Woods Charitable Fund

Annual Report

2022

Letter from the President

"Stories are more than compelling facts. People remember stories more than they remember statistics." – Soledad O'Brien

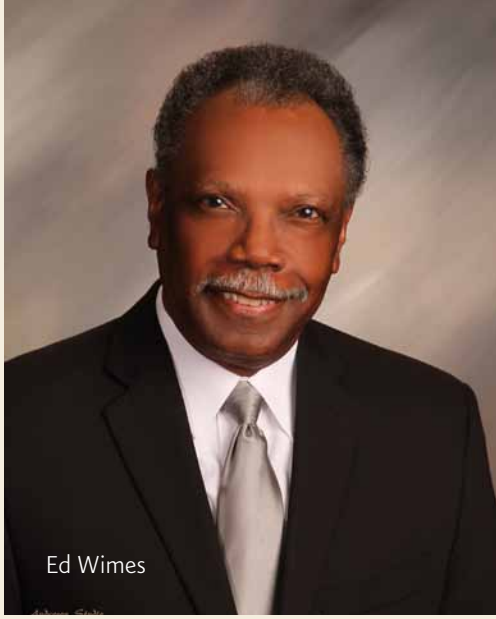
WCF's 2022 annual report shines a spotlight on the efforts of a handful of Lincoln nonprofits led by women and serving women. As part of the foundation-nonprofit relationship, WCF requires reports from its grantees to maintain communication, to evaluate projects we fund and to judge the value of our funding. Compiling the numbers has become second nature for nonprofits to show a return on investment to their supporters but also as a way to inform the general public of concerns facing our community. For instance in 2022, Friendship Home provided safe shelter to 648 domestic violence survivors; St. Monica's served 251 women seeking services for substance abuse; and Fresh Start sheltered 50 women on an average of 161 nights.

Unfortunately with statistics, it is easy to forget the fact that these numbers are actual people — people we know such as a friend, coworker, neighbor or family member. Reading — or, better yet, hearing — the stories of individuals within those reports personalizes the stats and gives the numbers more meaning. It provides a better understanding of what issues people are processing and highlights the amazing work that these nonprofits provide. In this report, we share some of those stories of women involved at those agencies, as well as the Lincoln YWCA, Voices of Hope, ACLU Nebraska Foundation and OutNebraska, to hopefully instill a lasting impact for our readers.

This year marked the end of Ed Wimes' board term. Ed joined the WCF board in 2017 and was elected vice chair in 2020. He is the co-owner of E&S Consulting with his wife, Sherri. Together they provide leadership coaching, human resource management and diversity/inclusion strategies. Prior to this, Ed served as Special Assistant to the President of the University of Nebraska and for 14 years as the University's Assistant Vice President/Director of Human Resources. A lifelong resident of Lincoln and retired Army officer, Ed has donated his time in many capacities including service on nonprofit boards for the Malone Community Center, the Community Health Endowment, the NAACP and CASA for Lancaster County. During Ed's tenure on the Board of Directors, WCF paid 282 grants totaling $9,484,250. With his departure, WCF welcomes Charlie Foster, Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Woods Charitable Fund applauds the work of the featured nonprofits and Ed Wimes, who make the Lincoln community such a wonderful city in which to live.

Thomas C. Woods, IV, *President*



Ed Wimes

Charlie Foster

We extend our thanks to our community partners for sharing photos for use in this annual report: Fresh Start, Friendship Home, OutNebraska, St. Monica's and Voices of Hope. Also, thank you to the Lincoln Journal Star for the historical photo on page 3. We also appreciate Cara, Debbie and several anonymous clients and survivors for sharing their stories with us.

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Community Volunteer

Ed Wimes
Vice Chair
(term ended 2022)
Community Volunteer

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Jay Conrad
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Suk Wortman
Director of Direct Marketing
Arbor Day Foundation

Charlie Foster
Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor
for Diversity and Inclusion
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Donna W. Woods
Chair Emerita
Community Volunteer

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Nicole Juranek
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Supporting women throughout our history:

Two organizations with missions focused on empowering women received Woods Charitable Fund grants in 2022, continuing a long history of partnership:

– **Lincoln YWCA** received a second-year grant payment for its family and community engagement staffing. Its first WCF grant, in 1955, was an $800 donation to honor its centennial, and grants since then have supported a residential facility, staffing and programs including a collaboration to decrease teen pregnancy. More than $1.3 million has been awarded to this organization that seeks to eliminate racism and empower women.

– **Voices of Hope**, which provides crisis intervention services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and related forms of abuse, received a grant to assist with its leadership transition. Executive Director Marcee Metzger (pictured at far right in the picture below from a 1979 march) served in the position since the organization became an independent agency in 1989 and retired in 2022. The grant supported the transition to its new Executive Director, Natalie Roberts-Day. Voices of Hope has received more than $670,000 in grants and loans for operating, programming and building expenses since 1990.

About the Foundation

Woods Charitable Fund is a private philanthropic foundation located in Lincoln, Nebraska, founded in 1941 by Frank H. Woods, Nelle C. Woods and their three sons, Thomas, Henry and Frank Jr. The Fund's resources resulted from business interests in the telecommunications and coal industries in Nebraska and Illinois, namely Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph and Sahara Coal Company. For more than 50 years, the Fund made grants in Lincoln and Chicago, and until the early 1980s, it operated as a family foundation under the leadership of trustees Thomas C. Woods Jr. in Lincoln and Frank H. Woods Jr. in Chicago. At the end of 1993, Woods Charitable Fund restructured into two separate foundations to better serve their communities' needs, with Woods Charitable Fund continuing in Lincoln.

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.

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

To Apply for a Grant

Woods Charitable Fund offers two grant cycles per year and only accepts applications from nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln. Before applying, grantseekers are required to complete a letter of intent (available at www.woodscharitable.org/forms/) to determine if an application is appropriate. If the Fund requests a full proposal, the applicant will be asked to complete WCF's web-based application, accessible only to those invited to apply. The staff at Woods Charitable Fund is pleased to consult with applicants at any time during the process to help strengthen their proposals and reports. More information about the application process including timetables, limitations, samples of applications and report forms and what is not funded can be found at www.woodscharitable.org/apply/.

Direct inquiries to Tom Woods, Kathy Steinauer Smith or Nicole Juranek at info@woodscharitable.org, or call 402.436.5971.

Free meeting space available to nonprofit organizations:

Woods Charitable Fund offers its office conference room in downtown Lincoln 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 402.436.5971 for more information or visit www.woodscharitable.org/meeting-room/.

Supporting women through policy and advocacy:

Woods Charitable Fund values participation in creating policy that will affect our community. Two grants in 2022 supported organizations that empower women to speak out and encourage inclusiveness for all regardless of their identity:

- **ACLU Nebraska Foundation** received a grant for a collaborative project with Planned Parenthood of the Heartland to support reproductive rights and justice.
- **OutNebraska** received general-operating support for its work to support our LGBTQ+ community, including queer women and trans women, and help build an inclusive Nebraska that embraces and celebrates the full spectrum of LGBTQIA2S+ people.

Power in Community

Woods Charitable Fund seeks to create a community where everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive. In more than 80 years of grant-making, WCF understands that agencies and programs that empower women and support families are crucial to achieving this vision.

Our 2022 annual report highlights grants made to organizations that assist, empower and advocate for women, and in particular the three on the following pages that serve those facing specific challenges.

By supporting women, these organizations improve lives while also strengthening families, youth and our overall community. Here are stories shared by women whose lives have been forever impacted by these agencies.

Fresh Start provides a transitional shelter for homeless women and programming to help clients overcome barriers to self-sufficiency. WCF provided general-operating grants in 2021 and 2022 as the organization conducted a capital campaign to improve and pay off remaining expenses from the purchase of its house. Fresh Start has received nearly $500,000 in operating, programming and building purchase and renovation grants since 1992.

"I know that I am free to call Fresh Start at any time of day even though I don't live there anymore. They will help me. The girls I met at Fresh Start hang out with me even today and we have made special bonds."

– Fresh Start alumna

Cara's Story

Cara, right, with Program Coordinator Meg

When I moved in, I had been sober a little over a month and had nowhere else to go. I had no other ideas; it was either move in here or go die alone in my dad's basement wishing I could've done something different.

My first several weeks I did whatever I could. I went to as many 12-step meetings as I could and filled out job applications everywhere I could think of. I got a job and started to gain a little sanity back. I started going to work every day, I got honest with a sponsor, and got honest with staff at Fresh Start.

My first roommate hid food in the room, which led to an ant infestation. I finally asked the staff if they had any Raid to deal with this problem. They were flabbergasted that I had waited for so long. That was the thing: I didn't think my problems were deserving of attention, because I believed I was less than. The staff telling me I was worth the three minutes it took them to spray the room and remove the food was the beginning of breaking out of that shell of self-hate. It started my journey into self-sufficiency. I was learning how to be a human, hold boundaries and even how to save money. When I left Fresh Start nine months later, I bought myself a car — something I hadn't ever dreamed possible — and I got promoted a few times. Fresh Start gave me the basic life skills to do those things. I had just enough structure to not totally fall off, but not so much that I couldn't develop a sturdy foundation for when I left. Fresh Start taught me to be OK with women, to love myself and, most of all, that we all are deserving of good things in life.

Leaving Fresh Start, I felt a wave of gratitude. I was excited to go out on my own, terrified I would mess up, and more full of hope than I had been in 15 years. I have been blessed with a second chance. I came to Fresh Start broken, homeless, hopeless and tearful, with absolutely nothing to give. I left with confidence, hope, support and relationships with God and the people around me. Thanks, Fresh Start, for giving me my life back.

Friendship Home

Friendship Home supports and shelters survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their children. WCF provided project support in 2021 and 2022 to increase outreach and services to Lincoln's refugee and immigrant residents, especially Middle Eastern, North African and South Asian populations, in partnership with the Asian Community and Cultural Center. Friendship Home has received more than $580,000 in operating, programming and building purchase and renovation grants since 1985.

"If it was not for the Friendship Home, my three sons and I would be on the streets right now."

– Friendship Home resident

Survivor Story

I ask myself, 'How did this happen?' 'Where did it start?' 'When did it get so bad?' The abuse started so small that I didn't identify it as abuse, even when it escalated, and that way of living became everyday life – it became my ordinary.

His first promise was that if I ever whispered a word of anything to anybody, he would kill me. His second promise was that if I ever tried to leave him, he would take the children so far that I would never see them again. Do you know what it is like to live under the threat of never seeing your children again? I was scared to death.

When I decided to call the crisis line, a million thoughts flew into my head. When do I pack? When should I go? What should I take? How can I take everything I need? What if people find out what has been happening? How do I trust staff to be confidential with my story? These questions went through my head every minute, so I called Friendship Home and asked them. It was nice to have a gentle voice on the other end to reassure me that everything would be taken care of.

When I got to the Friendship Home, I was amazed at how well they tried to meet everyone's needs, especially the grocery list. We were always asked if there was anything special that we wanted. It made me feel taken care of for a change. They provided diapers and wipes and all the toiletries. We could do our laundry whenever we needed. My daughter loved to play in the toy room. And the only thing that was asked of me was one chore per day.

As survivors, we all have our stories, and not one is exactly as another. We share common components in our experiences that bring us together in support of one another: fear, pain, suffering and anguish. The issues we have faced are more complicated than they appear; why else would we have stayed or gone back for so much of our lives? The real work must be done within us all to ensure the outcome we have all shown up for, but without the knowledge, understanding, sincerity, care, encouragement and support of the dynamics of the Friendship Home and its gifted staff, there would be nothing to light our way.

The Friendship Home has restored my faith in myself, in people, and in life. I have never felt so much love or such genuine commitment and empathy in my life. I will continue to overcome this.

St. Monica's
Life Changing Recovery for Women

St. Monica's offers gender-specific, trauma-informed programming to treat addiction and support recovery. WCF provided general-operating grants in 2022 and 2023 as the organization conducts capital campaigns to renovate buildings and relocate some programming to Lincoln's Victory Park campus. St. Monica's has received more than $590,000 in operating, programming and building renovation grants since 1983.

"During my stay I've gained many friendships that I will take with me into my recovery. St. Monica's has been a saving grace for me these last seven weeks, and without this experience, I don't know if I would be alive today. Now, I see every new day as a blessing."

– St. Monica's alumna

Debbie's Story

It took Debbie decades to overcome childhood trauma and generational addiction. Pregnant at 38, her choice was St. Monica's or jail. Upon admission to its Project Mother & Child program, Debbie heard what she couldn't believe for herself: "St. Monica's staff said they would love me until I could love myself."

Inspired after completing treatment, Debbie is one of 13 current staff who graduated from St. Monica's programs. Her lived experience and formal education make her the perfect fit for her clinical management position. "At St. Monica's, we hold our client's hands while they walk through it. We meet them where they're at." Debbie and all at St. Monica's are doing that through the mental health and addiction crisis perpetuated by the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, peer-to-peer programming is booming. Debbie's an expert. She represented St. Monica's cutting-edge therapeutic approach as a speaker at the International Peer Support Conference in October.

What motivates Debbie to keep doing the hard work? "These ladies make me do better every day. I get to work with women to build healthy relationships, give them a voice, and empower them to believe they are worthy of moving forward."

2022 Grant Payments | December 31, 2022

ARTS & CULTURE

Flatwater Shakespeare Company	$ 7,500
Lincoln Arts Council	20,000
Lincoln Crossroads Festival (aka Lincoln Crossroads Music Festival)	10,000
Nebraska Cultural Endowment (aka NCE)	10,000
Nebraska Humanities Council (aka Humanities Nebraska)	20,000
Subtotal	**$ 67,500**

CIVIC & COMMUNITY

ACLU Nebraska Foundation, Inc.	$ 20,000
Center for Legal Immigration Assistance (aka CLIA)	60,000
Civic Nebraska (Capitol Experience Day)	20,000
Civic Nebraska (Collective Impact Lincoln-Phase 2)	300,000
Community Crops	10,000
Cultural Centers of Lincoln	10,000
Give Nebraska	4,000
Karen Society of Nebraska, Inc.	6,500
Legal Aid of Nebraska	110,000
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Inc.	25,000
Outlinc, Inc. (aka OutNebraska)	15,000
Subtotal	**$ 580,500**

EDUCATION

History Nebraska Foundation	$ 20,000
Lincoln Literacy Council (aka LLC) (Breakthrough 3.0 Bridgeway to a Better Life)	135,000
Lincoln Literacy Council (aka LLC) (Transition of executive director position)	15,000
Lincoln Public Schools	40,000
National Audubon Society, Inc. (for Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center)	15,000
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	15,000
Roots of Justice (fiscal sponsor: Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Inc.)	17,500
Subtotal	**$ 257,500**

(continued)

2022 Grant Payments | December 31, 2022

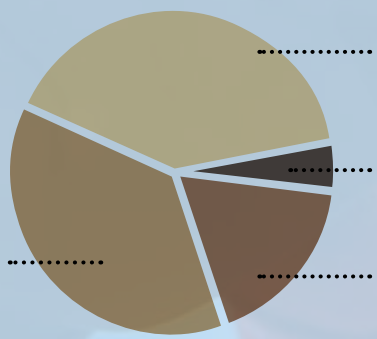
HUMAN SERVICES

Big Brothers Big Sisters Lincoln (Recruitment Specialist position)	$ 20,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters Lincoln (Staff support for community-based mentoring)	4,500
Bridges to Hope	10,000
County of Lancaster, Human Services	4,000
Family Violence Council (Breakthrough 4.0 Safe & Healthy Families Initiative)	300,000
** Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc.	12,500
Fresh Start, Inc.	45,000
Friendship Home of Lincoln	25,000
Girl Scouts-Spirit of Nebraska	15,000
Lincoln YWCA (aka YWCA Lincoln)	20,000
Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. (aka LFS)	20,000
** Malone Community Center	12,500
Mental Health Association of Nebraska	25,000
MENTOR Nebraska	8,000
Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, Inc. (aka Planned Parenthood North Central States)	10,000
Rabble Mill (aka The Bay)	20,000
St. Monica's Home (aka St. Monica's)	30,000
United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County (aka UWLLC)	10,000
Visionary Youth	15,000
Voices of Hope Lincoln, Inc.	15,000
Willard Community Center Corp. (aka Willard Community Center)	20,000
Subtotal	**$ 641,500**
TOTAL GRANTS PAID	**$ 1,547,000**

** *Indicates Directors/Officers/Staff/ Honorary Awards*

More information about each 2022 grant is available at www.woodscharitable.org/grants-awarded-2022/.

Summary of 2022 Grants Paid by Special Interest Area



Human Services
$641,500
41%

Arts & Culture
$67,500
4%

Education
$257,500
17%

Civic & Community
$580,500
38%

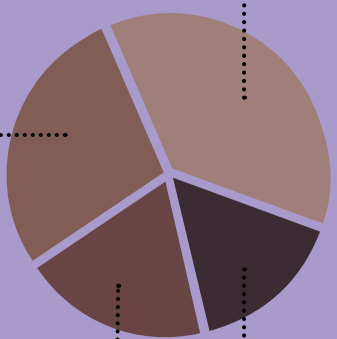
Breakthrough Initiative Grants

Woods Charitable Fund launched its Breakthrough Initiative Grant program in 2016 to support promising and groundbreaking new programs, collaborations and/or organizational best practices at nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln. More details on this grant program are available at www.woodscharitable.org/breakthrough-grants/.

To date, WCF has awarded $3.175 million for four Breakthrough grants to support promising and groundbreaking programs and collaborations. Another $1.35 million has been awarded for continuing support of two of the projects.

$1,175,000 (37%) for **Collective Impact Lincoln** *(2017; lead agency: Civic Nebraska), empowering resident-led change in six Lincoln neighborhoods. This project was awarded an additional $900,000 in 2020.*

$900,000 (28%) for the **Safe and Healthy Families Initiative** *(2021; lead agency: Family Violence Council), providing a collaborative, coordinated response to child abuse cases in which domestic violence also occurs and supporting the Safe and Healthy Families Court in Lancaster County.*



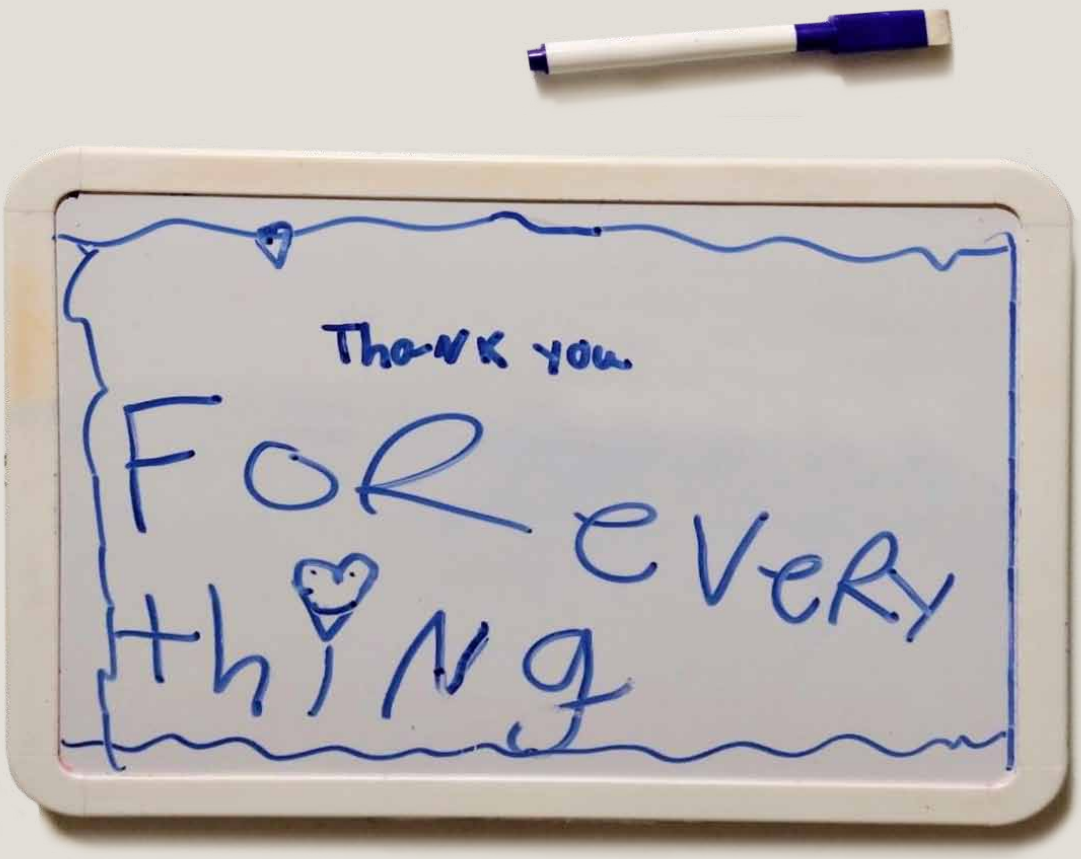
$600,000 (19%) for the **UPLIFT Project** *(2018; lead agencies: Legal Aid of Nebraska and the Center for Legal Immigration Assistance), providing legal services and education through Lincoln's cultural centers. This project was awarded an additional $450,000 in 2021 and 2022.*

$500,000 (16%) for **Bridgeway to a Better Life** *(2020; lead agency: Lincoln Literacy Council), expanding job-skills and training for careers with specific hiring needs.*

Supporting survivors:

In addition to receiving their own WCF grants, Friendship Home and Voices of Hope are vital partners in two additional projects funded in 2022:

- **Family Violence Council** coordinates the Safe and Healthy Families Initiative (noted at left) with Voices of Hope, Friendship Home, CASA for Lancaster County, BraveBe Child Advocacy Center and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Center on Children, Families and the Law.
- **Lancaster County's Human Services**, along with Woods Charitable Fund and Lincoln Community Foundation, are supporting an independent assessment of the county's domestic violence and survivor services in 2023.



Woods Charitable Fund

Setting Ideas In Motion

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