



Our 25 Year Journey

25 years ago, a public charitable foundation emerged in Dubois County with a clear vision to strengthen community through collective charitable giving. The Dubois County Community Foundation was established in 1996, but the community foundation concept was born over one hundred years ago. Cleveland lawyer and banker, Frederick H. Geoff, established the very first community foundation in 1914, giving rise to a new philanthropy. Today, each Indiana county is represented by a community foundation, the most of any state, largely due to Lilly Endowment Inc.

In 1990 though, fewer than a dozen viable community foundations dotted the Indiana landscape. Lilly Endowment launched the Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) initiative to encourage communities to establish community foundations and address problems on a local level. This effort seeded a community foundation in nearly every county in Indiana by offering matching grants if communities could raise local dollars.

The idea to start a community foundation in Dubois County originated when three community members – lawyer John S. Chappell, the late Anthony P. “Tony” Habig and then City of Jasper Mayor, William Schmitt, began thinking about it independent of one another. By the mid 1990’s, they were sharing their vision, and consensus began building more broadly in the community. These visionary community members then forged a plan and pooled their resources to capitalize on the second phase of Lilly Endowment’s GIFT initiative for matching funds. Thus, began a movement of uplifting the community through philanthropy that would dramatically impact generations of lives in Dubois County.

The organizational meeting of the Board of Directors was held on July 29, 1996. The founding board members were John S. Chappell, President; Anthony P. Habig, Vice President; Jan Stenftenagel, Secretary/Treasurer; George Astrike, Dave Buehler, David E. Eckerle, Jerry Hunefeld, Joyce Jackle, Bill Rubino, Gervase Schwenk, Bradley T. Seger, Keith Seger, Terry Seitz, Gilbert Verkamp and Fred Weyer. Dubois County Community Foundation, Inc. officially incorporated on August 1, 1996.

The Community Foundation initially operated out of Chappell’s law office. In March of 1997, the office moved to 323 E. Sixth Street in Jasper to a property the Community Foundation leased from the City of Jasper for \$1 a year.

The first gift came from a founding board member’s family. The \$100,000 donation seeded the creation of a general endowment, today known as The Fund for Dubois County. This endowment has grown to over \$2.7 million and fuels our community grantmaking efforts by supporting diverse charitable programs and projects across the county each year.

The Community Foundation had outgrown its office building by 2010, prompting the Board of Directors to launch a capital campaign for a building project. In 2011, a new office building was built at the current location of 600 McCrillus Street in Jasper to both meet the expanding needs of the organization and to offer meeting space for nonprofit organizations. The project was fully funded by philanthropic support.

By 2012, the Dubois County Community Foundation and the Huntingburg Foundation were inspired by the idea that a single, county-wide foundation would promote stronger collaboration and could amplify impact on the community as whole. The two organizations joined forces and solidified a merger in June of 2012. Through the merger and pooling of resources, new opportunities for partnerships and larger impact quickly became evident. Huntingburg's Stellar Communities designation and Lilly Endowment's continued investment with a \$4.4 million grant to the Community Foundation are testaments to the success of the merger and a new culture of collaboration.

Our founders' vision acted as a catalyst for change that has surpassed the expectations of many. In 25 years, we've distributed over \$14 million in grants and hold over \$52 million in protected, charitable assets. The Community Foundation model has sparked philanthropy across the county, impacting countless life-changing causes, all supported by a robust network of donors.

We invite you to join us in celebrating 25 years of **enriching the fabric of community**. Everything we do is made possible because of our donors' generosity and enthusiasm for community. Though this anniversary serves as a moment of reflection, we remain passionately committed to helping Dubois County reach its full potential.