



# TWENTY YEARS

## on a SOLID FOUNDATION

Barrington Area Community Foundation Leaders  
Reflect on Its 20-Year Anniversary

BY LISA STAMOS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE LINNEKIN

ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2018, officers, directors, and their spouses gathered for a dinner celebration at the home of Kim Duchossois to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of the Barrington Area Community Foundation (BACF). The Foundation exists to serve the community by establishing a long-term fund for the betterment of its residents—and to meet unmet needs.

Other communities around the United States were creating such foundations, and longtime Barrington resident Norval Stephens took notice. “I had heard that Indiana had started community foundations as a way to build a sense of community. Barrington, with so many organizations, would benefit from a foundation supplying venture capital—in the form of grants,” he said. “I got the idea from a meeting in Indianapolis of all the fraternity and sorority foundations; I was chairman of my fraternity foundation. There I learned that Indiana embarked on a program to start

Above: The Directors of the Barrington Area Community Foundation





Original founders of the Barrington Area Community Foundation area (from left) David Nelson, Jim Fitzgerald, Kim Duchossois, George Yapp, and Norval Stephens.

community foundations because Indiana was 47th of the 50 states to hold college graduates in the state,” Stephens recalled.

Stephens has been a leader of BACF since the conversation between he and the original founders took place. The first grants available totaled \$5,000 and were given out in 2000. “We provide, in increasing amounts each year, venture capital for the local charities. We encourage looking for new opportunities, new ways to serve,” he said.

Since its founding in 1998, BACF has presented 326 grants to organizations with the cumulative amount of \$2,079,000. Last year, \$250,000 was granted; in 2019, the foundation plans to grant closer to \$275,000. The key is that the funds granted are from a strict and formulaic portion of the interest income and not the principal foundation funds. To achieve these goals, BACF is committed to strong board involvement, incredibly low administrative overhead, and excellence in financial stewardship—including the professional expertise of its directors at no charge.

#### GRANTING A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Barrington community leader and philanthropic beacon Sam Oliver shares her insights into BACF and its internal processes. “The Foundation is well-managed, and the grant application process is rigorous,” Oliver said. “Organizations applying for grants are required to give vigorous thought as to the way they function, the importance of their mission, and the way funds will

be spent. Periodic reports to the Foundation are required. This strengthens and benefits the organizations and, ultimately, the community,” she said. “The Foundation is seen as a possible source of funding for a wide variety of initiatives that serve unmet needs in our community. It provides optimism that new programs that will serve the community in many areas can actually begin to make the difference that is needed,” Oliver said.

Original founder Kim Duchossois shares her experience in the grants process. “Though many aspects of our community foundation are quite worthy, I think the one which resonates most for both donors and grantees is our rigorous and thorough grants review process. It is a priority that every new director serve on the grants committee, enabling the essence of BACF’s purpose and mission to be experienced. The director becomes immediately enlightened about our area nonprofits and the many services they provide. Most importantly, they become aware of our community’s unmet needs. Many are quite surprised!”

#### EXTRAORDINARY LOCAL LEADERS

BACF meetings are a gathering of some of the most competent leaders in the Barrington area. Kim Duchossois recalls the early days and how it impacted her.

“My earliest remembrances of BACF meetings are of the inspiration and awe that I continually felt about the local icons, most with whom I was not



earlier acquainted, but was privileged to be seated amongst. The intellectual capital and experience coupled with an earnest commitment to launch a sustainable financial resource for our community's unmet needs was ample, impressive, and palpable every gathering. Such order, integrity, sensibility, determination, and grace," Duchossois said.

Duchossois takes the concept of meeting unmet needs a step further. "A well-managed community foundation bodes well as a pillar for its community. It provides a means through which emotional, social, educational, cultural, environmental, and economic health can grow stronger and thrive," she said.

Serving BACF has had its own rewards for founders and directors. Duchossois notes, "I've said countless times, the experience of 20 years alongside such a dedicated, intelligent, wise, and creative group of mindful volunteers has been equal, if not far superior, to a graduate degree (which I never acquired!). It is testament to the Margaret Mead quote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

#### LOOKING BACK AND AHEAD

Leadership, including new leaders, will always be a priority for the Foundation. The grant process is at the heart of the mission of BACF and according to the organization today, each year the grants committee receives three times





Barrington Area Community Foundation Officers (from left) Vice President Young Chung, President Karen Lambert, and Treasurer Bob Beaubien. (Not pictured: Jim Fitzgerald, treasurer.)

more the amount of grant requests than is granted. A strong team is needed to continue the success of the Foundation as it continues to grow, thanks to generous donors.

Stephens looks back on BACF's 20 years with thoughts on what makes it work. "First, how hard BACF members work to make things happen! The time spent by the grants committee, and the procedures it has worked out, really serve the whole community. Determining how to allocate \$250,000 is hard work. The review system the committee has developed ensures that no one committee member can dominate and that every committee member has a voice. Second, that good work stimulates more good work. Many times, we have heard from the charities how much better they used the grant money because of how hard the committee worked to be sure the grant was a good one."

Duchossois says that new leaders are needed. "Did anyone say a few of us should finally retire? Heck yes! We are and have been very enthusiastically recruiting directors from the next generation of Barrington stakeholders to keep our community foundation ever strong, relevant, and exceptionally well-managed," she said. "Our donors deserve the very best oversight of their valued investments in our community through BACF"

Reflecting on BACF and its history, Oliver says, "Over these 20 years, so many lives have been affected by outstanding programs that require vision, work, determination, and funding. The Foundation's funding is often the essential help that is needed to assure that the programs will begin to change lives." U

## ABOUT THE GRANTS WORKSHOP

Charity and nonprofit leaders are invited to attend the Grants Workshop to be held on Tuesday, Nov. 13 from 4-5:45 p.m. with a reception to follow at 5:45 p.m. at Barrington's White House. To RSVP, provide the names of those attending to 847-382-8800 or by email to [admin@barringtonareacommunityfoundation.org](mailto:admin@barringtonareacommunityfoundation.org) by Nov. 1, 2018.



GiGi and Nancy Gianni of Gigi's Playhouse

## LOCAL FOUNDATION, INTERNATIONAL REACH

BACF Benefits Gigi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers

BY NANCY GIANNI

Gigi's Playhouse has received grants from the Barrington Area Community Foundation (BACF) on several occasions—in 2008, 2015, 2016, and 2018. One of our grants went towards giving free speech therapy to children and adults with Down syndrome. Our biggest gift to date was for our career training program for our adults with Down syndrome called Hugs and Mugs Café. GiGi University graduates work in Hugs and Mugs for an 18-week internship and learn valuable career skills to help them gain independence and get jobs in the community.

What I love about BACF is that they understand that a charity is still a business. Our programs are free to our participants, but they are not free to us! The only difference between a not-for-profit and a for profit business is tax status. We all have the same compliance issues, tax, legal, and employee issues that we have to adhere to, and BACF recognizes that. With that said, they really challenge us to show the sustainability of the program and have metrics tied to the programs they fund. They want to make sure their money is being used in the most efficient way possible. They take the time to understand the program, study the business plan, and then challenge you on it! That shows me that they truly care and want you to get the most out of their grant funding.

I also love that BACF allows our children and adults with Down syndrome be a part of their grant breakfasts and parties! It allows the entire BACF group to see the people they are serving and how important this programming is to their lives.

We are so grateful for BACF as they continue to change lives through their grant funding. For GiGi's, this grant goes far beyond the families we serve here in the Barrington area. We use their grant funds locally, but the program curricula, metrics, and outcomes serve as a model to 40 GiGi's Playhouse locations in the United States and Mexico.

*Nancy Gianni is the Chief Belief Officer for GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers, and GiGi's Mom. Their motto is: Be Generous. Be Accepting. Be Kind. Learn more at [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org). #GenerationG*