

Place Matters



Sunflower Foundation
HEALTH CARE FOR KANSANS

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Annual Report

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Letter from the Board Chair and the President & CEO

The term *Place Matters* is not new to public health. It's been long recognized that the places where we live, work, learn, and play affect our individual and collective health. And we have observed through our own work that environmental factors – from local economic opportunities, to social interactions with neighbors, to the physical environment, to proximity to health care, to access to local grocery stores – all impact health.

This year, the Sunflower Foundation's work took us to small towns and rural communities throughout the state and connected us to passionate, resourceful, and proud Kansans who are working hard to make their communities stronger, healthier, and better for their residents.

Why? Because it's their home – their *place*. In this year's Sunflower Foundation Annual Report, we are sharing stories from a variety of Kansas communities that we think shed light, each in their own way, on why place matters.

The first story features the four sovereign Native tribes in Kansas, which have come together to work on common health challenges, creating the Kansas Tribal Health Summit to that end. Each of these communities has challenges unique to their particular place, but they have resolved to work together to improve the health of all tribes' members. *Place matters.*

The second story features three health care safety net providers that received Sunflower Foundation Capacity Building grants this year. Each of these clinics provides essential health care services to their community. We know that organizational capacity is crucial to building and sustaining a strong health care safety net and that living in a community with access to health care is critical to good health. *Place matters.*



The Great Nemaha River on the Sac and Fox Nation's reservation, which straddles the state line between southeast Nebraska and northeast Kansas.

Finally, the third story features one of nine grantees participating in our HERO Project, Sunflower Foundation's "Healthy Eating: Rural Opportunities" (HERO) program. Many communities across Kansas are facing serious challenges to keeping or reviving their local grocery stores. This is a critical issue for these communities, which are often designated as "food deserts," as the lack of access to fresh, healthy foods affects the health of all residents, especially the most vulnerable. *Place matters.*

The opportunities we have—or don't have—to be healthy at home, work, school, and play are often determined largely by where we live. The place we call home determines the set of life circumstances that can obstruct us from life's opportunities or can open up the world to whatever opportunities we seek to pursue.

When we build better places, we make better lives.

On behalf of Sunflower's Board of Trustees, we thank our many grantees and partners for their commitment to improving the health of Kansans.

This report highlights the stories of people who are Kansans either by birth or by choice, working to make their community a better place.

Andrea Krauss
Board Chair
Russell

Billie G. Hall
President & CEO
Topeka





Why does *Place Matter* when it comes to personal and population health?

In so many ways, *where* we live determines *how* we live. Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. Healthy behaviors may seem to be based on individual choices, but those choices are profoundly influenced by environmental factors that are often out of the control of the individual. Over the past decade, leading health agencies such as the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have declared the significance of place by stressing the role of the “social determinants of health.”

What are the Social Determinants of Health?

These are the factors that surround us every day: the social, economic, and physical conditions in which we are born, grow, learn, work, play, and age. Key areas include the following:

1. Economic Stability (employment, housing, poverty)
2. Education (early childhood education, high school graduation, literacy)
3. Social and Community Context (social cohesion and support, participation in civic life)
4. Neighborhood and the “Built Environment” (ability to walk or bike safely, access to healthy food)
5. Health Care (access to primary care and other services, health literacy)

Research confirms these conditions play a significant role in shaping not only our behavior choices but our health itself—perhaps as much as 80 percent. Understanding the role of the social determinants of health helps us understand the relationship between how people experience their *place* and how their *place* affects their health.

What does this mean to Kansans?

The more we understand what shapes our health, the more we can advocate for opportunities and policies that help all Kansans achieve better health.

What can we do to help ourselves and others?

- Be informed. Know your county health rankings, and get involved in local efforts to make your community a healthier place to live.
- Support efforts that promote the social determinants of health: education, affordable housing, healthy food access, walkable communities, and access to health coverage.
- Lead by example. Adopt healthy behaviors and support others as they try to lead healthier lives.
- Promote a culture of health and civil discourse. Participation in public life is an important part of overall community health, regardless of the direct connection to health. Get involved!



This is Home

Leadership of the Native nations in Kansas come together to address health challenges



At 89, Rita Bahr is the oldest member of the Sac and Fox tribe, one of four sovereign Native nations in Kansas.

She's spent her entire life on the reservation, located 80 miles north of Topeka—10 square miles of hills, trees, and winding streams straddling the Kansas-Nebraska border. Since she was born, Bahr said, her family lived entirely off this land.

"I've lived here all my life. I live in the house I was born in. Ducks, rabbits, squirrels, turtles, fish—if it moved, I hunted it for our food," Bahr said. "When I was 8 years old, I had to go out and get water from the neighbor's spring."

Neighbors would often enlist her to get more than water—after all, she was one of the best shots in the tribe, even at age 8. "They'd say, 'Rita, can you go get us a deer?' And I'd usually get 'em. I'd go down to near Indian Caves—I shot a .270 (rifle). I'd get a spot before it turned daylight. And I'd hear others out there, clickin'—and I'd say 'It's just me, I'm walking on by.' We were all living off the land, back then."

Those times are mostly gone.

Sac and Fox Nation

Even so, Bahr wouldn't have it any other way. "We had kind of a rough life out in the country. No water. No lights. Out of doors toilet. We used to have bad, bad winters. Snowin' and a'blowin. My brother used to ice skate on the corn field, that's how cold it was," said Bahr, whose father was Sac and Fox chairman for 53 years.



Sac and Fox Nation Councilwoman Victoria Ramos (from right), Rita Bahr, and Dr. Dee Ann DeRoin.

“They called us the ‘rich’ Indians, but we weren’t. It was just a big, cold house.”

“It wasn’t an easy life back then. I walked everywhere without shoes. We had no heat—winters were hard. Today we have our challenges—the water isn’t clean, we can’t eat the fish. But the things left for us to do are easier. We just have to have the will to make the change.”

Today, members of the Sac and Fox Nation of course have central heat, running water, and a somewhat nearby grocery store—Sun Mart Foods—within 20 minutes of most homes.

Yet very real challenges remain. For one, living off the land, even partially, is no longer advisable, said Councilwoman Victoria Ramos.

“The health of the land and water is at risk of further harm, from pesticides and fertilizers. Those members who are used to living from the land, we have to constantly warn them: We don’t think it’s safe to eat the fish,” said Ramos.

“For many members, our way of eating has changed a lot. We don’t eat like we used to eat. We used to hunt and eat off the land—turtles, deer, fish. Now there’s so much fast food and not a lot of vegetables in tribal members’ diets. We do have a (domestic) buffalo herd that we distribute meat from, but I think that could be improved upon. A lot of things could be improved upon.”

Coming Together

- **2013** – Four Kansas tribes first convened to learn about federal grant opportunities via the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)
- **2013** – Kansas tribal health summit first convenes (although without an official name)
- **2014** – Secretary of KDHE assigned Vital Statistics Data Analysis Director Greg Crawford to work with tribes on availing health data
- **2014** – Secretary of KDHE assigned administrator Mindee Reece as facilitator to the tribes
- **2013-2014** – Kansas tribes work on planning Community Health Assessments (CHAs)
- **2014** – 3 of 4 Kansas tribes completed CHAs under the purview of KDHE
- **2015** – Kansas tribes reconvened to review CHA reports
- **2017** – KDHE wins federal grant to establish a Four Tribes Cancer Program
- **2017** – Kansas Tribal Health Summit convenes fifth conference

Kansas Tribal Health Summit

To that end, the four tribes in Kansas came together five years ago—for the first time in collective memory—to work on ways to improve their communities' health.

They formed a planning committee with the goal of identifying common health challenges and taking steps—together—to address them. Among their immediate actions was to organize an annual summit, which this year brought more than 100 leaders and concerned citizens together in its fifth year.

"The Kansas Tribal Health Summit has helped us identify what the problems are," Ramos said. "We now have access to statistics, to data, access that we didn't have before we started working together."

Ramos said she sees hope all around her community—particularly when it comes to tribal members' interest in their heritage in foods and cooking.

"We're starting with the children. It's really a food desert out here. What we're trying to do is incorporate more Native approaches—gardening, cooking, buffalo—helping people learn how they can do better for themselves."

That's something that stemmed from the Kansas Tribal Health Summit, she said. There, Native chefs and nutritionists have given cooking demonstrations and food safety classes to help encourage preparing healthy foods at home.



Rita Bahr points to herself among a wall of historic Sac and Fox photos.

About the Kansas Tribal Health Summit

In 2017, the Kansas Tribal Health Summit convened its fifth meeting aimed at finding ways to improve their members' collective health. Sunflower Foundation supported the summit's planning committee with a \$103,500 grant. Among other things, the grant supports year-round health planning work, data sharing and evaluation, workshops, and work aimed at food sovereignty. The collaboration marks first collaborative effort between the four Native tribes in Kansas in recent memory. The grant is administered by the American Heart Association, which provides assistance coordinating the tribes' collective efforts.

Find more information at:
SunflowerFoundation.org/ths

Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

All four tribes in Kansas are relatively small, but the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation is the largest and located closest to Topeka, on an approximately 25 square-mile reservation about 20 miles north of the Kansas capital, along and west of U.S. Highway 75.

That relative proximity to Topeka—to urban services and to potential patrons of the tribe's casino right off the highway—gives the Potawatomi some advantages over the other three tribes, which are smaller and located further from urban centers, said Chairwoman Liana Onnen.

"For example, we are fortunate to be on a rural water system, given our proximity to Topeka. But other tribes can have trouble making sure their water is safe," she said.

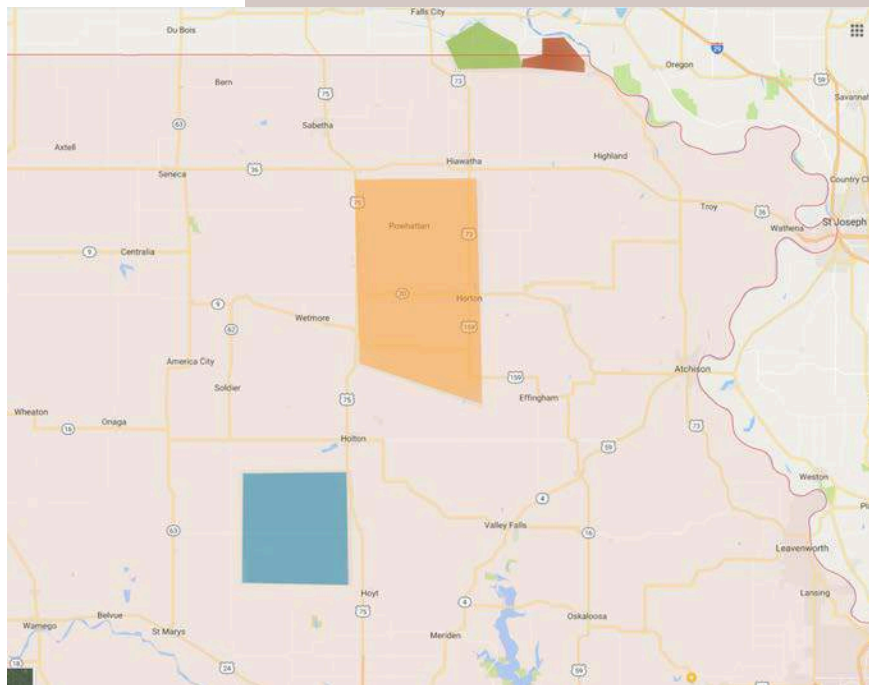
Proximity to the capital also means relatively easier access

Praire Band of Potawatomi Nation 

Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas 

Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska 

Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska 



Four Sovereign Native Nations in Kansas

“Kansas” originates from the Kaw Nation, also known as the Kansa (“People of the South Wind”). “Topeka” is said to be the Kaw word Tó Ppí K’é meaning “a good place to grow potatoes.”

Other tribes that have called this area home include: Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, and Wichita. To learn more about the history of Native nations in this area, visit the Kansas Historical Society website.

Today, Kansas is home to four sovereign Native nations. All four tribes originally came from the southern Great Lakes region and were moved multiple times by the federal government, ultimately dislocated to Kansas between the 1830s and 1850s.

Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska

The community is located on a 10-square mile reservation near White Cloud, with about 4,500 members.

Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas

The community is located on a 30-square mile reservation near Horton, with about 1,630 members.

Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

The community is located on a 25-square mile reservation near Mayetta with about 5,000 members.

Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska

The community is located on a 10-square mile reservation near Reserve, with about 450 members.

to more advanced medical services that tribal clinics cannot offer.

“It’s challenging for our members to get to Topeka without ready access to transportation. But I imagine that challenge is even greater for the other tribes, being further north and even more isolated than we are. Whatever our challenges are, the other tribes are facing some version of that, too, if not more magnified. It just makes sense that we come together, and work together,” she said.

‘Unified, You Speak with a Louder Voice’

Historically, because out-of-state tribes in the Midwest Region are so much larger (in Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation has nearly 300,000 members; the Choctaw Nation has 223,000), it can feel like the Kansas tribes are all but forgotten, Onnen said. Prairie Band has about 5,000 members, and the smallest Kansas tribe, the Sac and Fox, has fewer than 500.



“In the past, the tribes in Kansas have been somewhat compartmentalized. We’re geographically not very far apart, but sometimes it can seem like we’re far apart, even though we all have health needs that we feel are very specific to Native Americans,” she said.

Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation Chairwoman Liana Onnen inside the tribe’s health clinic lobby.

“One of the benefits of working together on the Tribal Health Summit is that there is strength in numbers. If you are unified on an issue, you speak with a louder voice. Our message is stronger if it’s all four tribes in Kansas than if it’s just one or two of us. When we stand together, that garners more of a response from federal and state agencies, as well as from groups in Oklahoma that have traditionally only focused on Oklahoma,” she said.

Chairwoman Onnen also cites getting more attention from the state of Kansas when it comes to accessing health data on Native populations across all four tribes. “We need to get serious about data, and take what appears to be causing our health problems from theories to analysis—to prove or disprove them. Then, I think we can all take better actions toward improving upon things.”

Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska



Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska
Vice Chairman Alan Kelley.

Data is also where Vice Chairman Alan Kelley of the Iowa Tribe focuses much of his time. The tribe’s 10 square-mile reservation straddles the corners of northeast Kansas and southeast Nebraska, east of and adjacent to the Sac and Fox reservation.

“With data, we can get a better grasp of where we actually need to improve our members’ health. That’s the key,” Kelley said. “Without data, you can only guess about how bad or relatively good something is. Cancer and diabetes are two main areas where we’ve just started to learn about what’s really going on.”

Dr. Dee Ann DeRoin is also a member of the Iowa tribe, a family physician, and a community health consultant working with all four tribes.

She said the Kansas Tribal Health Summit has been a difference maker in many ways, but especially when it comes to data.



The Missouri River on the Iowa Tribe's reservation, which straddles the state line between southeast Nebraska and northeast Kansas.

"We have been trying for an entire decade to get access to our cancer statistics. We've not been able to get it from the Kansas Cancer Registry, but now we are making progress," DeRoin said. "We have a partnership with KDHE (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) and the vital statistics division—they are helping us gather cancer statistics."

"We also now have a partnership with the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board," she said, referring to the non-profit organization that works with all tribes in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. "In fact, in August they received a grant from the CDC (the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to work with us to create a Four Tribes Cancer Program," she said.

Vice Chairman Kelley sees promise in the data shedding light on how to improve water quality, which he suspects could be adversely affecting the health of tribal members, as well as nearby communities.

"We know water quality is not what it should be," citing feed lot run-off, elevated nitrate levels from fertilizers, and concerns about illegal dumping. "These are longstanding issues. What we don't know is what exactly it may be doing to our health. That's why we're working so hard to get the data—so we can analyze it and focus our efforts on what may be the most predominant health issues."

While the challenges facing water sources are many, said Kelley, so are the sources of hope that inroads are being made toward safer water in northeast Kansas. Long-term efforts by several state agencies, federal agencies, universities, and others are starting to bear fruit.

"There are a lot of people, working behind the scenes, monitoring things and doing hard work to overcome these challenges," Kelley said. "The more I meet with Summit leaders—the more I talk about the challenges we face with all the agencies that have jurisdiction over things—the more people start getting ahold of me and making connections to find out more, and to take the steps they can. So, there's hope," he said. "Even while the challenges are many, there's hope."



Councilman Russell Bradley of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas. Below, a watertower on the tribe's reservation in northeast Kansas.



Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas

The Kickapoo Tribe also shares Kelley's water concerns when it comes to their own members. The 30-square-mile reservation is about 50 miles north of Topeka, along and east of U.S. Highway 75.

Russell Bradley is tribal treasurer, has twice been chairman of the tribe, and is a retired Civil Services Superintendent of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, having dedicated 27 years working for five different bureaus around the country. One of the tribes he worked with over the years was the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation straddles the state line between the Dakotas. For months in 2016 and 2017, the tribe was in the national news, protesting federal policy decisions they believed put the safety of their water at risk.

"I was there for seven years. Their chairman is a close friend of mine. His family grew up with my kids. My son is now an EPA (federal Environmental Protection Agency) Officer for the Standing Rock," Bradley said. "Their struggle is not so different from the Kickapoo. We are concerned with domestic water quality. It's been a long struggle to protect our water, everywhere."

However, numerous other challenges face tribes—not just for improving health, but for improving infrastructure and other aspects of the community—and it can be difficult for tribal councils to agree upon priorities.

"Health and wellness is just one area. You have education, social services, roads, police departments, tribal courts, casinos, overall administration of programs. Every one of those presents great need," Bradley said.

"It's very difficult to improve upon all of them," he said. "But by networking resources, we are helping each other find the best path. I think the Tribal Health Summit has helped with that."



The Delaware River on the Kickapoo Tribe's reservation.

Kansas, 'Such a Beautiful Place'

After all his decades of travel around the country, Councilman Bradley still finds this place to be among the most striking.

"These lands are our home. They will be home to generations that come after us. We must work to ensure that this place is also a place our children will be proud to call home," Bradley said.

Sac and Fox Councilwoman Victoria Ramos didn't grow up here. She was born in California and spent most of her life there. Decades ago, her great grandparents moved away from the reservation to find work. A few years ago, with a new family of her own, Ramos felt a calling to go back to the reservation in Kansas to at least see it, to try to connect with her heritage.

"My mother and my aunts told me 'There's nothing out there. There's no stores. No water.' I thought the reservation would be dry. But I wanted to see the place where we came from," Ramos said.

"Then we came out here and we saw that there are so many creeks, so many waterways that are all interconnected. We saw that this is such a beautiful place. And then I got voted onto the council, so we decided we'd have to stay," she laughs, along with the tribe's eldest member Rita Bahr, with whom Ramos has formed a deep friendship.

At just 36, Ramos is working with 89-year-old Bahr to preserve Sac and Fox heritage—memories that perhaps only Bahr, the elder of community, now holds. Not long after she met her, Ramos started recording videos of Bahr telling stories of their tribe and visiting lands of importance, so she could point out where unmarked graves were as well as other sacred grounds—all heritage that is at risk of being forgotten. For her part, Bahr says she is grateful for her relationship with Ramos. Likewise, Ramos says her life has been changed by connecting with Bahr.

"This place is so much more than I expected," Ramos said. "This place is a better environment for my children than the city. They can play outside, climb the trees, get to know where they came from. They love it. I love it. This is home."



Stronger Nonprofits, Healthier Kansans

Capacity Building Grants Aim to Let Nonprofits
Focus More on Their Missions

Sunflower Foundation awarded its first capacity building grants in 2002.

Over the years, our partner organizations have evolved and grown. But one thing has stayed the same—and most every Capacity grantee has it in common: steadfast commitment to their mission, prioritizing the needs of those they serve, often at the expense of their organization's basic needs.

This trait is admirable and it reflects the dedication of the organizations to their missions of improving the lives of Kansans. But it can also leave many nonprofits with little, if any, budget for technology or other upgrades to core operating infrastructure. Year after year, they make do with what they've got—whether it's old and slow computers, outdated software, inadequate phone systems, a website that no longer functions well on today's devices...and so on and so on.

Nonprofits generally hold themselves to a high standard: be lean, efficient, responsive, and adaptive. Even so, being burdened by poor tools can compromise their ability to pursue their mission. And we know that when nonprofits have a good year, they often direct surplus funds back toward their core mission and services.

That's why Sunflower established the Capacity Building Initiative: to help develop organizations' core skills and capabilities in order to increase effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Following are the stories of three 2017 Capacity Building grantees.

Capacity Building Initiative

For 15 years, Sunflower Foundation's Capacity Building Initiative has aimed to develop organizations' core skills and capabilities in order to increase effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Sunflower believes that as an organization's capacity is strengthened, staff members can focus even more on the mission. Since 2002, Sunflower has awarded 485 Capacity Building grants totaling nearly \$9,600,000. That includes this year's Capacity Building grants to 67 nonprofit organizations statewide totaling \$1,080,000. Learn more about each grant at: SunflowerFoundation.org/Capacity2017

Central Kansas Mental Health Center Salina, Central Kansas

With modern software, even large organizations can run payroll in a matter of hours. But with outdated technology, this simple task can be painfully slow—as was the case at Central Kansas Mental Health Center.



Central Kansas Mental Health Center's (from left)
Kathy Moshier, Vicki Wilson, and Sondra Tower.

For years now, it has taken two staff members two entire days to run payroll, said Executive Director Kathy Moshier.

"We've been making due with a 22-year-old accounting system that we could no longer get support for. We had to use a lot of spreadsheets to make things work. It's really been a drag on everyone's time," Moshier said.

A \$28,125 Capacity Building grant will allow the center to dramatically upgrade the system. "With this new system, it will be night and day—it will take one person maybe a couple of hours."

Just as important, the new system will interface with the center's electronic medical record, which will allow the center, over the long term, to improve the quality and efficiency of its services.

"This system will allow us to move into outcome-based payment systems that we know are coming in Kansas," Moshier said.

Moshier said that most available grants are focused on patient care, and that Sunflower's Capacity Building grants fill a critical need.

"Helping build organizations' capacity isn't the most glamorous approach," Moshier said. "But the fact is, it can be just as powerful over time as any funding initiative. It's absolutely just as important."

Norton County Hospital Norton, Northwest Kansas



Norton Medical Clinic staff include (above: back row, from left) Gina Frack, interim CEO; Emily Swatzell, RN; Cami Cornelius, CNA; Elsa Temmel, RN; and receptionist Sherri Lowry; (front row, from left) receptionists Brenda Dole and Claudette Graham.

Gina Frack has worked in public health in Norton County for 18 years. Two years ago she joined the hospital as Chief Operating Officer as well as Interim Chief Executive Officer.

Soon after joining the team, her priority has been to address the two main sources of frustration for the 150 employees:

1) Lack of communication and 2) Lack of accountability, she said.

“Typically, the only communication tool used was email. But with the complexities of schedules for health care employees, that was far from optimal. For example, somebody may work three nights in a row, have limited time to check email, and then be off for four days,” Frack said.

“We didn’t even have a common calendar for staff availability, or an ‘in and out’ board,” she said.

The \$23,224 Capacity Building grant will allow her administration to implement a HIPAA-compliant intranet to support staff, both at the Critical Access Hospital and its two clinics—one in Norton and the other in Logan.

“This new system lets us know which staff are available and when, so that we know exactly what our team is capable of at any given time,” Frack said.

The benefits of the new system are numerous, Frack said. Beyond basic communication and accountability, for the first time all staff will be able to log in remotely 24 hours a day, and via mobile devices. It also gives administrators a ready means to send mass-staff notifications, including emergency alerts. The new network also dramatically improves the hospital’s risk mitigation.

Likewise, the new system gives staff a searchable, secure means to store and share other documents, instead of relying on email attachments. The system allows administrators to give varying levels of access to doctors, nurses, accountants, and so on.

The new network also will make compliance tracking much more efficient, which should enhance better patient care.

“This new network is not inexpensive, there’s no getting around that. But for all the ways that it will improve our operations and delivery of patient care, its value is clear,” Frack said. “Sometimes it’s difficult to explain the return on investment when something isn’t directly for frontline patient care. That’s what is so great about Sunflower’s Capacity Building grants—the existence of the initiative acknowledges how critical basic infrastructure is for quality patient care.”

Wilson Medical Center Neodesha, Southeast Kansas

Wilson Medical Center serves about 50,000 patients annually via its hospital in Neodesha and two clinics—one 20 miles away in Cherryvale, and the other 15 miles away in Independence. However, in some ways, the clinics have operated on their own, for lack of a modern privacy-protected network to connect them all.

A \$30,000 Capacity Building grant will allow the medical center to implement a new network interface between this Critical Access Hospital and its rural health clinics. Previously, their network could not transmit certain patient information, which meant the clinics did not use the hospital’s lab, said Janice Reese, the medical center’s Community Relations Director.



Wilson Medical Center staff includes
Director of IT Kevin Myers and
Community Relations Director Janice Reese.

“It’s critical to have a seamless connection between our hospital and the clinics for better, more efficient patient care, as well as for the sustainability of the center,” Reese said. “We were losing \$480,000 a year revenue from them not using our lab. And from the patient’s perspective, the turnaround time was much, much longer than it needed to be.”

The new network will also allow the center to expand the services it offers, particularly in Independence, a community of 8,800 people that saw its hospital close in 2015.

“When the hospital closed, their Cancer Center needed a new space. We’ve been housing them temporarily in our clinic’s education room, and we’re in the process of building out a permanent space for them,” Reese said. “This new network will provide the same benefit there, too, connecting our hospital and the clinics to them as well.”

“By being able to get funding for a core component of our infrastructure, it more than triples our ability to deliver quality, timely patient care,” Reese said. “When you consider all the improvements—improved patient care, revenue growth, and expansion of services—there is really a compounding effect to this capacity building grant.”



The HERO Initiative: Healthy Eating, Rural Opportunities

Finding solutions for sustaining groceries and access to healthy foods in rural Kansas



MariLynn Ruff shopping at Jetmore Food Center.

Jetmore is among the fortunate—but rarer and rarer—small rural communities that has something vital to the town’s survival: its own grocery store.

The Jetmore Food Center serves a community of around 900 Kansans in the southwest corner of the state. The store has an impressive selection: a wide variety of fresh produce, in-house butchered meats, competitively priced groceries, and even a pizza shop, said Lea Ann Seiler, Director of Hodgeman County Economic Development.

They also have all kinds of other miscellaneous items that are priceless to

have available just a few blocks away, she said, including: a variety of bath and cleaning items, pet foods, baby products, toilet paper, greeting cards, and other things you sometimes need in a pinch.

“If the Food Center were to close like so many other small-town grocers have,” Seiler said, “it would be devastating.”

“It’s hard to overstate the importance of a local grocery store to the vitality of your town,” she said. “It’s a lot like the school or the hospital—if you lose any of them, other dominoes start to fall, and before you know it, the lifeblood of the community is at risk and it all starts to drain away.”

“We really depend on that store. When word got around last year that it may be at risk of closing, people were just terrified,” she said.

Grocery Stores and the Vitality of Rural Communities

Grocery stores are incredibly important to the vitality of rural communities, said David Procter, Director of the Rural Grocery Initiative (RGI) at Kansas State University.

“These small businesses are one of the primary economic drivers in rural towns, annually adding nearly \$1 million to small, local economies,” Procter said. “They provide these towns with significant tax dollars. They employ 17 workers, on average.”

“But not only do these businesses add to the local economy, they are also providing rural citizens healthy food—particularly vulnerable residents such as the elderly, disabled, or those without ready transportation.”

Nearly 5 million rural citizens across the United States are living in what is known as a food desert: an area with limited access to food. In Kansas alone, more than 40 grocery stores in rural communities have closed during the last nine years.

“The trend does not bode well for the health and wellbeing of communities at risk of losing their local grocery store,” Procter said.

A Grocer’s Struggle to Keep His Store Open

Like many in the Jetmore community feared, Jetmore Food Center was indeed—and is still—at risk of closing, said Mark Wellbrock, who owns and operates the store with his wife, Linda.

“It’s like any small business—it takes hard work that never stops, just to stay relevant to your customers,” he said. “And even then, you’re not going to win a lot of people over.”

Wellbrock cites a few factors that have led Jetmore residents to buy their groceries elsewhere.

“Of course, a lot of people work out of town, and then there’s youth sports events that take people out of town on weekends,” he said. Dodge City—population 27,000—is



A panel of grocers at the 2017 “Healthy Eating: Rural Opportunities” Learning Collaborative: Fred and Vali Smith (left) of Tipton Grocery in Tipton, pop. 210; Jenny Osner (second from right) of Hired Mans Grocery & Grill in Conway Springs, pop. 1,272; and Debra Nelson (right) from Garden of Eden in Little River, pop. 557. David Procter of the Rural Grocery Initiative is in the center.

30 miles away, but it’s got a Walmart Supercenter and several other discount grocers. There’s even an Asian market in Dodge.

“I understand how it happens, I do,” Wellbrock said. “I’m sure a lot of people don’t give it that much thought. You know, if you’re in Dodge anyway, why not buy the whole week’s—or a whole month’s—worth of groceries at Walmart while you’re there? Well, I’ll tell you why: because if too many people keep doing that, every small town grocery store is going to go out of business. It’s a direct cause and effect,” he said.

“The frustrating thing is: we’re not really that much more expensive in most cases. Milk maybe...but most things in our selection are competitive. I’m just not sure how much people are really aware of that. And thinking about what spending dollars locally means as far as jobs in town and keeping money around here to grow and be all we can, instead of spending it at Walmart.”

The other big factor that could help sustain the Jetmore Food Center is if businesses or organizations in town would place bulk food orders with Wellbrock, instead of with national food distributors.

“I’m probably as much as 2 or 3 percent more than national distributors on some items,” Wellbrock said. “However, you’re keeping that money in the community, supporting jobs and strengthening your local grocery. And in turn, you get a reliable source for your food orders—a neighbor who’s going to always be there to bring food to Jetmore.”

Healthy Eating, Rural Opportunities

Fortunately, Wellbrock and his staff at the Jetmore Food Center aren’t the only ones working to make sure the town keeps its grocery store. Lea Ann Seiler and Hodgeman



At the Jetmore Food Center are (from left) Mac Ruff, Candace Ruff, MadiLynn Ruff and, clerk Julia Chambers.

County Economic Development along with GROW Hodgeman County have formed a community task force to find practical ways to make sure the Jetmore Food Center can be sustainable.

Jetmore's story is hardly unique among Kansas communities. Many other rural towns are at risk of losing their grocery store—or already have—and are taking their own steps to find solutions unique to their local circumstances.

That is why in 2017 Sunflower Foundation began partnering with such communities to support their existing grassroots efforts. The HERO Initiative (Healthy Eating: Rural Opportunities) was launched

in January with nine initial pilot projects across the state: Allen County, Crawford County, Harvey County, Hodgeman County, Marion County, Plains, St. John, and two projects covering a 10-county area in northwest Kansas. These first HERO grants totaled \$150,000, plus an \$81,000 grant to K-State's RGI, which is providing technical assistance and resources directly to each community.

The initiative also includes Learning Collaboratives that bring grantees and partners together for multi-day conversations on microtopics that implicate their bottomlines, such as marketing to rural communities or providing loyalty-inspiring customer service.



“We know that access to a full range of nutritious foods is critical for the health of growing children and their families,” said Billie Hall, Sunflower Foundation President and CEO. “Yet more and more Kansas communities are losing ready access to nutritious foods, with residents facing round-trips of an hour just to buy fresh vegetables. Over time, the consequences of families having less healthy diets will be stark.”

Finding Solutions for Rural Food Access

Working with RGI, Sunflower identified multiple communities and counties that either met the USDA definition of a “food desert,” or would meet the definition if a remaining grocery store were to close.

As part of the invitation to apply, each community group was asked to assemble a leadership team, representing a wide array of stakeholders (for example, local grocers, producers, schools, churches, and health professionals), if one didn’t already exist. The planning projects are intended to set the stage for successful implementation of a two-pronged approach: assessing and studying technical data for long-term feasibility, while also gathering community input to foster local buy-in.

In some communities, this means transitioning a struggling grocery store into a non-profit co-op model, or boosting the store’s revenue by connecting purchasing to the school or hospital. Other communities are focusing on the local food systems and what it takes to



Jetmore Food Center employee Julia Chambers (right) with customer Mary Ravenstein.



The HERO Initiative is a pilot project focused on supporting community-based strategies to address food access needs in rural areas, such as strengthening local grocery stores. The initiative started in 2017 by supporting planning efforts in nine communities, totaling \$150,000 in Sunflower Foundation grants. These planning grants are intended to provide community teams with the resources and technical assistance needed to explore and develop sustainable strategies for increasing access to healthy foods. Find more information at: SunflowerFoundation.org/HERO

actually get fresh produce into a grocery store or “micro-markets” for towns without stores.

In Hodgeman County, efforts are focused on finding ways to make the Jetmore Food Center more sustainable, including efforts to raise awareness about the importance of shopping locally and an effort to find a potential bulk purchasing solution with Jetmore’s hospital. David Procter, RGI’s Director, sees particular promise in both approaches but particularly the latter.

Procter said Sunflower’s HERO Initiative not only gives the communities involved critically needed resources, but also signals to them that they are not alone in their own rural community’s struggle to find solutions to this challenge.

“Sunflower Foundation’s HERO Initiative may well be the difference to these communities,” said RGI’s Procter. “These communities need resources, to be sure. And that helps in a big way, no doubt. But maybe even more critical, for finding long-term sustainable solutions, is connecting far-flung Kansas communities to other towns struggling with similar challenges.”

“Together, I think we’ll identify the best ways to make sure rural communities have the sustainable, locally identified opportunities for achieving local access to healthy foods.”



When RGI first started its work in 2007, Procter and his team at Kansas State University identified 213 grocery stores in Kansas communities of 2,500 people or less. Today there are 186.

“The good news is that, while many have closed, there have also been many that have opened. There’s a lot more transition in communities than that number might indicate,” Procter said. “Communities have found many innovative ways to sustain their grocery store—and that continues to be the case. One of the best ways we can help other communities that are trying to save or bring back their local grocery is to disseminate knowledge. The hard-fought lessons learned in one small town hold the potential to help towns across Kansas keep their grocery and keep their community vibrant.”



Board of Trustees

The Sunflower Foundation is governed by nine trustees who represent, as much as possible, the diversity of Kansas. Eight trustees are appointed through a process overseen by the Community Advisory Committee and the Kansas Attorney General. One trustee is appointed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. The voluntary trustees serve three-year terms and can serve up to three terms.



Jay Kennedy

Jay Kennedy, Frankfort, is Chief Executive Officer of First National Bank. He was appointed by Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2015.



Andrea Krauss

Board Chair
Andrea Krauss, Russell, is Secretary and Treasurer of John O. Farmer, Inc. She was appointed by Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2013.



Les Lacy

Secretary

Les Lacy, St. Francis, is Vice President for Regional Operations at the Great Plains Health Alliance. He was appointed by former Attorney General Steve Six in March 2010.



Beryl "Bebo" Lowery-Born

Treasurer

Bebo Lowery-Born, Topeka, retired in 2013 from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas as the health insurance company's Chief Financial Officer. She was appointed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas in 2014.



Krista Postai

Krista Postai, Pittsburg, is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas. She was appointed by Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2014.



Reginald L. Robinson

Immediate Past Chair

Reginald L. Robinson, Lawrence, is Interim Vice Chancellor of the School of

Public Affairs and Administration at the University of Kansas. He was appointed by former Attorney General Steve Six in 2009.



Don Sherman

Don Sherman, Wichita, is Vice President of Community Relations and Strategic Partnerships at Westar Energy.

He was appointed by Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2014.



Martie Ross

Martie Ross, Leawood, is a Principal at Pershing Yoakley & Associates healthcare consultants. She was

appointed by Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2014.



Liz Sosa

Liz Sosa, Garden City, is Chief Executive Officer of Public Square Communities. She was appointed by Attorney General

Derek Schmidt in 2016.



Community Advisory Committee

The nine-member Sunflower Foundation Community Advisory Committee nominates candidates for the foundation's Board of Trustees. The Kansas Attorney General appoints eight of the committee members; the ninth member is the chair of the Sunflower Foundation board, serving ex-officio with vote. Terms of office are three years and committee members may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Kent Bradley

Valley Center
Obstetrics-gynecology physician at Newton Medical Center

John Coen

Ottawa
President and CEO of the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce

Susan Concannon

Beloit
Representative in the Kansas House, District 107

Francie Currie

Neodesha
Office manager for Neodesha Family Medicine

Andrea Krauss

Russell
Serves on the CAC in her role as chair of the Sunflower Foundation Board of Trustees

Sue Krische

Topeka
Retired Chief of Staff to four Kansas Senate Presidents

Terry Presta

Overland Park
Executive Director of the Kansas Lottery

Glen Singer

Iola
Family medicine physician

Donna Thomas

Leawood
Pediatric dentist



Sunflower Staff



Sunflower Foundation staff members are passionate about our work. Whether it's talking through a possible project or finding creative ways to provide technical assistance, we believe in trusting our partners' knowledge and perspective. Relationships are important to us and we strive to foster a culture of grantee-centric service. Trust, fairness, responsiveness, and respect are the principles we use to guide our daily work and grantmaking decisions.

health, including school health education, women's health, community health planning and health policy. She was Vice President for Public Affairs for the Kansas Health Institute. Previously, she led the development of the first specialty women's health center in Topeka, where she served as Executive Director for nearly 10 years. She began her career as a public health educator for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. She is a native of Topeka.

Education: Master of Science degree in Public Health from the University of Missouri; Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Washburn University.



Billie Hall

President and Chief Executive Officer

Billie Hall is the corporation's

Chief Executive Officer and works in partnership with the Board of Trustees and staff to provide leadership, vision, and direction for the organization. She is responsible for policies, programs, practices, and procedures to accomplish the foundation's functions including grantmaking, investments, operations, and communications. Hall's career has focused on many aspects of health care and public

Cheryl Bean



Chief Financial & Operating Officer

Cheryl Bean oversees both the finance and grants

management operations of the foundation. Her responsibilities include the management of all grants, including grant contracts, payments, reporting requirements, and maintenance of Sunflower's grants database

Sunflower Staff

and software. Her financial management duties include oversight of all financial accounting activities, budget preparation, payroll, and working with CEO, finance committee, and Board of Trustees concerning the foundation's investment policy and management and annual audit. She also is responsible for human resources, maintaining personnel records, administrating benefits, and personnel policies. Since 2013, she has been a board member of the Grants Managers Network. Previously, Cheryl was an office coordinator, staffing consultant, and accounting manager for Key Staffing, a personnel firm in Topeka, Kansas. Cheryl is a native of Claflin, Kansas.

Education: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Management from Washburn University.

Elizabeth Stewart Burger

Senior Program Officer



Elizabeth Stewart Burger oversees the foundation's Healthy Living & Active Communities program area.

The program area focuses on the built environment: the systems,

structures, and surroundings that make "the healthy choice, the easy choice" around physical activity and healthy food access. Burger began her career as a TV news producer but later transitioned to health and wellness. While completing her graduate degrees, she owned a personal training business, managed hospital-based wellness programs, and taught health education at the collegiate and community level. Most recently, she served as the evaluation director of practice-based research for the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Education: PhD and Master of Science degrees in Health and Human Performance from the Oklahoma State University; Master of Business Administration from Rockhurst University; post-doctoral fellowship from the University of Kansas; and Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications/Journalism from the University of Tulsa.



Phil Cauthon

Director of Communications

Phil Cauthon oversees external and internal communications

for Sunflower Foundation. This primarily includes messaging that furthers the mission of the foundation and advancing the goals of programs and initiatives. Communications are aimed at amplifying the work of Sunflower grantees and other stakeholders and their effect on their communities, particularly successful initiatives that can serve as models for others. The primary modes of communication are Sunflower's website, email newsletter, traditional media, social media, annual reports, and nonprofit journalism grantmaking. Previously, Phil worked at the Kansas Health Institute as Digital Editor, Communications Coordinator, and KHI News Service Reporter. Before that, he was a reporter and online editor at several newspapers in Kansas and in Washington, D.C. Phil is a fourth-generation Kansan.

Education: Master of Science degree in Journalism, and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Spanish and International Politics/Economics, all from the University of Kansas.



Jason Fizell

Director of Business

Development for Sunflower Foundation's Nonprofit Center

Jason Fizell oversees fundraising and grant development for the Nonprofit Center, as well as tenant recruitment and marketing of the conference center. Previously, Jason served for five years as Development Manager for St. Francis Health Foundation in Topeka. He has also served as Executive Director for the Kansas Land Trust in Lawrence, District Director for U.S. Rep. Nancy Boyda, and Proposal Development Manager for Health Systems Research, Inc., in Washington, D.C.

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in History focusing on history of science and environmental history from the University of Kansas.

Sunflower Staff



Brandon Skidmore

Program Officer

Brandon Skidmore oversees the foundation's health care programs, including the Integrated Care Initiative. The focus of this program is on attainable and sustainable integration of primary and behavioral health care at the community and statewide levels. Previously, he served as Director of the Bureau of Health Promotion at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, where he worked for more than a decade. He is a Fellow of the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute and a recipient of the Outstanding Service Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Brandon is a native Kansan.

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from the University of Kansas.



Gayle Smith

Executive Administrator

Gayle Smith oversees all corporate responsibilities at Sunflower Foundation, as well as provides executive and governance support, organizational and project management, and event planning. Previously, she served for seven years as Senior Executive Assistant at Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka. Before that, she did similar work at Childcare Aware of Eastern Kansas (a non-profit social service agency) and Security Benefit. Gayle is currently President of the American Business Women's Association Career Chapter and is an active member of the Washburn University Alumni Association. Gayle is a native Kansan.

Education: Master of Business Administration from Baker University and Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Washburn University.





Sunflower Foundation
HEALTH CARE FOR KANSANS



Financial Report

Statement of Financial Position • June 30, 2017

Assets	
Cash and investments	\$88,160,033
Property, fixed assets and other assets	\$2,404,390
Total Assets	\$90,564,423
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$372,437
Grants payable	\$2,759,842
Total Liabilities	\$3,132,279
Unrestricted Net assets	\$87,432,144
Total Net Assets	\$87,432,144
Total Liabilities and net assets	\$90,564,423



Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets • Year Ended June 30, 2017

Support and Revenue	
Investment income, net of expenses	\$11,250,270
Total Income	\$11,250,270
Grants and Expenses	
Grant awards	\$2,081,909
Grant awards (refunds/adjustments)	(\$272,623)
Special initiatives	\$795,131
Program and general administrative expenses	\$1,064,462
Total grants and expenses	\$3,668,879
Change in net assets	\$7,581,391
Net assets, beginning of year	\$79,850,753
Net assets, end of year	\$87,432,144

The above amounts are from the foundation's fiscal year 2017 unaudited financial statements.
A copy of the foundation's audited statements can be requested after December 14, 2017.



Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Advocacy and Policy

Supporting public policies aimed at improving the health of Kansans, and supporting or developing efforts of nonprofit organizations to advocate for such policies on behalf of the populations they serve.

Children's Alliance of Kansas

\$10,000

Shawnee County

To support advocacy efforts and strengthen the organization's nonpartisan voice for the health of Kansas children and families, particularly through social media outreach, engaging partners to create community conversations, and educating advocates and policymakers on the child welfare system.

Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved

\$67,028

Shawnee County

To help support the Health Reform Resource Project, an initiative to assist organizations statewide that are affected by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including addressing potential changes or replacements to the law. The project was established by the Kansas Grantmakers in Health to help nonprofit organizations apply for federal grants available under the ACA, as well as to ensure that the health care needs of consumers were appropriately represented under the ACA.

The project also provides monitoring and analysis of KanCare. The Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved is the fiscal agent for this two-year grant.

National Institute for Civil Discourse

\$10,000

Out of state

To expand and strengthen the work of the National Institute of Civil Discourse in Kansas, including: Next Generation, "Text, Talk, Act," and "Text, Talk, Vote." These programs promote a culture of civil discourse and engage voters of all ages statewide in the democratic process. Arizona University Foundation will serve as fiscal agent.

Built Environment

Promoting and supporting efforts to improve the physical environment of where we live, work, and play—to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Liberal Area Coalition for Families

\$39,075

Seward County

To build a .6-mile-long, six-foot-wide concrete trail connecting parts of the Seward County Community College (SCCC) campus to existing sidewalks in Liberal. The trail is the first phase of the SCCC Connection Trail, a shared vision of

SCCC, Liberal Area Coalition for Families, and the City of Liberal. Southwest Guidance Center will serve as fiscal agent.

USD #203 — Piper School District

\$49,200

Wyandotte County

To build a .6-mile-long, six-foot-wide concrete trail around the perimeter of the Piper School District grounds, which includes three schools.

USD #457 — Garden City School District

\$25,000

Finney County

To build a .25-mile-long, eight-foot-wide asphalt trail on Jennie Barker Elementary School grounds, which will include access for nearby community members.

Capacity Building

Developing core organizational skills and capabilities in order to increase effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

All Faith Counseling Center of Atchison

\$5,102

Atchison County

To upgrade the office computer technology and network security system at this counseling and educational services organization.

Atchison Community Health Clinic

\$8,576

Atchison County

To develop and redesign the clinic's website, develop a publishing strategy, and develop a social media plan to reach its target audience.

Attica Hospital District #1

\$12,102

Harper County

To upgrade this Critical Access Hospital's phone system, including new equipment for use in staff training.

Caritas Clinics, Inc.

\$16,200

Wyandotte County

To provide electronic medical record training to this safety net clinic's providers, assistants, certified medical translators, and administrative staff.

Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas

\$10,627

Saline County

To upgrade this social service organization's office computer technology.

Central Kansas Mental Health Center

\$28,125

Saline County

To purchase new accounting software and server—replacing the current, 22-year-old system—at this community mental health center.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Cheyenne County Hospital

\$6,416

Cheyenne County

To assist this Critical Access Hospital in transitioning to a new electronic medical record system.

CLASS LTD

\$12,692

Cherokee County

To upgrade the office computer technology at this disability-focused organization.

Coffeyville Regional Medical Center

Foundation

\$30,000

Montgomery County

To purchase technology to improve internal communication among staff, with a focus on training and education, community outreach and patient engagement.

COMCARE of Sedgwick County

\$16,470

Sedgwick County

To train this Community Mental Health Center's staff in improving patient engagement.

Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas

\$20,305

Crawford County

To upgrade this Federally Qualified Health Center's pharmacy software system and interface with the clinic's electronic medical record.

Episcopal Social Services, Inc.

\$27,942

Sedgwick County

To upgrade this social service organization's phone system and server to improve efficiency and privacy protection.

Families Together, Inc.

\$14,490

Sedgwick County

To update this disability-focused organization's website in order to provide resources for parents and to raise community awareness of its services.

Family Service and Guidance Center of Topeka, Inc.

\$19,359

Shawnee County

To secure management training and succession planning services for this Community Mental Health Center.

Finney County Community Health Coalition, Inc.

\$21,200

Finney County

To develop a new website, including secure access for partners of this community health coalition.

First Care Clinic, Inc.

\$15,577

Ellis County

To purchase communications technology for expanding onsite patient education opportunities and recording group support classes and other education offerings for patients with limited transportation or challenging work schedules.

Flint Hills Community Health Center

\$30,000

Lyon County

To upgrade this Federally Qualified Health Center's office computer technology and add a patient portal to its electronic medical record system, as well as train staff and engage patients on using the portal.

Flinthills Services

\$2,795

Butler County

To purchase technology needed by this disability-focused organization for production of professional-quality videos and ancillary media.

Florence Crittenton Services

\$3,000

Shawnee County

To develop a video for raising community awareness of this clinic's mission and services.

Fredonia Regional Hospital

\$6,590

Wilson County

To develop a new website and mobile website for providing accessible information about this Critical Access Hospital, its services, and its programs.

Friends of Johnson County Developmental Supports, Inc.

\$21,890

Johnson County

To develop a new website that is easier to navigate for this disability-focused organization's clients and potential donors.

Gove County Medical Center

\$29,427

Gove County

To upgrade this Critical Access Hospital's electronic medical record system.

Harper Hospital District #5

\$18,404

Harper County

To upgrade office computer technology at this Critical Access Hospital.

Hays Area Children's Center

\$5,455

Ellis County

To upgrade office computer technology and purchase interactive white boards for use in classrooms at this early child care organization.

Health Partnership Clinic

\$30,000

Johnson County

To upgrade this Federally Qualified Health Clinic's website and social media presence, and to develop a more user-friendly mobile website.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Historic Northeast Midtown Association, Inc.

\$12,682

Wyandotte County

To support this neighborhood revitalization group — whose work is based in part upon an appreciation of the social determinants of health — particularly by developing a website, integrating social media, and developing a resource guide with input from neighborhood residents.

Hoxie Medical Clinic

\$5,284

Sheridan County

To purchase office technology at this Federally Qualified Health Center. Sheridan County Health Complex will serve as fiscal agent.

Hunter Health Clinic

\$12,825

Sedgwick County

To develop a new website to more effectively communicate the mission and services of this Federally Qualified Health Center and Urban Indian Health Program.

Infant Toddler Services of Johnson County

\$6,040

Johnson County County

To purchase office computer technology needed by this early child care organization's staff working in the field.

Integrated Behavioral Technologies Inc.

\$25,000

Leavenworth County

To purchase office computer and network technology for this disability-focused organization's field staff and the families they serve.

Inter-Faith Ministries

\$26,240

Sedgwick County

To purchase office computer and network technology at this social service organization.

Kansas Action for Children, Inc.

\$9,000

Shawnee County

To train this advocacy organization's staff in public speaking and other professional development.

Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved

\$21,600

Shawnee County

To develop a Member Information Management System to better serve the organization's members and evaluate its services.

Kansas CASA Association

\$26,956

Ellis County

To upgrade the management software for this child advocacy organization's 23 member-programs statewide.

Kansas Food Bank

\$27,000

Sedgwick County

To upgrade the software that organizes all aspects of this hunger-relief organization's operations, including inventory and ordering, finance and accounting, and customer relationship management.

Kansas Learning Center for Health, Inc.

\$11,388

Harvey County

To purchase office computer technology, video equipment, and conference technology at this health education organization.

Labette County Emergency Assistance

\$2,797

Labette County

To upgrade office computer technology at this social service organization.

Lawrence Community Food Alliance

\$23,420

Douglas County

To purchase office computer and network technology at this healthy food access organization (also known as Sunrise Project). Funds will also support a redesign of the organization's website.

Live Well Live Atchison

\$8,105

Atchison County

To develop this community coalition's website and social media strategy.

Logan County Health Service

\$26,029

Logan County

To support the purchase of a contingency backup system for this Critical Access Hospital.

Medical Loan Closet of Wichita, Inc.

\$3,939

Sedgwick County

To purchase office computer technology at this organization, which loans durable medical equipment to underserved individuals.

Medical Service Bureau, Inc.

\$5,292

Sedgwick County

To upgrade the client database at this organization, which provides underserved individuals vouchers for vision care and prescription medications.

Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas

\$23,250

Sedgwick County

To assess and upgrade the service delivery system and donor support network at this advocacy and service organization.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Morris County Hospital

\$15,790

Morris County

To purchase computer network technology at this Critical Access Hospital.

Mt. Hope Sanctuary, Inc.

\$6,000

McPherson County

To train board members and staff on fund development and enhancing communications at this organization, which provides transitional housing and support services for single women and their children.

NAMI Kansas, Inc.

\$25,000

Shawnee County

To train board members and staff on fund development and enhancing communications at this advocacy organization.

Network of Communities Focused on Poverty Alleviation

\$13,805

Riley County

To support the training needs of a statewide network to deliver more coordinated and tailored support for families living in poverty. K-State Research and Extension will serve as the fiscal agent.

Norton County Hospital

\$23,224

Norton County

To implement an intranet to support staff at this Critical Access Hospital and its clinics.

Oral Health Kansas, Inc.

\$13,455

Shawnee County

To update this advocacy organization's website to be mobile friendly.

Prairie Independent Living Resource Center

\$2,918

Reno County

To update the phone system linking the three locations of this center for independent living.

Rainbows United, Inc.

\$22,586

Sedgwick County

To purchase network technology at this child and family support organization.

Reno County Health Department

\$25,191

Reno County

To purchase office computer technology to support staff at this public health department.

Russell Child Development Center

\$9,182

Finney County

To purchase office technology at this early childhood support organization.

Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita

\$30,000

Sedgwick County

To implement an integrated database for tracking membership and participation at this senior services organization.

Sheltered Living, Inc.

\$18,099

Shawnee County

To upgrade office computer technology, video equipment, and staff training software at this disability-focused organization.

Southwest Boulevard Family Health Care

\$16,207

Wyandotte County

To upgrade office computer technology at this safety net clinic.

Spring River Mental Health & Wellness

\$19,766

Cherokee County

To upgrade office computer and network technology at this community mental health center.

Sumner Mental Health Center

\$23,970

Sumner County

To upgrade office computer technology at this community mental health center.

The Arc of Sedgwick County Inc.

\$4,409

Sedgwick

To purchase office computer technology for the outreach efforts of this disability-focused organization.

The Capper Foundation

\$6,290

Shawnee County

To upgrade the donor database at this developmental and intellectual disabilities social service organization.

The Cedar House Foundation

\$8,909

Dickinson County

To purchase office technology at this organization, which provides transitional housing and services for women.

Thrive Allen County, Inc.

\$18,393

Allen County

To upgrade the phone system, network, and videoconference equipment at this community organization.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Topeka Community Cycle Project

\$1,900

Shawnee County

To purchase office computer technology for coordinating volunteer support at this community bicycle education and repair organization.

Washington County Health Department and Home Health Agency

\$7,200

Washington County

To upgrade office computer technology at this public health department.

Wichita Children's Home

\$28,340

Sedgwick County

To upgrade office computer technology at this organization, which provides emergency, temporary residential shelter for children.

Wichita Family Crisis Center

\$5,075

Sedgwick County

To secure leadership development training for board members and staff at this organization, which provides shelter and program support to survivors of domestic violence.

Wilson Medical Center

\$30,000

Wilson County

To implement a new network interface between the electronic medical record systems of this Critical Access Hospital and its rural health clinics.

Healthy Eating and Rural Food Access

Supporting access to healthy food—including nutrition education—in underserved communities. In 2017, efforts centered around the HERO Initiative: "Healthy Eating, Rural Opportunities." The pilot project is focused on supporting community-based strategies to address food access needs in rural areas, such as strengthening local grocery stores.

Community Enhancement Foundation of Plains

\$15,000

Meade County

To be one of the HERO Initiative's pilot communities. Community Enhancement Foundation of Plains will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input.

Eat Well Crawford County

\$15,000

Crawford County

To be one of the HERO Initiative's pilot communities. Eat Well Crawford County will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Crawford Co. Health Department will be the project's fiscal agent partner.

Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation

\$30,000

Cheyenne County

To be one of the HERO Initiative’s pilot projects, serving northwest Kansas. The Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc.—working with the High Plains Food Co-op, Western Prairie Food, Farm & Community Alliance, and others—will conduct a feasibility study for a potential food hub that would serve 12 counties in northwest Kansas.

GROW Allen County

\$15,000

Allen County

To be one of the HERO Initiative’s pilot communities. Allen County GROW will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Thrive Allen County will be the project’s fiscal agent partner.

GROW Hodgeman County

\$15,000

Hodgeman County

To be one of the HERO Initiative’s pilot communities. GROW Hodgeman will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based

community input. Hodgeman Co. Economic Resource Development Council will be the project’s fiscal agent partner.

Harvey County Food and Farm Council

\$15,000

Harvey County

To be one of the HERO Initiative’s pilot communities. Harvey County Food & Farm Council will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Harvey Co. Health Department will be the project’s fiscal agent partner.

Kansas State University

\$81,708

Riley County

To provide technical assistance for the HERO Initiative: “Healthy Eating, Rural Opportunities.” Kansas State University is home to the grantee, the Rural Grocery Initiative.

Southern Marion County Healthy Partnerships

\$15,000

Marion County

To be one of the HERO Initiative’s pilot communities. Southern Marion County Healthy Partnerships will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Peabody Main St. USA will be the project’s fiscal agent partner.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Stafford County Grocery Store Task Force

\$15,000

Stafford County

To be one of the HERO Initiative's pilot communities. The county's Task Force for Grocery Store Access will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Stafford County Economic Development will be the project's fiscal agent partner.

Western Prairie Food, Farm, and Community Alliance

\$15,000

Sherman County

To be one of the HERO Initiative's pilot communities. The Western Prairie Food, Farm, and Community Alliance will lead the planning project, including assembling a leadership team representing a wide array of stakeholders and gathering broad-based community input. Western Prairie Resource, Conservation & Development Council will be the project's fiscal agent partner.

Integrated Care Initiative

Supporting primary care and behavioral health safety net systems that endeavor to move toward integrated service delivery models, including education, peer collaboration, technical assistance, planning efforts, implementation, sustaining transitions, and efforts aimed at payment reform.

Health Ministries Clinic

\$150,000

Harvey County

To sustain primary and mental health care integration at Health Ministries Clinic. This is a two-year grant.

Responsive Grants and Special Initiatives

Supporting research, education, public engagement, communications, and other efforts aimed at advancing Sunflower Foundation's mission.

Kansas Tribal Health Summit

\$103,500

Shawnee County

To support the Kansas Tribal Health Summit as well as its planning committee, whose work throughout the year is a collaborative effort by the four Native tribes in the state to improve their communities' health. Among other things, the grant supports year-round health planning work, data sharing and evaluation, workshops, and work

toward food sovereignty. The American Heart Association will serve as fiscal agent for this three-year grant.

Fredonia Unified School District #484

\$5,000

Wilson County

To support the Summer Medical Academy, a course that is designed to provide students with an introduction to the various professional fields within health care. The two-week program includes hands-on activities, coursework, independent study, and fieldwork experiences. Leaders in health care will provide students with first-hand knowledge of the opportunities available for a future in health care.

Get Outdoors Kansas

\$55,000

Shawnee County

To develop a mobile application for finding information about trails and other outdoor opportunities for physical activity across the state. Kansas Wildscape Foundation will serve as the fiscal agent.

Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved

\$5,000

Shawnee County

To support the 2017 KAMU Annual Conference in their ongoing commitment to integrated care.

Kansas Association of Counties

\$10,000

Shawnee County

To secure professional facilitation and technical assistance for strategic planning for this quasi-public agency, which seeks to advance the public interest by promoting effective, responsive county government in Kansas.

Kansas Family Partnership

\$10,000

Shawnee County

To support technical assistance and strategic planning for this social services organization.

Topeka Community Foundation

\$10,000

Shawnee County

To support development of a pocket park to honor the founders of Menninger Foundation—part of an effort to make downtown Topeka more walkable.

Valeo Behavioral Health Care

\$10,000

Shawnee County

To regularly convene stakeholders to review opioid misuse in Shawnee County, study the contextual factors within the current health care delivery system that influence the problem, and explore opportunities to respond.

Sunflower Foundation 2017 Grants

Wichita State University

\$1,500

Sedgwick County

To support the 2017 Kansas Community Health Worker Symposium. The event brings together stakeholders from across the state to better understand community health worker systems across Kansas.

Sunflower-Directed Initiatives

Resources supporting major, self-initiated and directed projects aimed at improving access to health care, effective leadership and advocacy on behalf of Kansans, and other efforts to advance the foundation's mission that are supplemental to its grantmaking.

Advocacy Fellowship Network

To support the Sunflower Foundation Advocacy Fellowship, a non-partisan initiative designed to provide education and training opportunities for Kansas leaders whose work can help shape public policy and ultimately improve the health of Kansans. A total of 89 community leaders from around the state have graduated from the Fellowship's first six classes. The Advocacy Fellowship Network is an ongoing effort to connect all of the Fellowship classes' members, provide opportunities to stimulate collaboration,

and organize convenings giving attendees the chance to learn from experts in a variety of subjects related to health and civil discourse.

Alliance for a Healthy Kansas

To support the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, a statewide coalition dedicated to engaging communities to become involved in promoting policies aimed at health equity, assuring everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Members of the Alliance include grassroots citizens, community leaders, and organizations across the state — among them are business leaders, doctors and hospitals, social service and safety net organizations, faith communities, chambers of commerce, advocates for health care consumers, and many more. Alliance members believe that unifying Kansans' voices makes everyone stronger advocates for common goals. The Alliance's first policy goal is the expansion of KanCare health coverage for low-income Kansans.

Integrated Care Initiative

Learning Collaboratives

To provide an opportunity to learn from national and state experts, as well as from grantees' peers across the state who are also working to integrate care at their clinics. The collaboratives bring together more than 70 health care professionals who are working to integrate physical health



care with behavioral health care at their clinics. Integration of traditional primary care with behavioral health and substance abuse treatment has become more widely recognized as a progressive model of providing high-quality and cost-effective treatment, resulting in improved health outcomes and better patient experience. Changing decades-old models of care delivery is challenging at best, no matter how committed those involved are toward the goal. The collaboratives provide hands-on opportunities for participants to share what's working and what has not.

“Health Eating: Rural Opportunities”

Learning Collaboratives

To bring together dozens of community leaders from around the state who are each working in their own way to ensure local access to healthy foods. The Healthy Eating: Rural Opportunities initiative is aimed at facilitating community-based strategies to address food access needs in rural areas, such as strengthening local grocery stores. In this, the pilot project's first year, nine sites around the state were identified and funded. The Rural Grocery Initiative at Kansas State University is providing technical assistance to grantees.







About the Cover Art

“Sky Fire,” by Edward C. Robison, III



This is an image I created in January 2006 at the Breidenthal Preserve in Douglas County, also known as the Baldwin Woods, just a couple miles north of Baldwin City. The preserve is home to 3,400 acres of hills, creeks, and undisturbed old growth woodlands in the terminal zone of historic continental glaciation in Kansas.

At the time, I was living in a small farmhouse adjacent to the preserve. I had been working on a four-year project called “One Square Mile,” which set out to prove that you could find beauty and the extraordinary in your own back yard.

One afternoon, after a particularly strong winter thunderstorm passed through the area I was anxious to get out and photograph the clouds. When I went outside, I noticed that the thick cloud bank stopped at the western horizon and there was a break in the cloud cover right where the sun was going to set. I quickly gathered my camera gear and set out to find a composition that would capture the expansive sky. After setting up my camera I waited about 30 minutes until the sun dipped below the clouds and illuminated their undersides with a beautiful spectrum of reds and purple hues. I captured a number of images that evening, but “Sky Fire” was my favorite composition. It’s since become one of my all-time, best-selling images. “Sky Fire” is composed of 12 separate vertical photographs stitched together into one seamless, high-resolution panoramic.

I love the simplicity of Kansas and its endless sky. One of my favorite things to capture is solitude, and Kansas offers many subjects that are isolated on vast prairie. The sky

is a constantly changing canvas of color and textures. I love to explore and find hidden gems. Seeking out and discovering new locations is as exciting for me as creating the photographs.

Many think of Kansas as boring or flat or “flyover country.” But those of us who have lived here any time at all — and are ready to witness the wonder of this world — know that’s just simply not true. It may not be true of anywhere, but it is certainly not true of Kansas. Witness the sunrise on a spring morning. The sunset over a disappearing horizon of magic colors. Stunning limestone outcroppings revealing life over millennia, in every corner of this place. Wheat waving in chorus for miles. Prairies unvisited by more than a few people over years. Thunderstorms on the horizon that will take hours to arrive at last. A red tail hawk sailing on air so still you could swear you hear its feathers flying by.

This place is truly beautiful. We who have ever called it home are truly fortunate.
— Edward C. Robison, III

Edward C. Robison, III, was born and raised in Warrensburg, Missouri. He pursued a degree in photography at the Kansas City Art Institute. He and his wife Janalee have also lived in Kansas and Colorado. While traveling through Kansas to visit friends, he realized his calling was to photograph the subtle beauty and simplicity of the Midwest landscape. His work has been exhibited and published nationally. He currently owns and operates the Sacred Earth Gallery in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. To see more of his photography, visit his website at: www.ECR3.com.



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