

taking THE INITIATIVE

News from Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

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www.smifoundation.org

September 2015

Message from Tim Penny



As we prepare for Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's (SMIF) 30th year in 2016, we are excited to reflect on the impact our work has had, but also to look to the future. A big part of this forecasting will be driven by our next strategic planning cycle.

As a stakeholder of SMIF and of southern Minnesota, we invite you to be part of this conversation at our upcoming Annual Luncheon. What do you feel are top priorities for our region? How impactful has SMIF been at addressing existing concerns? We value the chance to hear from those outside our organization who deeply care about seeing our communities continue to thrive.

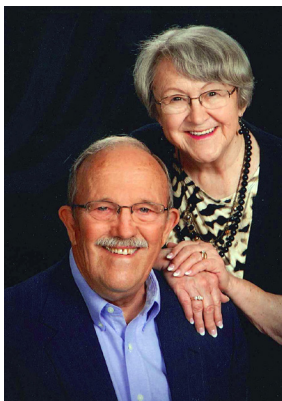
Also at this year's Annual Luncheon, we will acknowledge the strong network of regional connections that make SMIF's work so impactful. Our efforts in educating our region's youngest generation, strengthening local entrepreneurs, and empowering community philanthropy would not be possible without the collaboration of many partners and engaged residents. This event will be a chance to shine light on a few key partners and say thank you to all SMIF stakeholders. I look forward to seeing you then!

Join SMIF on October 8 from 12:00-2:00 pm for our 29th Annual Luncheon at the Holiday Inn in Owatonna. We encourage you to stay from 2:00-3:00 pm to be part of the strategic planning conversation. Registration for both the Luncheon and Strategic Plan input session is on our website.



Collaborating for Regional Growth

Partner Spotlight



Leaving a planned gift for Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) continues to pave the way for growing and expanding our resources throughout the region. "I believe it is everybody's obligation to give back in some way to their community," said former SMIF Board Chair Jerry Monson. "I believe in SMIF's mission and want to contribute to the Foundation's future."

Jerry Monson and his wife Mary have deep roots in southern Minnesota. Jerry's great grandfather settled as a farmer here in Steele County in 1860 after making the long journey from Norway. Jerry's grandfather also owned and farmed land here. Mary's family moved to Owatonna in

Program Spotlight

SMIF's Quality Child Care Program (QCCP) has had a significant impact on the quality of early child care in our region since launching in 2012. QCCP was created as a holistic training and coaching program to help more of our region's child care providers successfully participate in Parent Aware, the State's quality rating and improvement system. QCCP goes beyond the basic Parent Aware trainings and focuses on professional growth, mentoring, improving business plans, implementing educational curriculum and assessment tools, and putting providers on track to become Parent Aware rated at a pace that is right for them.

To date we've offered QCCP in eight counties. Over 200 providers attended, and nearly 50 have signed up for Parent Aware. While the State participation rate for Parent Aware is 10 percent, 22 percent of QCCP participants are enrolled. Based on positive feedback from providers and strong results, SMIF received funding to expand QCCP to five new counties this year: Le Sueur, Rice, Wabasha, Waseca, and Winona.

QCCP is offered at no-cost to all child care providers. A special thanks to Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Minnesota, Mardag Foundation, and Medica Foundation for helping us to expand this work, as well as our program partners: Child Care Aware MN Southern at Families First of Minnesota and First Children's Finance.

For more information about QCCP, contact Teri Steckelberg at 507.455.3215 or teris@smifoundation.org.



1940, when her father (G. R. Imbody) became the principal of Owatonna High School. Jerry and his three brothers all graduated from Owatonna High School, becoming the first of five generations to do so.

The Monsons share SMIF's belief that we need to invest in our future by investing in our youngest children. "Young children represent our future and we need to prepare them for it," said Jerry. By leaving a bequest to SMIF, the Monsons are able to align their resources with their personal beliefs and values to ensure this region of the state continues to thrive.

If you would like to learn more about planned giving options through SMIF, contact Jennifer Nelson at 507-455-3215 or jennifern@smifoundation.org.

Capstone Club (\$50,000 & Above)

- *The ABDO Publishing Group, Mankato
- *Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, Eagan
- *The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis

Keystone Club (\$25,000-\$49,999)

- *Rosen's Diversified Incorporated, Fairmont

Cornerstone Club (\$10,000-\$24,999)

- Cambria, Le Sueur
- *Bill and Katie Rossi Davis, Utica
- Mark and Mary Davis, Saint Peter
- *Neil and Susan Eckles, Blue Earth

Champion (\$5,000-\$9,999)

- *Ag Ventures Alliance, Mason City, IA
- *Suzanne Blue, Red Wing

*Iowa Foundation for Microenterprise, Boone, IA

- *Fred W. and Shelly Krahmer, Fairmont City of Northfield
- *Profinium Incorporated – Fairmont, Mankato, Owatonna, Truman Steele County

Leader (\$1,000-\$4,999)

- Anderson Center, Saint Cloud Dodge County
- Freeborn County
- *Le Center Economic Development Authority City of Le Sueur
- *Tim and Sandy Penny, Owatonna
- *U of M SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Rochester
- United Prairie Bank – Mankato, New Ulm, Owatonna, Waseca
- Waseca County
- City of Waseca
- Winona County

Partner (\$500-\$999)

- *Blandin Foundation, Grand Rapids
- *Sue Kolling, Spring Valley
- New Prague Economic Development Authority
- *June Reineke, Winona

Contributor

- Alliance Bank, Lake City
- City of Altura
- *AmazonSmile Foundation, Seattle, WA
- *August Schell Brewing Company, New Ulm
- *Pamela and Kevin Bishop, Glenville
- *Jean Burkhardt, Welcome
- *Lisa Clarke, Rochester
- *Brian and Dawn Conzemius, Lakeville
- *David and Marta Fisk, Wabasha
- *Marcia and Jerry Haley, Waseca
- *Jennifer Heien, Owatonna
- *Tracy Jevning, Waseca
- *John Katz, Waseca
- *David Krueger, Arlington

- *Connie Lau, Owatonna
- Diane Lewis, Waseca
- City of Minneiska
- Jerry and Mary Monson Sr., Owatonna
- *Jennifer Nelson, Dundas
- *Oneota Community Food Co-op, Decorah, IA
- *Jennifer Sawyer, Northfield
- *Colleen Skillings, New Ulm
- *Lynn and Chris Smith, Owatonna
- *Bonita and Rick Sommers, Waseca
- *Raymond and Helen Stawarz, Owatonna
- Valley Design Enterprises Incorporated, Fountain
- *Bob Wallace, Fairmont
- Eric Walters, Rochester

*PROGRAM DONORS

To make a donation, visit www.smifoundation.org.

Recent Activity

Grants

- Scholastic Book Grant:** 10,000 books valued at \$67,550 to 26 Kiwanis Clubs
- Community Growth Initiative:** City of Albert Lea, \$30,000
- One Big Thing Grant:** \$47,950 to City of Fairmont and Eagle Bluff Learning Center
- Opportunity Grant:** \$20,000 to Town Center Inc., Trimont
- Paint The Town:** 99 gallons of paint valued at \$2,475 to five communities

Loans

- Hill Concrete & Masonry, Lyle
- Katie's Kinder Garden Preschool & Day Care, Rochester
- Maggie J's LLC, Mapleton
- Pexa Farms LLC, Lonsdale
- Southern Minnesota Drilling, Owatonna
- UnleaSHed, Inc., Red Wing

For more information about these grants, loans, and equity investments, visit www.smifoundation.org.

Where we'll be (and hope to see you!):

September 30:

The Leadership Connection Lunch, Faribault

October 5, 12, & 19:

Profit Mastery business workshop, Rochester

October 5:

Quality Child Care Program training, St. Peter

October 6-7:

MIF ECI Central Coordination Meeting, Minneapolis

October 8:

SMIF Annual Luncheon, Owatonna

October 22:

Quality Child Care Program training, Lake City

October 24:

Early Childhood Care Conference, Owatonna

October 29:

SE MN Together regional workforce conversation, Albert Lea

November 2:

Quality Child Care Program training, St. Charles

Visit www.smifoundation.org for full event calendar.

- **Join us! SMIF Annual Luncheon - October 8**
- **Quality Child Care Program expanding to 5 new counties**
- **Planned Giving Donor Spotlight**

Read More Inside!