We’ve closed the books on first quarter 2021 and I’m pleased to report that Foundation assets – thanks to new contributions and strong investment performance – now top $91 million. This is a major milestone but the real work of the Foundation is deploying those assets to have the most impact possible in our community.

To that end – we are doubling down on our Impact Topeka work. This is our commitment to leveraging our grantmaking and leadership to make progress on the social determinants of health. We know that a person's zip code determines more about their future health than their genetic code. We also know that if we work together differently … and think about the systems, policies and environments that can be changed to help our neighbors who need help the most … real change can happen. We are committed to this work and welcome you to learn with us and work with us to impact change.

We are so committed to this work, that conversations about deploying assets to create and sustain this change were a major focal point of our staff and board’s strategic planning earlier this year. We will be sharing more information about a new initiative – designed to increase economic prosperity for all – later this year. We are very excited and trust that you will be, too. We consider it a privilege to be your charitable giving partner.

MARSHA POPE, TCF PRESIDENT

When a childcare center closed in East Topeka, the area was burdened with a “childcare desert” for several months. Thanks to a grant from the State of Kansas, SENT Topeka purchased the existing buildings to create SENT Prep Academy, an early education center in Hi Crest. This academy will provide a high-quality educational experience for early learners.

In partnership with NetWork Kansas, the Topeka Community Foundation invested $40,000 in SENT Prep, to aid with renovations and ensure the building and staff were prepared for children to begin classes in late April.

Knowing that a person’s zip code determines more about their future health than their genetic code, we are pleased to continue our commitment to making progress on the social determinants of health, including education, in Shawnee County.
FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW AND RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS

The Topeka Community Foundation elected four new board members in 2021 for their first three-year term:

Noel Etzel, CEO and owner of Jetz Service Co., Inc.; Dr. Robert Kenagy, President and CEO of Stormont Vail Health; Jennifer Sourk, General Counsel at Midwest Health, Inc.; and Dr. Shane Van Dalsem, Associate Professor of Finance at Washburn University.

Three members of the Board of Directors were re-elected for their second three-year term:

Dr. Tiffany Anderson, Superintendent of USD 501; Arnold Downing, Sr., Vice President – Leasing and Tenant Services at Topeka Housing Authority; and Curtis Sneden, Chief Operating Officer at Greater Topeka Partnership.

We are grateful for all of our Board members and the work they do for the Foundation and the community.

IMPACT TOPEKA UPDATE: IMPACT AVENUES

In April 2020, the Foundation awarded a $116,000 grant to Impact Avenues, a collective impact program focused on eradicating student homelessness in Shawnee County. The objective of Impact Avenues is simple: within two years, Shawnee County school districts will see a 50% reduction in the number of homeless youth (ages 4-18).

More than 35 city, county and state agencies have joined forces to work with homeless students and their families in Shawnee County to determine their best routes out of homelessness and help make connections between families and services they need. Intensive wrap around case management is provided until their child graduates from high school.

Currently Receiving Services from Impact Avenues: 117 families including 311 children
Housed as a result of Impact Avenues (since October 2019): 59 families including 154 children

Impact Avenues staff continued work through COVID to provide services for homeless students and their families, to ensure they had resources to navigate the pandemic and online schooling, as well as deliver food, clothing, and hygiene items.

Learn more about Impact Avenues at www.topeka.org/Impact-Avenues.