

Habit of the Heart

By Janet Haley

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At this time your Hendricks County Community Foundation is in the middle of its strategic planning session. According to Wikipedia, strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. It's the formal consideration of the organization's future course. As members of the committee review our mission and core values, they are faced with the strategic challenge: How can the Community Foundation assure the relevance and ultimate sustainability of its roles—catalyst, convener, grantmaker—to better serve and empower Hendricks County?



As I was writing this column, I thought about a fund within the Community Foundation that embodies the success that can arise when the Community Foundation serves in these roles. Over ten years ago, Deedee Daniel, former executive director of the Community Foundation, convened a group of philanthropic women and the seed for what has become the Habit of the Heart Fund was born. Spurred by a passion to help with the emergency needs of women and children in Hendricks County, these women have grown the Habit of the Heart Fund by utilizing their skills and reaching out to area business partners and community members. Since the inception of the fund, Habit of the Heart has granted over \$92,000 to help with eyeglasses, dental work, hearing aids, transportation, clothing and more.

A recent example of Habit of the Heart's impact centers on a student who had profound hearing loss and speech issues. The young student finally received a long overdue cochlear implant in one ear and a hearing aid in the other. She needed very special speech therapy for the implant to be advantageous. The father had been recently laid off and could not make the payments for the therapy at Riley Hospital for Children. Working with the hospital, the teacher, the therapist and the parents, Habit of the Heart was able to help this grateful family. The student continues to make progress in her listening skills and auditory abilities while her mother participates in each session and is learning acoustic strategies to help her continue to improve.

The Habit of the Heart Weekend is just around the corner—September 9 & 10. It is a sold out event because of the passions of the Habit of the Heart committee to get so many involved in this effort. The money raised during the weekend will provide grants for the current school year and will grow the endowed Habit of the Heart Fund. With an endowed fund, even when these women are gone, their hard work will still be realized and used to provide grants to help those in need. Their history is a lesson rich in what happens when passion becomes a mission and “no” is not an option. And it is a lesson that shows how the Community Foundation can serve as catalyst, convener and grantmaker while serving and empowering the Hendricks County community.

What is your passion? If I can help your passion become a mission, contact me at 317.718.1200 or janet@hendrickscountycf.org or visit our website at www.hendrickscountycf.org.