

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

COVID-19: Rising to the Challenge

It started with a question about feeding the kids. When Fremont Public Schools (FPS) released students early for spring break on March 6, 2020, administrators were hard at work to determine how the new COVID-19 situation would impact return to school and continued learning.

Community leaders were concerned as well, about the increasing threat of an outbreak and, in this case, food security for hundreds of area youth should school pivot to remote learning.

So a meeting was called by the Fremont Area Community Foundation on March 17th (before Dodge County had a single case of COVID-19). Community partners representing Fremont area school districts, Senator Lynn Walz, Fremont city officials, public health and local hospital officials, faith-based leaders, several nonprofit leaders and others met to begin the work of what would become the Fremont Area COVID Response Taskforce.

Meeting almost weekly since then, the COVID Taskforce has grown to involve dozens of people—including state and county officials—dedicated to helping the Fremont area respond effectively to the challenges of COVID-19.

Through collaboration, the Taskforce supplemented food for FPS' daily Grab N Go meal distributions throughout the spring and summer, disseminated information about community resources, hosted free Grab N Go meal events in communities throughout Dodge County, and more.

The Fremont Area Community Foundation has helped facilitate the Taskforce efforts while also providing grant funding to organizations and charitable efforts “on the front lines” of COVID-19 response.

Grants have helped area agencies meet increased



demand for rent and utility assistance, shored up the Care Corps' LifeHouse food pantry, facilitated a mobile food pantry to Scribner, aided local efforts to manufacture personal protective equipment for health care facilities, and supported the operations of area nonprofits impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. FAF grants are addressing these needs and many others, while still funding programs and projects that enhance quality of life for us all.

The year 2020 has presented the Fremont area with yet another challenge. But, together, we are rising to meet it.

FACF spearheads the Fremont Area COVID Response Taskforce which has met almost weekly via Zoom since March to address community needs and challenges.



Leon Van Zyl and the GFDC's Kelly Gentrup prepare Grab N Go meals at Mel's Bar & Lounge in Scribner.

To support the foundation's Fremont Area COVID-19 Response Fund, mail your check to FAF at the address below, or give online at facfoundation.org.



The mission of the Fremont Area Community Foundation is to improve the quality of life by connecting donor interests with community needs and serving as a leader and catalyst in the development of solutions.

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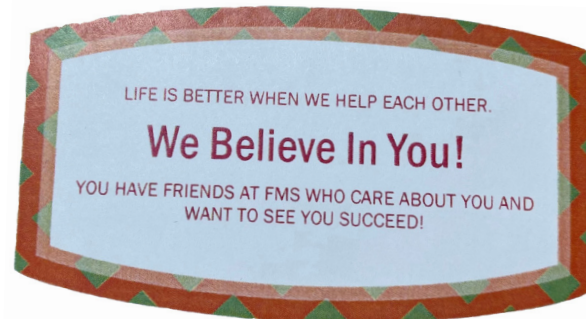
The Urban Tiger Restores Dignity

As is often the case, it was the teachers who recognized the need first. Some Fremont Middle School students were arriving at school clearly in need of appropriate and/or adequate clothing, decent shoes and coats, and better hygiene. An idea was born for The Urban Tiger, a special room inside the school building—not unlike a store—outfitted with clothing, shoes and outerwear in various sizes, hygiene supplies and more. Students in need are discreetly invited to visit the “store,” and teachers on hand help them select the supplies they need.

The Urban Tiger was initially funded by a grant from the Fremont Area Community Foundation during the 2016-17 academic year. The flood of 2019 and pandemic of 2020 would bring a drop in additional donations to support the initiative, along with increased demand for its supplies. So a second foundation grant was awarded this fall.

The goal of The Urban Tiger is to “restore dignity and hope to students who face challenging life situations,” according to FMS teacher Tammi Zentic. “Providing clothing and hygiene items for students allows them to feel better about themselves during challenging life situations. For some, it may even meet one of their primary needs in an educational setting. For others, it could be an incentive to earn a reward based on behavior goals. We allow students to enter the room and ‘shop’ for the items they need. We want to give a choice to those who don’t get to choose their life circumstances.”

To support The Urban Tiger, send a check to the Fremont Public Schools Foundation, 130 E. 9th St., Fremont, NE 68025. Designate your gift to: Urban Tiger.



FMS students who visit The Urban Tiger are sent out the door with an encouraging note.

Thank You for Supporting Our Sustaining Drive!

These individuals, families and businesses have shown their support for the work and programs of the Fremont Area Community Foundation by contributing to the Sustaining Drive for our 2019-20 fiscal year (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020). Thank you for your support! Together, we're enhancing quality of life for families throughout the Fremont area.

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Back row, from left to right: Terry McClain (Vice President), Steve Navarrette,* Shawn May, Bob Hillis (President), Barry Benson, Rev. Scott Jensen, Greg Haskins (Immediate Past President).

Not pictured: Patti Beebe, Tanya Dillon, Sid Dillon, Jr., Brad Holtorf, Russ Peterson,* Mark Prince, Heidi Richmond, Joe Sajevic, Tom Thomssen,* Toni Vering, Jessup Wilson.

*Ex-officio

The Fremont Area Community Foundation Board of Directors

Our 26-member Board of Directors provides inspired leadership and a passion for improving the quality of life for families throughout the Fremont area. FACF Directors serve up to three consecutive three-year terms and commit their time, talent and resources to help provide strategic direction for our organization.

New Playground and Fountain Welcome Visitors to Fremont

A grant from the Fremont Area Community Foundation was key to launching a fundraising project recently unveiled on the east side of Fremont—an inclusive playground designed for children ages 2 to 12, located by the Splash Station water park.

Spearheaded by the Fremont Noon Kiwanis Club, the playground offers amenities that all children can enjoy, regardless of their physical abilities. The merry-go-round is low to the ground, and access to other rides are “at grade” for children in wheelchairs.

Dozens attended the dedication of not only the playground but a new fountain installed in Johnson Lake, a project that also received an FACF grant. Both amenities offer a bright “Welcome” along Fremont’s east corridor.



A new inclusive playground by the Splash Station water park will be enjoyed by youth of all ability levels. Above, 4th Grader Tristyn Feala of Morse Bluff helps “break in” a new playground feature following the public dedication.



Grant Funds Housing Study

A new Housing Study is underway, spearheaded by the Greater Fremont Development Council (GFDC) and funded in part by a grant from the Fremont Area Community Foundation.

The five-year study is regional in scope and includes the communities of Cedar Bluffs, Dodge, Hooper, Inglewood, Nickerson, North Bend, Snyder, Uehling and Winslow, as well as rural areas of Dodge County. The project has received additional funding by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), the GFDC and the Cedar Bluffs Education Foundation.

Nebraska-based community planning and research consulting firm Hanna:Kelan Associates, which conducted the Fremont area’s last Housing Study in 2017, is directing the new effort and has conducted a number of surveys and community discussions.

When completed late this year, the Housing Study will provide data that measures population growth, current housing vacancies, housing units severely damaged by the 2019 flood, the types of housing still needed and more. City and Village officials throughout Dodge County will gain insight as they set priorities for housing development efforts designed to better serve the needs of their communities both today and for years to come.

Stay Connected!

Would you like to receive regular updates on how the Fremont Area Community Foundation is making the Fremont area a better place to live, work and play?

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Our 2020 Grantees

Since its inception in 1980, over \$32 million in grants have been awarded from the Fremont Forever Fund, donor-advised funds, scholarships and other funds administered by the Fremont Area Community Foundation. This fiscal year alone, the Foundation has awarded over \$1.6 Million in competitive, COVID-19, flood recovery, donor-advised fund and other grants. Listed below are competitive grants awarded from the Fremont Forever Fund and Lester A. Walker Fund during 2020.

Action Community Team & Saunders County Youth Services—\$5,000 to support in-home therapy services for high-risk families in rural Dodge and Saunders Counties.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service—\$5,000 for a Mobile Communications Center.

Archbishop Bergan Catholic School—\$10,000 to enhance scholarship support for families impacted by COVID-19.

Care Corps' LifeHouse—\$25,000 to help meet increased demand for its food pantry, and \$30,000 to shore up food security efforts including a monthly mobile food pantry to Scribner.

City of Scribner—\$5,600 to purchase a speed sign to encourage travelers on Highway 275 through Scribner to slow down and drive safely.

Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders County—\$5,000 to support Saunders County families seeking assistance from the organization's Rural Emergency Services program.

Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity—\$10,000 to support operations during COVID-19.

Fremont Area United Way—\$24,500 to support an increased demand for rent/utility assistance requests due to COVID-19. A second grant of \$12,000 supports the organization's voucher program which serves families and individuals in need.

Fremont Civil Air Patrol—\$20,000 to enhance the organization's programming.

Fremont Public School Foundation: The Urban Tiger—\$5,000 to help meet increased demand for clothing and hygiene supplies to distribute to Fremont Middle School students.

Fremont Opera House—\$12,000 to sustain the programs and operations that were impacted by COVID-19.

Girl Scouts-Spirit of Nebraska—\$2,500 for Girl Scout Camp scholarships.

Greater Fremont Development Council—\$2,730 to support a Housing Study Update.



Two grants to the Care Corps' LifeHouse food pantry this year boosted food security for families throughout Dodge County.

Lutheran Family Services—\$15,000 to support operations and services at the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families.

Midland University—\$10,620 to support emergency CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) training to help funnel critical care workers to area hospitals impacted by COVID-19.

Trinity Lutheran School—\$1,923 to support efforts to create protective face shields for area healthcare workers across Dodge, Saunders and Washington counties, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Uniquely Yours Support Services—\$15,000 to support a comprehensive parenting education program that complements similar programs offered in the community.

In addition, several organizations received \$1,500 "mini-grants" this year to support special programs and charitable initiatives. These grantees include: American Cancer Society, Blade 5K, John C. Fremont Days, Dodge County Clover 4H Club, Care-A-Van, Inc., Fremont Area Art Association, Friends of the Fremont Area Parks, Greater Fremont Development Foundation and CASA of the Midlands.