

Minnesota Community Foundation - The Saint Paul Foundation - Fall 2009

MNSIGHTS



Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.

- HELEN KELLER

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 All Together Now: Partnerships Pay Off
- 4–7 Connecting for the Greater Good: the Community Economic Relief Fund
- 8 Foundations' News and Notes

26%

Over the last two years, the number of food shelf visits in Minnesota has increased by 26 percent. The fastest-growing group of clients? The working poor. On page 4, get a look at how the Community Economic Relief Fund is helping.

Coming Together for Our Communities

There are many initiatives in progress at the Foundations, so our first eight-page issue of *MNSights* (which alternates quarterly with a two-page version) has a great deal of information packed inside. Our featured topic is one that continues to be on everyone's mind: the impact that the challenging economy is having in our region. To respond to our community's most urgent needs during this difficult time, we are focusing our efforts on the Community Economic Relief Fund, a collaboration with other philanthropic organizations and nonprofits that maximizes the impact of every dollar given. We believe that there has never been a more important time to invest in our communities; by working together, we will ensure that those investments make a difference now and for years to come.



Carleen K. Rhodes, President and CEO

HOMELESS STUDENTS In the Saint Paul school district, the **number of homeless students has risen more than 44 percent over last year.**

By June of 2010, an estimated 2,000 students in the district will have been homeless or highly mobile at some point during the school year. On page 5, read about how the Community Economic Relief Fund helps homeless families.

FINANCIAL COUNSELING Demand for financial counseling services was so high at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota that **up to 1,000 people per month were being turned away** or declined to come in once they learned there was a six-week wait time. The Community Economic Relief Fund is helping to ease the crunch—see page 6 for more.

FIND US ONLINE The next time you go online, find the Foundations:

- at our websites, www.mncommunityfoundation.org and www.saintpaulfoundation.org
- on Facebook, as Minnesota Community Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation
- on Twitter, @TwoFoundations
- and on our YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/vibrantvideo



Read more. Learn more. Engage more. Visit more:

WWW.MNCOMMUNITYFOUNDATION.ORG and WWW.SAINTPAULFOUNDATION.ORG

All Together Now:

Partnerships Pay Off

The more brainpower, the better the results. Collaborations with other organizations are leading to new ways of helping those in great need, facilitating smart investments in the community and increasing the Foundations' capabilities to assist donors.

SMALL GRANTS MAKE A BIG IMPACT

For more than 25 years, the Community Sharing Fund has provided small emergency grants to East Metro residents to avert household crises like missing a rent payment when an emergency medical bill comes due, or losing transportation to work when a car breaks down and needs repair. A new partnership with the Butler Family Foundation's Special Project Giving Fund and the Bremer Emergency Fund enables the Community Sharing Fund to serve more individuals and families in 2009 and 2010. In addition, this special funding helps the Community Sharing Fund keep pace with the escalating costs of critical items like rent and utilities.

FOUNDATIONS BENEFIT FROM SURPLUS

The Foundations were recently named as recipients of a multi-million-dollar donation, thanks to the fundraising success of the nonpartisan Minneapolis Saint Paul Host Committee for the 2008 Republican National Convention. The committee has donated its surplus of approximately \$7 million to Minnesota Community Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation and The Minneapolis Foundation—the largest surplus ever donated by any city's host committee.

The committee chose to donate these funds to local community foundations because of our deep knowledge of communities' needs and our understanding of the issues our state faces. We will invest in the Community Economic Relief Fund, partner with the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations to support needs in Greater

Minnesota, help fund new e-philanthropy initiatives for Minnesotans and add resources to our 2010 grantmaking budget.

EASING THE WAY FOR REAL ESTATE GIFTS

Making it easier for donors to give real estate to community foundations and other nonprofits is the goal of the Minnesota Real Estate Foundation (MREF), established in 2003 by the Central Minnesota Community Foundation. In the past, we have called on MREF's expertise to facilitate real estate gifts like the one made by Richard and Lynne Olson of Milaca, Minnesota. The Olsons owned the land on which a Milaca grocery store was located and wanted to move quickly to convert that asset into a Donor Advised Fund. MREF's expertise enabled the Olsons to donate the land to MREF before the end of the tax year, and then use the proceeds from the later sale of the land to fund The Olson Family Foundation at Minnesota Community Foundation.

Inspired by this success story, the Foundations have launched a collaboration with MREF to share our expertise in reaching out to a wide range of donors across the state; in return, we will have MREF's help in building our capacity and that of other foundations to handle gifts of real estate.



Log on to Learn More

www.saintpaulfoundation.org

www.minnesotarealestatefoundation.com

www.mcknight.org/greatermn

The Community Economic Relief Fund aims to reach Minnesotans hit hardest by the recession.

Connecting for the Greater Good

» [Food for thought, this page](#)

» [Hoping for a home, on page 5](#)

» [Know somebody who'd benefit from financial counseling? See page 6](#)

» [Why give? Donors share their perspectives on page 7](#)

As we navigate the most challenging economy our nation has faced in decades, Minnesota Community Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation have taken a new approach to helping Minnesotans weather tough times. In July, we established the Community Economic Relief Fund to support strategic projects of specific nonprofits. Our goal: to work closely with carefully selected organizations to bring immediate relief to people whose struggles have been exacerbated by the economic downturn. Thanks to our many supportive partners, the Fund now has more than \$3 million to help fund important initiatives in the community. Read on for snapshots of three Community Economic Relief Fund projects that are making a real difference in the areas of hunger, housing stability and household finances—and for the perspectives of two donors who are a key part of the collaboration. In future issues of *MNSights*, we plan to spotlight additional Community Economic Relief Fund projects that focus on healthcare, mental health, and jobs and training.



Emergency Foodshelf Network: Feeding a Need

“Asking for help can be tough for many people,” says Tim Barnes, executive director of the Emergency Foodshelf Network. Fare for All Express, the network’s cooperative food-purchasing program, aims to reach those whose food budgets are stretched to breaking, which can happen when families have not reached the income guidelines for government food support or when they need more than the three-day food supply that food shelves normally provide. Fare for All Express offers people the ability to purchase \$40 worth of fresh meat, produce and other groceries for just \$17.

“The program is growing by leaps and bounds in suburban areas—places where we haven’t historically seen as much need,” says Tim, who notes that demand for the program has soared more than 110 percent over last year. With its Community Economic Relief Fund grant, the network is opening five new food pickup sites in the East Metro area, including locations in

Stillwater and North Saint Paul. “Our new sites speak to the changing face of these tough times,” Tim continues. “The need is really across the board, without regard for age or culture. We want to be sure we’re serving this group of people who have never had to ask for help before and aren’t familiar with the available resources.”

Lisa's Story

I always gave to food shelves—and now, after I got laid off from my job, my daughter and I are using Fare for All Express. I never imagined that I’d be in this situation. It’s hard to ask for help, but when you see all the people who come to pick up their food packages, you realize, “Hey, they’re just like me.” Paying a little bit helps your pride, because you’re not just asking for free handouts. It’s easier for me to come here than to go to the food shelf.

The Family Place: Embracing Homeless Families

Receiving a Community Economic Relief Fund grant to expand The Family Place was “a miracle that happened just in time,” says Margaret Lovejoy, executive director of the day center for homeless families in Ramsey County. The capacity of The Family Place has been stretched because the tight economy means that periods of homelessness and joblessness are lasting longer than ever for the families who use the center’s services, she explains.

“The people we serve truly have nowhere else to go,” Margaret says. “It’s painful to tell a mother that we have to turn her and her children away because we’re already full.” When the church-based overnight shelters that serve the same clients found space to add some beds, a Community Economic Relief Fund grant enabled The Family Place to add enough space and staff to accommodate 60 clients each day, a 50 percent increase over its previous capacity of 40. “Most of our clients are children who are homeless with their parents,” says Margaret. “Our goal is to get every family into its own stable home” by helping parents find housing and employment—and to provide a safe, welcoming space in the meantime.

Charra's Story

I’ve lived on the streets before, when I was in the middle of drug addiction—I’ve been clean and sober for a year and three months now—and it’s hard to think about where my daughter, grandson and I would be right now if we didn’t have The Family Place. The staff here are beautiful; they’re helping me find housing, and I can use the computer to look for a GED program and a job. My vision is that if you check in with me a few weeks from now, I’ll be on the way to my GED, in my own apartment and going to a new job every day. I can’t wait.



ECHOes Far and Wide

A Community Economic Relief Fund grant to ECHO, the **Emergency & Community Health Outreach** collaborative of public health and nonprofit groups across Minnesota, is expected to reach more than 1.8 million Minnesotans. ECHO provides health and safety information in multiple languages via television, radio, phone and the Internet. ECHO will use its Community Economic Relief Fund grant to create public-service announcements that show people with limited English-language skills how to access food, housing assistance and public benefits.



Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota: Strengthening the Economy One Household at a Time

In past years, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota typically provided financial counseling to 5,000 families. By last year, that number had tripled, and demand remains at an all-time high, says program director Darryl Dahlheimer. Lutheran Social Service used its Community Economic Relief Fund grant to add a full-time financial counselor who will help 720 families this year.

“Everybody knows someone who could use our services,” Darryl says, because Lutheran Social Service serves all Minnesotans regardless of their location or income. Its clients, generally middle-income and working people, have typically lived without a savings cushion and have been building up credit-card debt—a situation that becomes an instant crisis if they face a layoff or unexpected medical bill.

While Lutheran Social Service can help families avoid foreclosure and avert bankruptcy by interceding with creditors and setting up debt-management plans, Darryl says that its ultimate goal is to help people create livable budgets so such catastrophes never happen in the first place. “As American culture has shifted from one of savings to one of debt, people walk a razor’s edge,” he says. “Our aim is to help consumers become debt-free and in control of their finances. Many of our clients who complete debt-management plans tell us, ‘We’ve learned our lesson and will never be trapped by debt again.’”

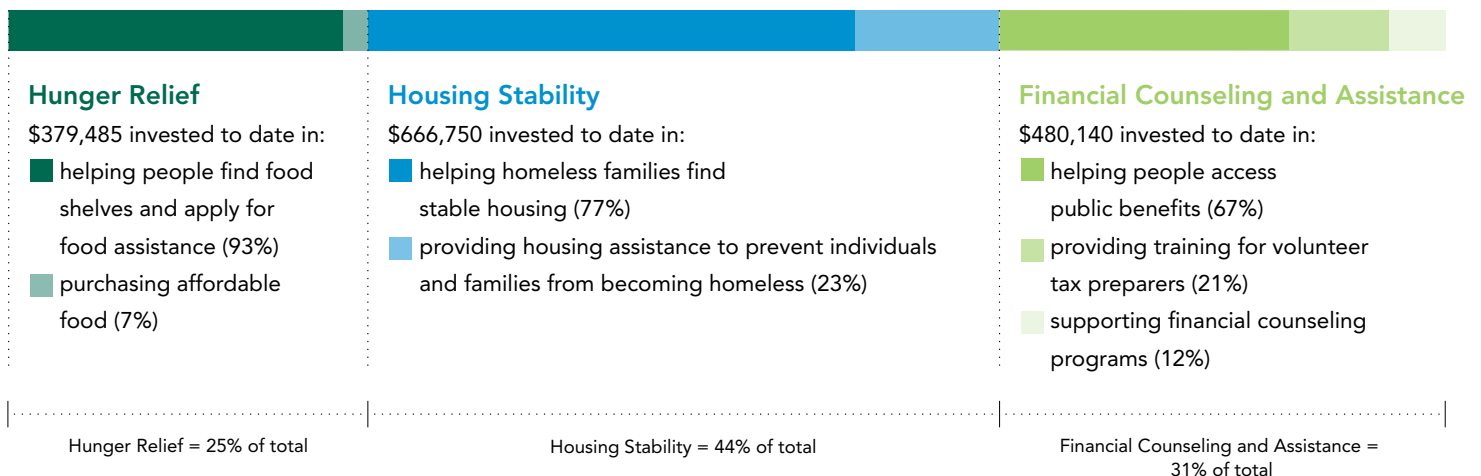
Kate's Story

I'd turn my phone off because I couldn't deal with one more collection agency call—and then my situation got worse because I went to a for-profit debt consolidator and couldn't make the minimum payments on the loan they gave me. My Lutheran Social Service counselor helped me get back on track

Log on to Learn More

- www.emergencyfoodshelf.org/OurFamilyOfPrograms/ffa
- www.famplace.org
- www.lssmn.org
- www.echominnesota.org

Community Economic Relief Fund by the Numbers



without being the least bit judgmental about it. Without her help, I probably would have had to move in with my parents, and certainly would have kept getting more and more behind on my debt.

Donors' Perspective: Leveraging Dollars for the Most Impact

As the impact of the economic downturn worsened, many people began to wonder about the most effective way to help those who have been hit hardest. "We'd been thinking for several months that we should be giving to organizations that satisfy the immediate needs of people who need help in this stressful economic situation," says David Good. When he and his wife Rosemary heard about the Community Economic Relief Fund, they knew that making a gift from their Donor Advised Fund was the way to ensure that their gift would quickly do the most good.

The Foundations' partnerships with selected nonprofits that have the ability to make a significant impact were important to Emily and Emil Slowinski, who were among the first to make a gift to the Community Economic Relief Fund from a Donor Advised Fund. "We knew that the Foundations' perspective on where the dollars should go would be better than ours," explains Emil. "Several of the organizations the Fund supports are ones that we'd have supported on our own, but we trust the Foundations' staff to choose those that make the most sense."

For the Goods, the close collaboration among the Foundations and the nonprofits that receive Community Economic Relief Fund dollars was important. "We felt that putting our dollars into the pool would make more impact than if we just picked a couple of organizations on our own," David says. "We believe in the importance of partnership in philanthropy and know that the Foundations will leverage what we give by collaborating with other organizations. By working together we can often do more good than if each of us works alone."

To learn more about the Community Economic Relief Fund, or to make a gift directly or from your Donor Advised Fund, please call Jean Vukas Roberts, Sonja Moore or Sally Seiberlich at 651.224.5463. For the latest news about the Community Economic Relief Fund, visit our websites at www.mncommunityfoundation.org and www.saintpaulfoundation.org.

Funding Partners

The F. R. Bigelow Foundation

Michael L. Burbach and Mary Thomas

The David E. Feinberg Family Fund
of The Saint Paul Foundation

The Rosemary H. and David F. Good
Family Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation

The Mardag Foundation

Minnesota Community Foundation

The Saint Paul Foundation

Bernice L. Schapiro Shafer Fund of
Minnesota Community Foundation

The Emil J. and Emily D. Slowinski Fund
of The Saint Paul Foundation

Anonymous

Foundations' News and Notes

Introducing GiveMN

Building on the strong tradition of philanthropy in Minnesota and its own history of supporting healthy nonprofits, Minnesota Community Foundation worked with many partners to shape GiveMN—an innovative online resource that will help change the way Minnesotans give and help create a stronger nonprofit community. GiveMN enables nonprofits of all sizes to reach new and different audiences and helps donors find, learn about and contribute to local and national programs that support the causes in which they believe. It also allows donors to view their donations to multiple organizations in one easy-to-use online portfolio. The site will launch November 2; in the meantime, you can visit www.GiveMN.org to learn more about the program.

New Anti-Racism Dialogue Tool Available

As part of its ongoing effort to create a more equitable, just and open community, The Saint Paul Foundation's Facing Race anti-racism initiative has created a dialogue tool called "New Conversations About White Privilege" designed for individuals and groups who have begun to explore racism and want to keep learning. The Foundation offers dialogue sessions for the general public, in-house facilitation for organizations and train-the-trainer courses for facilitators. For more information, visit www.FacingRace.org.

Nonprofits and the Economic Downturn

Minnesota's nonprofit organizations continue to be seriously affected by the recession, according to the Minnesota Council on Foundations, which explores the impact in its *2009 Nonprofit Outlook*. The Bridgespan Group, a consultancy that advises nonprofits, provides a national perspective with its *Managing in Tough Times* report. Both are linked from the "News & Publications" section of our website, www.saintpaulfoundation.org.

Information the Way You Want It

You asked for it! In 2010, you will be able to choose whether to receive information from the Foundations via e-mail or via U.S. mail. We will contact you so that we can update your preferences. For now, please help us update our records by sending your e-mail address to inbox@mncommunityfoundation.org or inbox@saintpaulfoundation.org.

Philanthropy's Tremendous Return on Investment

Partnerships between foundations and nonprofit organizations really pay off for Minnesota, says the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. The watchdog group analyzed the work of 15 Minnesota nonprofits that receive foundation funding to support advocacy. They concluded that every dollar invested results in a return of \$138 in benefits for Minnesota communities. For the full report, follow the link from the "News & Publications" section of our website, www.saintpaulfoundation.org.

About MNSights

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Staff Announcements

We welcome:

Dana Nelson, executive director of GiveMN, September 2009

Gerilyn Hausback, controller, September 2009

Stephanie Johnson, administrative assistant in the executive office, October 2009