

Racine County Keeps Moving Forward

Non-profit organizations, including the Racine Community Foundation (RCF) play a significant part in determining the quality of life for the people of Racine County. These organizations and RCF are supported by generous donors and volunteers who share a common goal of making Racine County a better place for all of its citizens.

Professional development in the non-profit field is continuously developing, and the RCF just completed the rigorous recertification process for the National Standards. The National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations® (National Standards) is an accreditation program created by community foundations for community foundations. It is peer-driven, and self-regulatory. The National Standards accreditation represents operational effectiveness to foster excellence in community philanthropy, and is done in two ways. First, the standards were created for operationally and legally sound community foundations. Second, the process leads our staff and board toward the achievement of operational excellence. RCF is looking at ways to continually improve its impact on Racine County, and by obtaining its National Standards recertification has shown that it has the framework in place to look at innovative ways to keep moving ahead.

Any funds earmarked for charity are limited and precious, and the non-profit organizations that donors choose to support are aware of the tremendous trust that they have earned. The University of Wisconsin-Parkside has offered professional development opportunities for non-profit professionals in our area, and is another way that our community keeps building trust and moves forward. Parkside offers certificates in Non-Profit Fundraising as well as a certificate for a Non-Profit Professional, and it hosts a Non-Profit Excellence award that is sponsored by the Kenosha Community Foundation and the Racine Community Foundation. It should be mentioned that the United Way of Racine County has provided scholarships for both certificates, and CCB Technology provided scholarships for the Non-Profit Professional Certificate. Due to the generosity of those organizations, even the smallest non-profit organizations may be able to participate in professional development.

Another way that Racine County keeps moving forward is by collaboration. Recently, the RCF was proud to be one of the original funders of the Racine Coalition Against Human Trafficking, now called the Fight to End Exploitation. Sadly, due to our proximity to the I-94 corridor linking Chicago to Milwaukee, Racine is positioned along a frequently travelled route for traffickers. This organization truly embodies the true sense of a collaborative as it has assembled representatives from both the public and private

sectors, and and has done so effectively. The Fight to End Exploitation has focused solely on battling this problem and has quickly become known state-wide as a successful coalition model. Were it not for our community's ability to come together to address an issue such as this, the collaborative would not be able to coordinate local service providers as well as work on educating our community on this very important topic. Other examples of our community collaborating are: Greater Racine Collaborative for Healthy Birth Outcomes, the Racine Collaborative for Children's Mental Health, the Racine County GED Initiative and the Opiate Prevention Collaborative. In order to keep moving forward, Racine County like many other communities will need to continue to look at ways to collaborate and combine resources in an effective manner.

The Racine Community Foundation is proud to support and provide service to Racine County and is looking forward to assisting the numerous local non-profit organizations fulfill their missions in the future.