

HLOCF Newsletter

Heron Lake-Okabena Community Foundation

July 2016

The Beginning—To create a legacy of pride and partnership....

It started with an idea! Community members from Heron Lake and Okabena founded the Heron Lake-Okabena Community Foundation (HLOCF) in 2001. Under the leadership of the Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), the HLOCF developed a mission statement and organized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. “SWIF is an independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to be a catalyst facilitating opportunities for economic, social, and cultural growth by promotion of philanthropy, leadership, innovation and collaboration in southwest Minnesota.”

The exclusive purpose of the HLOCF is to solicit funds and award grants to organizations that promote education and opportunities that enrich the communities of Heron Lake and Okabena. Funds are raised through fundraisers, donations, mass mailings, memorials and charitable gifting.

The evolution of the Foundation Board has brought about a revision of the original mission statement. We did some brainstorming and clarified the goals and objectives of the Foundation while still keeping the original focus of our mission in tact.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: “To enrich the community by promoting education and opportunities in the hope of creating a legacy of pride and partnership.”

Reaching the Goal of \$100,000!

Matching funds of \$25,000 from SWIF was incentive enough to get the fundraising ball rolling.

After a lot of discussion, we sponsored our first dinner and silent auction in March of 2003. With tremendous support from the community, we raised \$5,800. We were amazed at our success, and quickly decided to sponsor a second dinner and silent auction in March, 2004. Again, the strong support of our communities made the event a huge success. Sales of dinner tickets and auction items ranging from the “Okabena” fireplace, to theme baskets, to homemade quilts, to plane rides, to backhoe work, to sports memorabilia raised \$7,000. This event has become a much anticipated annual happening in our communities evolving into a social time with hors d’oeuvres, wine, and cash bar replacing the sit-down dinner. As of April, 2016, a total of \$82,430 has been raised and added to our endowment fund and special project fund.

The love of the game by some board members resulted in a Best Shot Golf Tourney in September, 2004 at Emerald Valley in Lakefield, MN. Nineteen sponsors paid \$100 each to sponsor a hole and 50

golfers enjoyed the warm September afternoon playing golf. The tournament netted another \$2,711. The golf tourney has also become an annual event and through September, 2015 has raised \$23,399 for our endowment fund and a special project fund. Combining those funds with the memorials and donations received, we met our first goal of raising \$25,000. With some matching funds from SWIF, we have over \$178,836 in our endowment fund and over \$4,200 in our special project granting fund.

By working together, we have been successful. We are thankful for the support and trust that the people of the Heron Lake and Okabena communities have given us.

The Funds

The HLOCF is a related component fund of SWIF. SWIF is an independent, nonprofit foundation servicing 18 counties in southwest Minnesota, and its 501(c)3 public charity status extends to the HLOCF, which allows gifts to be tax-deductible.

SWIF owns and manages the assets, provides investment expertise and administrative support, and technical assistance around fundraising, marketing, and grant making to our local board. All funds raised by the HLOCF will exclusively benefit our communities forever!

HLOCF currently has four funds. The first is its endowment fund, which is a fund that is kept in perpetuity to provide an ongoing stream of revenue generated by the investment of principal. That may seem confusing, so more simply put, an endowment is like a *savings account*. The principal is invested and never spent—only the income is used to distribute to qualifying projects within the community. The stronger our endowment fund, the more resources we have available to invest back into the community now and in the future.

The second fund is an operating fund which is used to cover our expenses such as advertising, mailing, etc. and is kept to a minimum. It may also be used to supplement our granting monies if needed.

Our third fund, a special project fund, is non-restricted and is used to supplement our granting funds or used if a special project comes to our attention.

Our fourth project fund was developed when an anonymous donor contacted the school wishing to make a generous donation, but wanting it handled through the HLOCF. These funds were used for the purchase of a band instrument and for the reconstruction/updating of the “Crow’s Nest” broadcast area at the HLO Football Field. Another anonymous donation was received and those funds were dedicated to the renovation of the ball fields in Okabena. A third anonymous donation was given in 2014 and those funds are dedicated to a new English curriculum for the high school in Okabena. A fourth anonymous donation was given in 2015 and was used for refurbishing the stage area in the HLO High School. A fifth donation has been received in June of 2016 and those funds are being used for industrial tech equipment, choir robes, updates to the FACS room, and a concession stand at the baseball field.

Our endowment fund is a long-term strategy...it provides dollars now and in the future to invest back into the community. And our project funds help meet current needs because the entire dollar is used for those immediate needs. Whatever your preference, the need is now and the opportunity is within your reach! Gifts of all sizes are welcome and truly appreciated.

Grants Awarded

Grants are awarded on a yearly schedule. Grant application deadline is January 15 of each year with grants awarded at our Silent Auction/Social event held in March or April. Grant guidelines, application forms and the rubric the board uses to process the grant applications are all available online at www.heronlakecity.org or www.okabena.net.

Since our first round of granting in 2005 of \$600 each to Narrow Path Youth Ministry for its programs and North Heron Lake Game Producers for books purchased for the SSC and Public libraries, we have granted over \$64,000 back to our communities. These monies have been used to add equipment to the Wellness Center, help purchase park equipment in Okabena, landscape around the new lift/entrance to the Heron Lake Public Library, provided a batting cage for SWU baseball, helped the Women of Today, the Heron Lake EMTs, assist several class projects at the local schools and purchase much needed equipment for the Heron Lake Day Care Center and the SSC Flag Squad. The HLO Food shelf was able to purchase a refrigerator and freezer for their program and a 4-H club was awarded funds to assist with a Community Pride project. In 2012 we were able to award a sizeable grant to the community through the Heron Lake Legion Auxiliary to go towards construction of a Veterans' Memorial as well as several more school projects and the children's program at the public library. In 2014 we were able to grant \$3000 to the Okabena Legion Auxiliary to go towards the purchase of new stoves for their kitchen remodel as well as monies to the Heron Lake Firemen and Heron Lake EMS for their projects. 2016 was another huge grant year for us. We were able to grant \$10,900 for school and community projects including welcome flags for the city of Okabena, funds to help in publishing the Veterans' Memorial Biography book, Legion baseball jerseys, just to name a few. What a benefit to our communities.

Our Activities

Mark your calendars for the following special events:

September 10, 2016—HLOCF Charity Golf Classic at the Worthington Golf Course
1 P.M. Shotgun start.

November 10, 2016—Give to the Max Day. We are listed at www.GiveMN.org or www.swifoundation.org and donating is very easy. All donations are greatly appreciated and your name may be drawn for a silver or gold ticket which gives an additional \$500 or \$1000 to our foundation

March 25, 2017—Annual Silent Auction/Grant Awards Gala. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at the Heron Lake Community Center.

September 9 or 10, 2017—HLOCF Charity Golf Classic, date, site and time to be determined.

A Very Special Surprise!

This past spring, Patrick Costello was awarded a special honor from Southwest Initiative Foundation for his work on developing SWIF's Keep It GrowingSM farmland giving program whereby farmland could be donated to a foundation. (go to www.swifoundation.org for more information.) SWIF awarded Mr. Costello a grant of \$2000 which he was to designate to an entity of SWIF. He chose Heron Lake-Okabena Community Foundation to be the recipient of this award. HLOCF wishes to express a sincere thank you to Mr. Costello for his generosity.

Where Can You Find Us?

The current HLOCF Board includes Collette Diemer, chair; Terri Pelzel, co-chair; Mitz Diemer, secretary; Tracy Freking, treasurer; Jackie Baumgard; Amy Bang; Angie Haberman; Carrissa Haberman, Alexa Johnson, Bardene Peter; Annie Rasche; and Julianne Volk. To visit our website, click on the Heron Lake-Okabena Foundation link at www.heronlakecity.org or www.okabena.net. The SWIF website is www.swifoundation.org.

What are your ideas? Let's put them in motion. Let's work together to build stronger communities. If you have an idea, let us know. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board, contact us.



HERON LAKE-OKABENA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

An Affiliate of Southwest Initiative Foundation