

Report to the Community

About the Kenosha Community Foundation

What is a community foundation and what does it do?

A *community foundation* is a tax-exempt public charity created and sustained by a community for a community. Governed by a volunteer board of community members who represent diverse interests and managed by professionals with local expertise, the foundation consolidates charitable donations and invests them to generate market earnings. This income, as in the case of endowed funds, can be perpetually distributed to deserving organizations, students, and causes.

How did the Kenosha Community Foundation (KCF) begin?

Nearly a century ago, Kenosha industrialists like Charles C. Brown, H. E. Barden, W. H. Alford, and A. H. Lance had a vision: to pool the charitable resources of community philanthropists into a single, significant, and permanent endowment for the betterment of Kenosha. That vision led to the formation, in 1926, of one of the country's earliest community foundations.

Your charitable funding fuels our growth.

Community foundations represent the fastest-growing areas of philanthropy, offering frameworks wherein YOU decide when to give, what to give, and how to give. Our professional staff will help you determine the type of fund that most effectively serves your charitable focus, whether that fund structure is unrestricted, field of interest, donor-advised, scholarship, designated, or organizational endowment funds. Regardless of the fund structure chosen, it can be customized to represent your charitable interests.

Recurring gifts: An easy way to become part of KCF

From television streaming services to grocery deliveries, subscriptions have become ubiquitous in our lives. Similarly, donors have the option to choose automatic recurring gifts, transforming one-time annual contributions into sustained support.

Tax advantage

A community foundation offers donors significant advantages through its tax status as a public charity, organizational structure, and professional staff. The federal tax code provides significant incentives for charitable contributions. Reach out to learn how to maximize the value of your gift through tax-efficient strategies.

Please contact us

Amy Greil, Executive Director | agreil@kenoshafoundation.org

Marian Bothe, Communications Manager | mbothe@kenoshafoundation.org

Photo by Alyssa Nepper at the Kenosha Creative Space.

"Our sole purpose is to serve the community, and that includes all of us. So keep KCF in mind when you need help, or wish to give back to our wonderful community. You will not find a better way to serve."

David Geertsen, Board President

A Note From KCF Leadership

Because of the generosity and tireless efforts of so many fund advisors, our Board of Directors, volunteers and staff, KCF is standing ready in 2025 to grow our mission and grow our impact.

In this 2024 Report to the Community, we will highlight key organizational achievements that include:

Fundraising Campaign Success: Our 2024 balance sheet shows a historic level of assets under management (17M) and five new endowed component funds were established. Together with a committed campaign committee, we realized the objective on behalf of the Kenosha County Ceremonial Courtroom Restoration Project, achieving the goal of raising 1.45M in cash and pledges while securing an additional 775K in match funding.

Incorporating Visionary Leadership: We welcomed Jodi Keene as our Accounting Specialist, while our newest Board member, Adam Mannerer made an outsized contribution. We saw transitions across our Board and committee members to include new faces and leadership perspectives.

Realizing Strategy: We made significant strides in all three functional areas of our strategic plan; community engagement, cultivating philanthropy and internal capacity building. Grant support advanced three priority areas of sustainable communities; workforce development, health and human services and the natural environment.

Impacting Community Through Grants and Scholarships: Our team moved all scholarship and grant application forms online while working in closer alignment with school districts across the county to receive/process a historic number of scholarship applications and a record number of grant applications through competitive cycles.

Our mission, after nearly 100 years remains vital, stewarding lasting philanthropy across individuals and organizations to enable health and development across the greater Kenosha area. Work with us in new and valued ways to leave this place—and yourself—forever transformed!



Amy Greil
Executive Director

Dave Geertsen
President





New Component Funds Established in 2024

- Arzate Fund for Entrepreneurship Designated Fund
- Hernandez Family Scholarship Fund
- Fund of the Martin Trust for the Dramatic and Forensic Arts
- Kenosha Symphony Orchestra Designated Fund
- Kenosha Visiting Nurse Association Legacy Fund for Community Health



Grace Kolakowski

Grace Kolakowski Endowment for the Symphony Orchestra

In 2024, a new designated fund was established to support the Kenosha Symphony Orchestra (KSO) in the name of Grace Kolakowski. Grace's family identified a shared passion for the performing arts, so they established a permanent endowment to ensure support for the annual KSO concert series. Together they envision working collaboratively with the Kenosha Unified School District to involve high school students into KSO performances, while broadening the appeal and appreciation for symphonic music. Grace's hope is that like-minded music lovers will follow her lead and make additional contributions to the fund so that the KSO continues to enrich the Kenosha community for generations to come.



Ronald Tatum, KAFASI

KVNA Legacy Fund for Community Health

Launching its first competitive grant cycle in 2024, the Kenosha Visiting Nurse Association (KVNA) Legacy Fund for Community Health awarded three grants to partners advancing health among communities of seniors and those with disabilities, namely, individuals that are homebound. As a grant recipient of this new fund, the Kenosha Area Family Aging Services, Inc (KAFASI) will apply these funds to strengthen the 'Meals on Wheels' Program, leveraging thousands of volunteer hours annually and connecting directly with a too-often unseen community. The 'Meals on Wheels' Program enables the elderly, the sick, and the disabled to remain in their own homes with help from people who care.



COMMUNITY. HISTORY. JUSTICE.

Major Project Milestone

KCF is thrilled to announce that a 3-year fundraising campaign in partnership with Kenosha County, raising funds for the restoration of the Ceremonial Courtroom, has proven successful. Serving as the fiscal sponsor and a member of the committee, in June 2024 KCF reported meeting the challenge of the Jeffris Family Foundation. The campaign committee completed Phase 2 to match an additional challenge grant from the TAWANI Foundation founded by Col. Jennifer Pritzker, who established the Pritzker Military Museum & Library located in Kenosha County. Thank you to all supporters of this ambitious project set to open to the public in 2026.



Members of the Ceremonial Courtroom Restoration Campaign Committee, Frank Martinelli, Hon. Mary K. Wagner, and Joe Potente.

Board of Directors



David Geertsen
President
Treasurer
Retired, Kenosha County



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Paula Heide-Poggenburg
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J. Michael McTernan
Alia, DuMez, & McTernan,
S.C.



Joan Wilk
Retired, University of
Wisconsin-Milwaukee



Jamie Young
Spectrum Wealth
Advisors



Adelene Greene
Retired, Kenosha County
Workforce Development



**Roberta Jorgensen
Puntillo**
Godin Geraghty Puntillo
Camilli & Hughes, S.C.



Katharine Keenan
Carthage College

Highlights of the 2024–2026 Strategic Plan

We worked with Grant Street Consulting and three focus groups: grantees, fund advisors/donors, and board members to form a robust framework for our strategic plan.

Our **Vision** is for a community that is engaged, improved and inspired.

Our **Mission** is to lead, serve, and collaborate with donors to create enduring philanthropy.

We **Value** community, inclusivity, engagement, trust, and connection.

Our **Goals** are to:
Engage the community through meaningful relationships, open communication, and inclusive initiatives.

Cultivate philanthropy by educating donors, building strategic partnerships, and creating inspiring platforms for community growth.

Ensure a dynamic foundation with strategic planning, innovation, financial stewardship, and adaptability for long-term mission fulfillment.



At the heart of our transformative journey was a re-envisioned branding process, seamlessly integrated with the ethos of the Kenosha Community Foundation. This strategic initiative not only focused on engaging external stakeholders but also harnessed the power of a unified brand identity.

We worked with Vendi Advertising to align our messaging effectively by honoring the Foundation's rich history, symbolized by the enduring pillar in its logo, while embracing its forward-thinking, ever-growing, and evolving nature represented by the reaching leaf. This holistic approach exemplifies our dedication to creating a positive, lasting impact on the communities we serve.



Initiatives / Opportunities

Workforce Development

Kenosha County's 2022 "Moving the Needle?" analysis of annual worker pay rates indicates significant structural challenges in the economic and social sectors. The county's wages are consistently lower than those in the 11 peer communities/counties, and there are pronounced racial disparities in median household incomes. Given these challenges, investing in preparation for work and career readiness is crucial. Strategically directing funds towards scholarships and grants for nonprofits can equip more working-age adults to meet current workforce demands, fostering a higher quality of life in healthy home environments.

Between the start of 2022 through the end of 2023, the Kenosha Community Foundation (KCF) awarded more than 50 higher education scholarships (undergraduate and graduate level). KCF awards nearly \$90,000 annually in scholarships to deserving students. The Foundation works closely with scholarship fund advisors to make serious considerations in designing criteria that incentivize student applications to regional or Kenosha County-based schools, namely Carthage College, Gateway Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin Parkside. With excellent choices in higher education nearby and a growing local employer base, KCF seeks to ensure that viable, affordable, and manageable pathways exist for local talent to train and study in the area or return to this community after graduation as future leaders and mentors.

The KCF targets underserved audiences through grants to nonprofits supporting workforce development in our community. Funded projects include skill development, occupational placements, employer recruitment/engagement efforts by Shepherd's College for those with developmental disabilities, and tutoring in reading, math, and social-emotional learning through Kenosha's YMCA. Junior Achievement focuses on entrepreneurship training for young adults, while minority business owners receive support through grants to Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative, Corp.

In 2023, KCF collaborated with a longstanding donor/fund advisor to explore opportunities for increased financial resources dedicated to fostering employment success. Through direct services from two Kenosha County based nonprofit organizations, KCF initiated a pilot program, funding support services for five individuals with incarceration records and facing significant employment barriers. Key insights from the pilot emphasized the need for more direct employer engagement. This may lead to the creation of Workforce Development Pilot 2.0, directly geared toward employers headquartered in Kenosha County.

Workforce development remains a critical yet promising area for investment by KCF and its many partners. This investment aims to ensure the competitiveness of the region, with a focus on meaningfully addressing economic barriers.

Initiatives / Opportunities

Health & Human Services

In alignment with the 2023 Kenosha County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), local healthcare agencies, collaborating with at-risk community members and various partnerships, have identified a critical need to enhance health outcomes by addressing healthcare access.

A primary strategy to achieve improved healthcare access and outcomes involves ensuring an ample presence of healthcare professionals within the community, thereby minimizing patient waiting times and ensuring culturally relevant care. The Kenosha Community Foundation (KCF) actively contributes to this strategy by providing three scholarships, two at the undergraduate level and one at the master's level. Specifically, the Colombe scholarship supports Gateway Technical College students pursuing nursing, the Clay Davison scholarship is geared towards students pursuing mental health professions, and the Martha Hollowell scholarship is directed at master-level study in mental health fields.

The second key strategy outlined in the CHIP report focuses on reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness and substance abuse. KCF addresses this objective by funding various projects that foster family and community connectedness. Initiatives include the establishment of a youth-focused LGBTQ task force, the creation of a "safe space" and library facilitated by Congregations United to Serve Humanity (CUSH), and a family engagement and cultural awareness project aimed at diminishing the risk of gang involvement (Kenosha Boys and Girls Club). Additionally, KCF supports programs like Peace Learning Circles, emphasizing positive relationships, communication, and conflict resolution, directly impacting different generations and aligning with the goals outlined in the CHIP report.

Recognizing the pivotal role of food access in health outcomes, KCF has championed several initiatives addressing immediate needs. Noteworthy contributions include funding of the Kenosha Food Bank for the holiday meal box project to combat food insecurity through culturally-relevant and nutritious contents. Moreover, KCF supports a senior nutrition program that ensures access to healthy meals and provides spaces for community bonding, contributing significantly to the overall health and well-being of the aging population through collaboration with Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services, Inc.

"With the senior population rapidly growing, surpassing millennials in five years, accessing nutritious food is challenging, especially for those near poverty. Skyrocketing costs force seniors to choose between food and medication. Senior Nutrition programs address health changes, offering tailored meals for conditions like diabetes and cancer. Beyond sustenance, these programs combat loneliness, reducing depression. The Kenosha Community Foundation's support is instrumental in providing quality services, paving the way for future collaborations, such as Food Pharmacies, and innovative approaches for healthy aging."

Ronald C. Tatum, Executive Director, Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services

Initiatives / Opportunities

Natural Environment

Our communities stand at a crucial juncture, contemplating the intersection of science and decisive action in the face of escalating climate-related challenges. The 2021 peer-reviewed report, meticulously prepared by The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) titled “Wisconsin’s Changing Climate: Impacts and Solutions for a Warmer Climate” presents local temperature data that demonstrates the past two decades have been the hottest on record. Likewise, the last decade marked the state’s record for precipitation. The consequences of these climatic shifts are evident in the intensification of weather events across virtually every region of Wisconsin, providing a sobering preview of the challenges ahead. Even within the local context, Kenosha County communities are vulnerable to the relentless impacts of persistent heat, flooding, and shoreline degradation.

The Kenosha Community Foundation (KCF) is listening, advocating, and fully engaging in this work as it actively supports those responding to recommendations found in the WICCI report: avoiding grassland or natural vegetation conversion to row-crop production or urban development, maintaining forest cover and urban tree canopies with the most significant potential to store carbon, prioritizing habitat management actions that provide food, and investing in flood risk reduction practices.

In 2023, the KCF became acquainted with the Kenosha County Regenerative Producers Group (KCRPG), a farmer-led initiative to support interested local landowners’ conversions toward more sustainable agriculture practices. Upon realizing that the volunteer leadership of KCRPG was considering nonprofit incorporation but felt it would be too difficult and premature to do so, the foundation encouraged their leadership to consider an alternative partnership. Together, these conversations led to the decision to affiliate with an existing peer nonprofit already actively working in environmental sustainability, RootPike-WIN, so that KCRPG could seek financial support. The Palmer Foundation became involved through the network of KCF donors. They provided backing for KCRPG to cover costs for a crops and soils consultant to actively instruct farmers on conservation strategies that would be cost-effective and suited to the unique composition of their acreage.

Beyond developing partnerships and extending Foundation resources to those across a network, the KCF issued grant awards to buffer restoration efforts in the City of Kenosha’s Lincoln Park Lagoon via RootPike-WIN. Likewise, by reaching audiences through museum learning experiences, the KCF supported Kenosha Public Museum’s National Geographic’s “Planet or Plastic?” exhibition that explored the impact of plastic pollution in waterways.

“Please realize that over 40% of the land in Kenosha County is controlled by farmers, while farmers make up less than 1% of the population. Since this is by far the county’s most extensive land usage, it dramatically impacts Kenosha’s environment and the water quality of the community. Our goals at Kenosha Regenerative Producers Group are to strike a balance by using farming practices that safeguard our natural resources while growing local food for Kenoshans and increasing farmer profitability. This can only happen through collaboration. The Kenosha Community Foundation, with its strong roots in Kenosha, helps connect the many participants needed for collaboration to build this important network. We appreciate all their support.”

Paul Maggio, Member, Kenosha Regenerative Producers Group

Financial Profile (Reported in Thousands)

2023 and 2024 lent historic investment returns as markets enjoyed a post-pandemic economic recovery and global markets expanded through the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence technologies. With a prudent approach to managing its investment portfolio and its success in fund development efforts, KCF realized an all-time high of assets under management in 2024, increasing its grantmaking impact.

	2024*	2023	2022
Cash and Investments	\$16,581	\$14,664	\$13,024
Total Assets	\$17,067	\$14,892	\$13,191
Organizational/Agency Funds**	\$1,611	\$2,362	\$2,061
Net Assets	\$14,647	\$12,227	\$11,017
Change in Net Assets	\$2,420	\$1,210	(\$2,374)
Grants	(\$742)	(\$627)	(\$642)
Scholarships	(\$220)	(\$83)	(\$97)
Investment Rate of Return	14.6%	17.6%	-16.9%

*Denotes unaudited figures

**Denotes the portion of KCF's pooled investments that remain assets of partner nonprofits



Pictured above: Kenosha Public Library's Dia De Los Muertos cultural program series and graduates of Shepherd's College class of 2024.

2024 Grant Recipients Awarded Through Competitive Grant Cycles

In partnership with Kenosha area nonprofit organizations, KCF connects donors to work that advances their respective values. Innovative grantmaking ensures local communities remain strong, safe and sustainable.

Workforce Development

Kenosha Achievement Center, Kenosha Literacy Council, Shepherds College, United Way of Kenosha County, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp.

Health & Human Services

Boys & Girls Club, Building Our Future, ELCA Outreach Center, Girl Scouts of SE Wisconsin, Girls on the Run, Giving to the Nations, Grace Welcome Center, Hospice Alliance, Hope Council on Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse, Kenosha Achievement Center, Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services, Kenosha County Food Bank, Kenosha Community Media, Kenosha Literacy Council, Kenosha Public Library, Kenosha Public Museums, Kenosha YMCA, Lemon Street Gallery, Peace Learning Circles, Shalom Center, Sharing Center, UW-Parkside Office of Multicultural Student Affairs

Natural Environment

Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary, Kenosha Urban Farm Institute (KUFU Farm)

Donors

Donor Advised Funds

Ann and Charles Heide Workforce Development Fund
Balmes Family Fund
BMO Harris Bank Corporate Fund
Elden G. and Ruth K. Weiss
Ferwerda Special Donor Advised Charitable Fund
Guttormsen Family Fund
Herbert John Barth Donor Advised Fund
Kenosha County Bar Association Charitable Fund
Kurt Jorgensen and Roberta Jorgensen-Puntillo Family Fund
Marian E. Gratz Fund
Robert B. Schneider Memorial Fund
Thomas Niccolai and Jean Grueter Fund
Wiers Family Fund

Donor Designated Funds

Charles and Kathryn Heide Endowment Funds
Eugene F. and Joan Soens Fund
O³ Fund
Snap-on Associate and Franchisee Disaster Relief Fund
Vern and Doris Gantzer Fund

Field of Interest Funds

Alan D. C. Goldsmith Arts Fund
Arts Fund
Clark Barber Family Fund
Kolakowski Endowment Fund
Kubasiewicz Family Trust
LaFave Family Fund
Mary Lou and Arthur F. Mahone Fund
OMC Legacy Fund
Womens Fund

Fiscal Sponsorships

Alano Club of Kenosha
Community Expressions
Kenosha County Ceremonial Courtroom Restoration
Kenosha Urban Farming Institute

Internal Endowment Funds

Howard J. Brown for Benefit of KCF
Officers and Directors for the Benefit of KCF
Stacy A. Breeden Endowment Fund

Charitable Gift Annuity

Sandra Heathcote

Organizational Funds

Brookside Care Center Endowment
Green Ridge Cemetery
Habitat for Humanity for Kenosha Endowment Fund
Hannah Stocker Young Scholar Award Fund
Hospice Alliance Foundation, Inc. Fund
KAFASI Meals on Wheels Fund
Kemper Center Endowment Fund
Kenosha County Youth As Resources Endowment Fund
Kenosha Public Museums Endowment Fund
Kenosha Symphony Orchestra Endowment Fund
Kenosha Technology Enhanced Curriculum (KTEC)
Kenosha Visiting Nurses Association Fund
Kenosha YMCA
Open Wings Learning Community Fund
Shalom Center Endowment Fund
Women and Children's Horizons Endowment

Scholarship Funds

Allan and Isabel M. Jankus Scholarship Fund
Bradford HS Class of 1961 Scholarship Fund
Clay Davison Legacy Fund
Colleen Deininger Aviation Scholarship
Cropley Scholarship Fund
Doris Kreuzer Colombe Scholarship Fund
Fellman Family Scholarship Fund
Gina Madrigano Friebus Educational Scholarship
Hartley Family Youth Sailing Scholarship
Henry A. Link Annual Educational Endowment Fund
Herman and Virginia Gundlach Scholarship Fund
Howard J. Brown Scholarship
Irene Buri-Nelson Scholarship Fund
KTEC Alumni Scholarship Fund
Manny Mitka Scholarship Fund
Martha Hollowell Scholarship Fund
Mary Louise Link Annual Educational Endowment Fund
Orgullo Hispano (Hispanic Pride) Scholarship Fund
Rizzo Family Memorial Scholarship Fund

Unrestricted Funds

A. Allan and Isabel M. Jankus Unrestricted Endowment Fund
Advantage Bank/Charles Vignieri Fund
Advantage Bank/Robert Loss Fund
Edna Mae Orvis and C. Wesley Orvis Fund
Elaine K. and Dr. Steven A. Azuma Fund
Enroth Family Fund
Fred and Jessie Hopf Fund
Kenosha News Charitable Fund
M&I/Ben-Ami Chemerow Fund
Mary Frost Ashley Fund
Ralph L. and Frances A. Jaeschke Fund
The Kathleen Stuemke Legacy Fund

Our **Vision** is for a **community** that is **engaged,**
improved and **inspired**



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