The THAF Celebrates the Community Foundation Movement’s 100th Anniversary

One hundred years ago, in 1914, the first community foundation in the world was established in Cleveland, Ohio, giving rise to a new kind of philanthropy and a new way of participating in community activities. Today, the Two Harbors Area Fund (THAF) is one of more than 700 community foundations in the United States, collectively managing more than $60 billion in assets and making grants of approximately $4.5 billion a year to improve life in their local communities.

What is a Community Foundation?

A community foundation is a public charity that is dedicated to improving the lives of people in a defined local geographic area. Whereas other charities have a specific mission, a community foundation’s mission is the entirety of the geographic region in which it operates. In the case of the THAF, that area is defined as the Two Harbors High School district.

Community Foundations are made up of numerous separate funds, which bring together the financial resources of individuals, families and businesses to support effective nonprofits in the community. These pooled resources are held in an endowment and only the earnings generated by their investments is spent in support of the community. The THAF is made up of the Two Harbors Area Fund, the Lyle and Trish Northev Family Fund, the Wallace and Ellen Johnson Family Fund, and the Lake Bank Fund, and together these funds have over $1,000,000 dollars forever dedicated to charitable projects in the area.
A community foundation’s assets are gathered through contributions or bequests by generous members of community. Smaller gifts are often pooled into a general fund which is then forever available for the changing needs of the community. Other larger gifts are sometimes dedicated to a specific purpose – be it a particular non-profit or a scholarship. Since the Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity, contributions are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowable by law. Since its creation in 1998, the Two Harbors has received over 1100 individual gifts from almost 300 individuals and organizations.

The assets of a community foundation are wisely invested for maximum gains, and earnings from those resources are given away in the form of grants to regional non-profits. Grants from the Two Harbors Area Fund are dedicated to assisting local groups in the fields of education, arts, human services, community & economic development and the environment. These days grants typically range from $500 to $3000 – although these grant amounts will grow as the fund’s earnings grow. To date, the THAF has awarded over $350,000 in grants to area non-profits and units of government. Some recent grant recipients include the City of Two Harbors, the THHS Cheer Squad, North Shore Players and Community Partners.

Grant recipients are determined by a community foundation’s board of trustees – often after a vetting process by a grants committee. Selections are made based on applications submitted by qualified non-profit organizations. In the case of the Two Harbors Area Fund, applications are taken once per year, with submission deadline of March 1st. Applications are available on the website – www.twoharborsareafund.com.

The Two Harbors Area Fund is proud to be approaching its long sought after goal of $1 million dollars in gifts. The fund is always looking to grow and seeks the contributions of both time and money. Such gifts will further expand the THAF’s ability to lend a hand in our community. Contributions can be made via our website: www.twoharborsareafund.com or via phone to 218-726-0232. Questions can also be directed to any members of the THAF Board. Board member’s names are found below.

The Two Harbors Area Fund board is excited to be part of the 100th anniversary celebration for this important branch of philanthropy, but we are even more excited to building a brighter future for our local community and those that call this place home.
The Two Harbors Area Fund (THAF) was created in 1998 to enhance the quality of life for people in Two Harbors by attracting charitable gifts, making philanthropic grants and providing responsible financial stewardship and community leadership. The 2014 THAF Advisory Board is Gordy Anderson, Russell H. Conrow, Kate Ferrari, Barbara Hamilton, Jennifer Hansen, Janelle Jones, Bob Larkin, Steve McLachlan, Bob Olund, Scott T. Seagren, and Randy D. Willert.

The THAF is partnered with the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, which promotes private giving for the public good. The Community Foundation is a permanent community endowment, built by gifts from hundreds of individuals and organizations. Guided by a 15-member Board of volunteer civic leaders, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation makes grants to nonprofit organizations and to individuals for scholarships and provides leadership on important community initiatives in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Since its inception in 1983, they have distributed about $40 million and currently hold over 350 different funds, each with its own charitable purpose. Learn more at www.dsacommunityfoundation.com or call Holly C. Sampson, president at 218-726-0232.

Regional affiliates of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation include the Two Harbors Area Fund (created in 1998), the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund (created in 2000), the Cook County Community Fund (created in 2003), the Hermantown Community Fund (created in 2005), the Eveleth Area Community Foundation (created in 2008), and the Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund (created in 2011).

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