitable Fund Board President, until his death in 2000.

Nelle Woods Jamison was elected the new board chair at the November meeting. She was elected to the WCF Board in 2005. She earned a Bachelor of Journalism degree and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has worked as the Director of Membership for the Minnesota Museum of American Art and as an Art Assistant for Creating Pride in Chicago. She is the daughter of Chip and Donna Woods.

Jay Conrad

To fill the board position vacated by Donna's retirement, Jay Conrad was elected. Since 1991, he has been the Executive Director of Houses of Hope, which provides residential and support services for individuals impacted by substance use and related mental-health issues. He has served on several local boards including Gathering Place, St. Monica's, CenterPointe, Cause Collective and Nebraska AIDS Project. He works at the national level to increase awareness and need for behavioral health services.

Left: Ruth Karlsson and Released and Restored class participant Madeline Brokke spoke at Woods Charitable Fund's November 2019 board meeting. From left: WCF staff members Nicole Juranek and Joan Stolle; Madeline Brokke and Ruth Karlsson; WCF staff members Kathy Steinauer Smith and Tom Woods.

Right: Valerie Dahlke, Office Assistant, and Rhonda Mattingly, Executive Director at Bridges to Hope.

Letter from the President

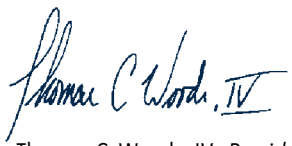
"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start." – Nido Qubein

For many incarcerated men and women in Nebraska, their starting point is very daunting. Thankfully, programs serving those in prison and who have been recently released improve their skills and give them resources to make the most out of their current circumstances, improve their starting position and help determine a more successful life beyond the confines of the prison system.

WCF's 2019 annual report shines a spotlight on the efforts by Released and Restored and Bridges to Hope to help decrease the recidivism rate in Nebraska. Released and Restored prepares individuals for their release, restores family relationships that were harmed by incarceration and renews lives by providing inmates with the tools and support systems needed for learning how to live moral, ethical and legal lives. Bridges to Hope provides basic household furnishings, clothing and personal-hygiene products - at no cost - to men and women soon to be or recently released and are making the transition to a productive life outside of the cell. The cost barrier is greatly reduced to those in need of establishing a place to live and furnishing a home.

Woods Charitable Fund applauds the work of those who make the Lincoln community welcoming for those re-entrants and help them improve where they can go once they start their lives back in our community. We also applaud the work of Donna Woods, who retired from WCF's Board of Directors in 2019. She not only influenced the direction of the Fund during her tenure but also the philanthropic character of those around her.

And finally, in addition to WCF's regular grant-making decisions, of which both Released and Restored and Bridges to Hope were a part in 2019, the Fund's board decided to set aside funds for a third round of Breakthrough Initiative Grants (BIG) in 2020. Civic Nebraska received WCF's first BIG award and is in its third year of programming for its Collective Impact Lincoln project, while Legal Aid and the Center for Legal Immigration Assistance received WCF's second BIG award and is in its second year of programming for its UPLIFT project. The Fund is proud of how these projects are progressing and look forward to what applicants propose next year.



Thomas C. Woods, IV, *President*

About the Foundation

Woods Charitable Fund is a private philanthropic foundation located in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was founded in 1941 by Frank H. Woods, Nelle C. Woods and their three sons, Thomas, Henry and Frank.

The Fund's vision is to help build a community that offers a promising future for all, where everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive. It supports a broad range of activities that include, but are not limited to, these special interests: Human Services, Education, Civic & Community and Arts & Culture. More details about WCF's history, grant-making and review of financial statements can be found on its website, www.woodscharitable.org.

In 2016, Woods Charitable Fund launched a Breakthrough Initiative Grant to support promising and groundbreaking new programs, collaborations and/or organizational best practices at nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln. Breakthrough Initiative Grants were awarded in 2017 to Collective Impact Lincoln, a collaboration led by Civic Nebraska, and in 2018 to Legal Aid of Nebraska and the Center for Legal Immigration Assistance for UPLIFT. The Breakthrough Initiative Grant program will return in 2020.

More details on this grant program are available at www.woodscharitable.org/breakthrough-grants/.

Before applying, grant-seekers are required to either contact the Fund by phone or mail/e-mail a letter of intent, including a budget, to determine if an application is appropriate. To allow adequate time for consideration, interested agencies are required to contact the Fund's staff at least two weeks prior to the application deadline.

TIMETABLE

Inquiry Deadline	Submission Dates	Notification Dates
April 15	April 15 to 30	November
October 15	October 15 to 31	May

Please note that if the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will defer to the following business day.

To Apply for a Grant

If the Fund requests a full proposal, the applicant will be asked to complete WCF's web-based Grant Application Form, accessible only to those invited to apply.

The staff at Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. is pleased to consult with applicants at any time during the process to help strengthen their proposals and reports.

In cases of extreme emergency, WCF will consider interim proposals of $10,000 or less outside the set timetable.

Applicants should direct inquiries to:

Tom Woods, Kathy Steinauer Smith or Nicole Juranek

Woods Charitable Fund, Inc.
1248 O Street, Suite 1130
Lincoln, NE 68508

www.woodscharitable.org
402.436.5971

twoods@woodscharitable.org
ksteinauersmith@woodscharitable.org
njuranek@woodscharitable.org

Woods Charitable Fund offers its office conference room as a meeting space to nonprofit organizations from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 8 a.m. to noon Fridays. Call WCF at 402.436.5971 for more information or visit www.woodscharitable.org/meeting-room/.

2019 Grant Payments December 31, 2019

ARTS & CULTURE

Families Inspiring Families	$ 10,000
Flatwater Shakespeare Company	15,000
Lincoln Arts Council	25,000
*Nebraska Cultural Endowment	6,000
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lied Center for Performing Arts	25,000
Vision Maker Media	10,000
Subtotal	**$ 91,000**

CIVIC & COMMUNITY

Center for Legal Immigration Assistance (Breakthrough #2, Project UPLIFT)	$ 40,000
Center for Rural Affairs	20,000
Civic Nebraska (Breakthrough #1, Collective Impact Lincoln)	400,000
Civic Nebraska (Civic Health program manager)	25,000
*Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, Inc.	7,000
Leadership Lincoln, Inc.	15,000
Legal Aid of Nebraska (Breakthrough #2, Project UPLIFT)	160,000
Legal Aid of Nebraska (Housing Justice Project)	25,000
Lincoln Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity, Inc.	20,000
The Mediation Center	9,500
Nebraska Civic Engagement Table	30,000
Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition	10,000
OpenSky Policy Institute	10,000
South of Downtown Community Development Organization	30,000
Stand for Schools	15,000
Sunrise Communications, Inc. dba KZUM Radio	20,000
Subtotal	**$ 836,500**

EDUCATION

Bright Lights, Inc.	$ 5,100
Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools	10,000
Girls Code Lincoln	5,000
Girls Incorporated of Omaha	15,000
Inclusive Communities	8,500
Lincoln Community Learning Centers (Fiscal Sponsor Lincoln Community Foundation, Inc.)	60,000
Lincoln Housing Charities	5,000
Lincoln Public Schools (STEM Ecosystem project)	5,000
Lincoln Public Schools (TCA Summer Academy)	30,000
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	15,000
Nebraska Human Resources Research Foundation, Inc.	20,000
Subtotal	**$ 178,600**

2019 Grant Payments December 31, 2019

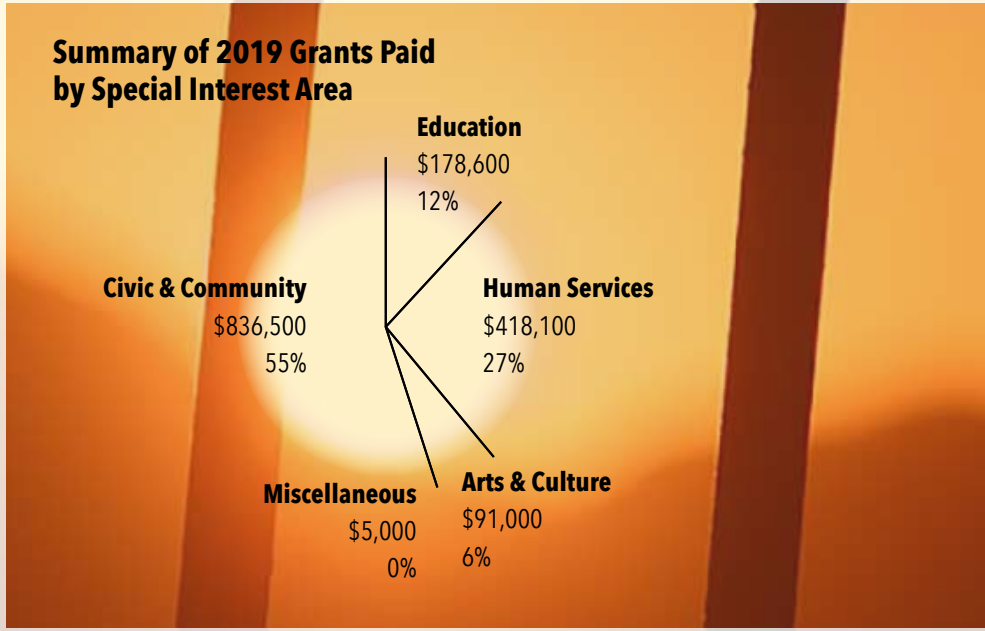
HUMAN SERVICES

Bridges to Hope	$ 16,600
CASA for Lancaster County	15,000
Cause Collective	10,000
*Center for People in Need, Inc.	6,000
CenterPointe, Inc.	10,000
City of Lincoln, Lincoln Police Department	25,000
Disability Rights Nebraska	40,000
El Centro De Las Americas	14,000
*Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc. (General Operating)	6,000
Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc. (High School Food Markets)	20,000
HopeSpoke	35,000
Lincoln Medical Education Partnership	15,000
The Madonna Foundation	27,500
Mourning Hope	50,000
Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, Inc.	20,000
Released and Restored, Inc.	55,000
The Set Me Free Project	20,000
Willard Community Center Corp	13,000
YWCA of Lincoln	20,000
Subtotal	**$ 418,100**

MISCELLANEOUS

ynpnLNK (Fiscal Sponsor Nonprofit Hub Foundation)	$ 5,000
Subtotal	**$ 5,000**
TOTAL GRANTS PAID	**$ 1,529,200**

** Indicates retiring Director's grant designation*



More information about each 2019 grant is available at www.woodscharitable.org/recent-grants/.

Woods Charitable Fund co-hosts Summer Social

In June 2019, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations met to celebrate and honor Lincoln's nonprofit community and the important role it plays in promoting and strengthening Lincoln.

More than 100 nonprofit and foundation representatives attended Lincoln's celebration June 21 at The Mill on Innovation Campus. The Summer Social was inspired by the fourth annual Beverage to Enhance Equity in Relationships (BEER), started by Vu Le, a national thought leader, blogger and co-author of "Unicorns Unite: How Nonprofits and Foundations Can Build EPIC Partnerships." Typically hosted on the summer solstice, this day provides an opportunity for nonprofit and philanthropic professionals, board members and trustees to make connections that strengthen relationships across the sector and in the community.

"This event was for all those who are doing critical work behind the scenes to allow them face time to meet and mingle with one another and foundation staff," said Tom Woods, President of Woods Charitable Fund.

"Collaboration is all about relationships," said Rhonda Mattingly, Executive Director of Bridges to Hope. "Getting together for a social gathering such as this helps nonprofits realize that those in the foundations are just as concerned about helping those in need as the nonprofits are."

The event was hosted by Woods Charitable Fund, the Cooper Foundation, Duncan Family Trust, Kinder Porter Scott Family Foundation/WRK Family Foundation and in partnership with Cause Collective.

Featured Grantees: Serving people in prisons and re-entering society

In 2019, Woods Charitable Fund awarded grants to two Lincoln nonprofit organizations that provide programs and services to those incarcerated in Nebraska facilities to help them rebuild their lives and successfully return to their communities after their sentences. Released and Restored leads life skills classes in several facilities across the state and at its office, while Bridges to Hope gives household furnishings, clothing and other products free of charge to men and women soon to be or recently released.

Across the state, 2,200 people are released from prison each year, typically with less than $100 in their pocket. They are challenged to find a job, a place to live and the necessities of life. Programs like Released and Restored and Bridges to Hope ease that transition and work toward the greater goal of lessening the likelihood of reoffending and returning to incarceration. While the national recidivism rate (the number of those who reoffend after release and return to prison) is 67% within 3 years of release, the rate of recidivism among those who have taken a Released and Restored class since 2005 is 26%. In addition to providing goods and materials for re-entrants to set up their homes, Bridges to Hope also prides itself on providing a welcoming and comfortable environment for all, inviting men and women to share stories over coffee in a friendly atmosphere.

Raising funds to pay for prison education and re-entry programs can be challenging, which is why many such programs including both Bridges to Hope and Released and Restored have their roots in prison ministry. Church support continues to help both organizations through volunteers, board leadership and fund-raising, but the agencies' programs serve everyone and do not center on religious affiliation. Both have expanded their programming and gained support from a variety of sources and are active with overarching organizations that address issues for re-entrants, including the Re-Entry Alliance of Nebraska and the Lincoln Homeless Coalition.

Left: Amanda participated in the EMPWR class at Released and Restored's office in February 2020.

Right: Ruth Karlsson leads an EMPWR class at the Released and Restored office.

"I came into class wondering what I could get out of a class when I was feeling a lifetime of problems on my shoulders. I have learned more than I could hope for. I have been able to take away what I feel is a foundation to help me repair the mistakes I have made and the thought processes that get me to these places. I feel as if Released and Restored has given me the tools I need to start repairing myself. It has empowered me to find these skills and use them to always let myself know that I have values, I have worth, I matter."

– Jennifer

"I learned new things and I gained the needed confidence to forgive myself, set boundaries without guilt, and finally blossom. I will always cherish and embrace the honor of being a witness to many peers' growth, as well.

Incarcerated women need an environment to both heal and grow. Released and Restored invests in women's abilities to change and transform by supplying women with their own power."

– Carla

Featured Grantee: Released and Restored

Released and Restored and its Founder and Executive Director, Ruth Karlsson, have provided structured programming in Nebraska prisons since 2004 to prepare women and men for their productive and successful return to their families and our communities. The skills taught include resume and cover-letter writing, job interview techniques and money management, as well as anger and stress management, conflict resolution and more. The vast majority – about 95% – of those currently in Nebraska's prisons will be released at some point, so Released and Restored's mission benefits the state by decreasing taxpayer cost through improved recidivism rates, reducing prison overcrowding and increasing public safety.

LEARN MORE

In 2015, Released and Restored opened an office in the St. James United Methodist Church at 11th and Lake streets in Lincoln and began offering its classes to those on work release at the Community Corrections Center-Lincoln. It also provides drop-in post-release support there including help with obtaining a job, finding a place to live, accessing resources such as food, shelter and clothing, and encouragement in adjusting to life outside prison in a safe and welcoming space. Released and Restored employs 3 in addition to Ruth and works with a variety of volunteers to facilitate programs at various prison and jail facilities.

Released and Restored launched its newest program in January 2018, EMPWR (Embracing My Personal Worth and Resiliency). EMPWR Is a 40-contact-hour, trauma-informed life-skills program developed by Released and Restored to help women move beyond cycles of abuse to become more confident, self-directed and self-empowered. National statistics show 95% of incarcerated women have been physically abused, 81% have been sexually coerced and 68% report childhood sexual abuse, and many women in prison had been coerced by abusive partners into committing the crime they are imprisoned for. "We see many women with a lack of their own dignity, worth and value," Ruth said. "They start to seek that validity outside themselves, usually in toxic intimate partners. Our goal is to break these cycles." So far 83 women have completed the EMPWR curriculum – 60 at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York and 23 through the Community Corrections Center - Lincoln at Released and Restored's office. Released and Restored received a two-year WCF grant in 2019 to support EMPWR. Released and Restored previously received grants in 2017, 2014 and 2012 for its life skills and classes.

Bridges to Hope's warehouse provides a place for re-entrants to shop for clothing, furniture and more and a place to receive community donations. At left, Jamison bags up his selected items with the help of Jan, a longtime volunteer. Below right, volunteers unload a truck of donated furniture picked up from a donor.

Featured Grantee: Bridges to Hope

Bridges to Hope was founded in 2009 by Bud Christenson, a Lutheran pastor who collected clothing for those recently released from prison so they had professional clothes for job interviews. At that time, Lutheran Family Services also provided job-skills classes and a warehouse with donated household goods for re-entrants. When this project ended, Bud and his church took over the warehouse. The agency hired Rhonda Mattingly as its Executive Director in 2015 and since has grown to a staff of three. Bridges to Hope serves over 700 men and women annually with the support of 20 regular volunteers and others from the community and connects re-entrants to resources that can provide a support system.

LEARN MORE Bridges to Hope

"We are working to lower the recidivism rate or people returning to incarceration," Rhonda said. "You have people struggling with housing and employment. They can be doing everything right, taking classes or finding a job, but that job may only pay for food and rent and then they are left sleeping on the floor. In order to get what they need, people can go back to what they know and become incarcerated again. It can be a vicious cycle. We help furnish a place from top to bottom and it's one less thing for people to worry about. That means they are less likely to return to criminal behavior, and that affects our entire community."

In 2019, WCF provided a grant for Bridges to Hope to hire an office assistant to help with accounting and office management. Additionally, that year the organization relocated Bud's Thrift Shoppe to downtown Lincoln to sell donated items that can't be used by re-entrants and generate revenue to support its services. WCF previously provided a grant in 2017 to support Bridges to Hope's strategic planning process to help it streamline and grow its programming.

"Every time people walk through these doors, they are greeted with a smile," Rhonda said. "We don't ask what crime they committed. We show them we care by listening and not judging. When you treat someone as a human being, it's showing them their worth and that they deserve to lead a healthy good life and can be successful."

Jared's Story

Jared's earliest memory is of watching his mother being beaten to death when he was just 4 years old. He was taken into custody of the state and placed in a foster home. Throughout his childhood, he was placed in a total of 17 foster homes. Jared admittedly was angry and only knew how to fight. He became involved with drugs, alcohol and joined a gang.

After 15 years of being incarcerated including being placed in solitary confinement for months at a time, Jared realized this was not the life for him. He became a model inmate and was released. After leaving prison, he found support through several Lincoln organizations, including Bridges to Hope. There he selected furniture, clothing and household items to furnish his new home. Today, Jared continues as a Bridges to Hope volunteer and often shares his story to help the community understand those who are incarcerated are human, each with their own individual story to share.

** Jared is not this client's real name; it has been changed to respect his confidentiality.*

Left: Shoppers browse items for sale at Bud's Thrift Shoppe, which provides revenue for Bridges to Hope.

Right: Bridges to Hope Founder Pastor Bud Christenson is a regular volunteer for the organization.

To make a gift to
Woods Charitable Fund,
please contact
President Tom Woods
at 402.436.5971 or
twoods@woodscharitable.org.

Photos in this annual report of programming at Released and Restored and Bridges to Hope were taken by Gwyneth Roberts.

Woods
Charitable
Fund

Setting Ideas In Motion

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Graduates of Released and Restored's Life Skills Re-Entry Prep class in fall 2018.