

2015

Fifteen Year Report

A legacy
of service to
Southern
Oregonians



g o r d o n e l w o o d
F O U N D A T I O N

OUR MISSION

Investing in
Southern
Oregon's youth,
individuals,
families and
communities

Remembering Gordon Elwood

GORDON ELWOOD DID NOT FIT THE PROFILE OF A PHILANTHROPIST.

Rather, he was a quirky and hard-working man who deprived himself and his family of most of life's comforts. Although he loved cars and talked shop with car salesmen, he rarely drove his old Mercedes because he didn't like to buy gasoline. Instead of bedding, he and his family slept in sleeping bags, and they wore stocking caps to stay warm in an unheated house that had no telephone. Curiously, it is his own deprivation that allowed him – after his death – to help others in need.

When Gordon was thirteen, he had his first job delivering papers on a 13-mile route. As soon as he began to make money his father expected him to be responsible, productive and frugal.

Gordon built his fortune with his hands, his intelligence and his economy. Doreen Keener said her brother's frugality and talent for saving was inspired by their father giving them money to invest in a grade school savings plan.

During World War II, Gordon's father taught him how to repair clocks and radios. As television grew in popularity, Gordon figured out how to repair TV sets and for the next 40 years he worked as a television repairman. He was proud that he could fix "almost anything." After he retired, Gordon made money scavenging cans and bottles for their deposits. He lived on that money and invested his Social Security checks.

[My parents] had me pay room and board as soon as I got out to work. I had to help buy my own food at home and my own bicycle for the paper route. I also sold Liberty Magazines right from the start — and I've been kind of a workaholic ever since.

– Gordon Elwood

Concerned about preserving his savings from taxes, Gordon sought financial counsel.

Bob Hutchins, Medford financial consultant, recalled his first meeting with Gordon. Among the usual brokerage clientele, Gordon was a conspicuous figure: tall, thin, usually sockless, dressed in dirty second-hand clothes with a bungee cord as a belt. His appearance alienated those around him. Hutchins, however, was not put off by this and invited him to come in and sit down. That encounter marked the beginning of a professional relationship and a friendship that spanned the rest of Gordon's life.

Gordon's daily routine during his last two years of life was to ride around Medford on a perfectly maintained 12-speed bicycle with his cat, Badger. They collected bottles and cans and occasionally stopped to buy day-old bread or picked up free outdated milk from the dairy. He also enjoyed dropping by the bank for cookies. He was often seen feeding stray cats at the shopping center. Many people presumed Gordon was homeless.

His appearance affected the way Gordon was treated. Hutchins felt that people's reaction to Gordon's appearance and demeanor might have shortened his life. According to Hutchins, when Gordon sought medical care "he was treated like a bum." Gordon didn't get treatment early enough for what turned out to be terminal prostate cancer. "My secretary and others took him to treatments and tried to help [but] it was too late."

I think Gordon understood the incongruity in his life. Underneath, his whole life was a paradox. He was bright, and I think he was caring... His relationship to his kids wasn't great. In Gordon's own words he was a miser, and that greatly affected his family. The dollars didn't do them any good. But I know he was excited about the possibilities of doing some good in other people's lives.

– Robert Hutchins



OUR VALUES

We are inspired to demonstrate...

... Financial Stewardship

by creating from Gordon's financial legacy a Foundation Vision and Mission supported by prudent investment and thoughtful disbursement of funds.

... Social Stewardship

by touching lives in a proactive and interactive manner.

... Integrity by living the mission

through employing strategies of patience, learning, teaching, compassion, caring, and love.

... Investment in the Journey

by thinking, acting, and committing resources to creating and sustaining the Gordon Elwood Foundation Values, Mission, Vision.

... Individuality

by being innovative.

OUR VISION:

***Youth and individuals thrive
in school and in life.***

***Individuals and families live
independently and
interdependently
with dignity and respect.***

***Communities evolve as the
situation of the people who live,
work and play
in these communities
change over time.***

***Youth, individuals, families
and the organizations
that serve them
are connected,
creating a unique and
sustainable community fabric.***

Prior to his diagnosis and just months before his death, Gordon asked Hutchins what he should do with all his money to avoid estate “death taxes.” After discussion, they initiated the foundation that now bears his name. Gordon Elwood left behind a trust fund to assist his family and approximately \$9 million dollars to benefit the community.

At the first meeting of the Foundation Trustees, Gordon remarked:

It makes me feel good that I can help do something. I never really did anything for myself.

Everyone is put on this earth to accomplish something, not just for their own self.

I just seem to have a purpose — I guess maybe this must be it.

Through this foundation I feel like I have made my life worthwhile to others.

He knew that things were always evolving and he had the faith and respect in the people creating the foundation to let them make decisions about the future. His philosophy was “things change and you have to go with that.” His expectation was simple: “Do good.”

His generosity to those who will never be able to thank him is the impressive legacy of an eccentric man who lived in the margins. In its first 15 years, the Gordon Elwood Foundation has distributed more than \$3.1 million in grants, creating hundreds of opportunities for thousands of people to help themselves, and leveraged time, talent and treasure beyond the foundation's to benefit the four county service area.



***For more about how the foundation and how the
Board of Directors was formed,
please refer to "Creating Gordon's Legacy"
in the Gordon Elwood Foundation's 5-Year report,
available online at www.gordonelwoodfoundation.org***

A Trusted Advisor

While the funds may have come from Gordon Elwood, along with the instruction to “do something good” with his estate, establishing the Gordon Elwood Foundation fell to Elwood’s longtime financial advisor, Robert “Bob” Hutchins. And he, in turn, credits what the foundation has become to those who agreed to serve on the board. “We chose the most effective people we could find in the community, he says. It was a knowledge base and a function base (for approaching potential members), not just people who volunteered to do stuff.” “I had no one who said no to joining,” says Hutchins, who also appreciated the independent thinking of the new board members. “After all, I never did have the last idea on anything.” “Do you think they had an inkling of what this would become?” asks his son, Rick Hutchins. Bob’s answer: “Even I didn’t have an inkling!”

Both father and son serve as financial advisors to the Elwood Board. Bob had seen Gordon work with another advisor for a few years before becoming involved with him. Eventually, Bob helped Gordon through his illness, estate planning and death. From his high school years, Rick watched the relationship grow between Elwood and his father, and then saw the legacy it created.

“I remember seeing him in Dad’s office and wondering who he was,” says Rick. “I was always aware that Dad had a personal relationship with this guy. Gordon really trusted Dad. “So when Elwood wanted to avoid estate taxes, and his death was nearing, he turned to Bob Hutchins for help. The foundation’s guiding principles, Bob says, go back to the single meeting the foundation board had with him. “Responding to our questions, he told us ‘You’ve got to be able to change’. He didn’t want the money to be used outside the area and he didn’t want it to be a hand out, but a hand up. Elwood’s simple instructions gave us the freedom to be creative,” says Bob. The diversity of the board members added to the creativity, as did the size of the foundation’s endowment. “We’ve got to leverage what we’ve got to be effective.”

Bob believes much of that leverage comes from the board’s early decision to hire Kathy Bryon as executive director. “She brought all her connections and her own background. It was an intentional decision by the board to encourage her to be out working with other agencies in the community.” “Bryon’s relationship with the board is also key,” says Rick. “Kathy will create the environment and then let the actions free-flow. The outcome is never set, people are willing to get their egos out of the way.”

“It’s very real, this idea of using outside-the-box thinking,” Rick says of board discussions. “The board members come from different backgrounds, but they all come together to creatively think about a challenge. There’s been some real invention as a result.”

Elwood’s instruction about change leads the board to be openly proud of having “no rules.” However, Bob says the board does have a distinct culture that existing members are careful to share with potential new members. There are learning processes that serve as stepping stones for future board members.

“Board members are very sincerely proud of being incredibly effective,” says Bob. “I don’t think many people have any idea,” agrees Rick, “of how the Elwood board is a quiet, creative servant for the community.”

“That really fit Gordon,” Bob says. “Nobody knew much about him, but he was brilliant in his own way.”

**“ Bob Hutchins is responsible
for this thing being what it is.”
Jan Murphy**



Bob Hutchins (seated) and his son Rick Hutchins

"We have with great volition attempted to awaken the best within each of ourselves when we gather... However, beyond ourselves, we have also taken the Elwood values into our communities."

John Harmon
Founding Board Member



Gordon Elwood Foundation
Board Members &
Executive Director 2004

On Reflection

One of the founding board members of the Gordon Elwood Foundation was John Harmon.

"I've never been involved with a group like this," says Harmon, who served as a board member from 1999 to 2011 before taking a job out the state though he still speaks of Elwood Foundation work in present tense. "It's not about giving away the money. It's the spirit. There's a spirit there that's hard to put into words that are tangible."

That spirit starts with Elwood's instruction to "do good" with his fortune that set up the foundation. After the foundation was established, Harmon helped Elwood with his medical care as he was dying of prostate cancer. "He never really could get specific," Harmon says of Elwood. "He said, 'I want this money to do good, to do things that I didn't do.' Innately, I believe he knew that he wanted to help people."

Harmon says Elwood's "broad framework" for the bequest left a challenge for the unique set of volunteers who were brought together by Elwood's financial adviser, Bob Hutchins.

"Bob understands character," says Harmon. "He invited people who have certain core values. They didn't have to be a homogeneous group to have certain characteristics." The diversity of experiences and background, Harmon believes, helped the board to find their common goals.

Beyond "do good" there was a second guiding value agreed to by the new board, says Harmon. "We were to be stewards of public funds, money that the government didn't get (as taxes on Elwood's estate). Stewardship forced us to look at the world outside of our stereotypes."

Several hallmarks of the Elwood traditions and agreements -- but not bylaws -- started very early in the board's struggle to create a process to "do good."

Internally, there are thoughtful, respectful and non-judgmental discussions. As part of decision making, there are site visits and follow-up discussions to consider alternative ways of looking at the underlying problem in a grant request, not just the goals of a project. Finally, while there is an aversion to taking credit for what has been accomplished, there is a focus on learning: What ingredients came together to cause a positive change? What didn't work and why?

“The discussions that follow a site visit are very interesting,” says Harmon. “Each one of us sees something from our own perspective, from our experience. Each board member has an ability to see, the ability to listen, to use our senses to discuss and decide without being judgmental. The ability to sit and listen to what people are saying, even when it’s not necessarily on topic, is our strength. It creates an environment that is non-threatening and non-judgmental.”

Hiring Kathy Bryon as executive director also shaped the foundation, says Harmon. “She’s visionary. It was the best decision we ever made.”

Once the board came together on the policy framework, a more significant kind of philanthropy started. Single grants quickly changed into grants aimed at leveraging relationships between organizations, encouraging ways to raise other funds, and finding new ways to address a complex issue. An effort to be more directly engaged led the Elwood board to offer not just funding, but sometimes actual staff and board time.

“Our money is a very small part of what happens,” says Harmon. “The right organization will multiply that money by whatever they’re doing. It’s a multiplication of something tangible. It’s just like in John’s Gospel: It’s a process of recognizing what’s present, and empowering that.”

Harmon recalls discussions about specific projects aimed at specific problems, leaving him frustrated about not being able to bring influential people and agencies together to cooperate on the broader issues. That feeling has led the Elwood Foundation to encourage and support collaborations on health care, high school graduation, the food system, workforce readiness, and philanthropy. “In effect, because we’ve stayed with it, our leverage is so much greater than what we’ve ever given away in grant funds.”

While grants and leverage are not always immediately successful, the Elwood traditions, atmosphere and bonds make board members value the overall experience of learning what results from trying various strategies to “do good.”

“We’re not doing this in Gordon Elwood’s honor,” Harmon says, “but in the spirit of what he wanted us to do.”



“The ability to sit and listen to what people are saying, even when it’s not necessarily on topic, is our strength. It creates an environment that is non-threatening and non-judgmental.”

**- John Harmon,
Emeritus
Founding Board Member**

Leveraging Time, Talent and Treasure

OUR PROGRAM GOALS:

YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS

Support children and individuals by providing access to the education and life skills they need to be successful in life.

Reduce obstacles to success in the classroom.

Reduce economic and cultural barriers to educational and training opportunities.

Create incentives for staying in school and achieving personal potential.

Increase youth and individual engagement with a sense of responsibility to the larger community.

As the founding members of the Gordon Elwood Foundation begin documenting their passions for succeeding boards, some transitions seem likely in both mission and focus on specific programs.

For example, founding member Mike Heverly and “new” member Steve Boyarsky both count College Dreams as one of their favorites among recipients of Gordon Elwood assistance. And they both point to the same reasons.

Boyarsky is on the College Dreams board, after retiring from an education career; Heverly is “a fan” of what the Gordon Elwood Foundation has been able to do for College Dreams, founded by Tom and Judie Drummond.

“We were able to find and fund the right people,” says Heverly. “Tom and Judie are charismatic individuals and the Gordon Elwood Foundation has been able to get them where they are today.”

“It was about leadership.” agrees Boyarsky. “These are people in the community, in the schools, who identify the kids early and are familiar with the individual.” The help that the Drummonds give, he says, “is built around the personal relationships and it leads to the success. The data over 10 years is pretty persuasive.”

“This whole concept impressed the (Gordon Elwood) board,” recalls Heverly. “We took them on and we said ‘We’re going to help build this.’ That kind of action is more than just giving money away; this is leverage.”

“Being an engineer, I wanted to measure the results,” Heverly says. “They’ve convinced me that it doesn’t work like that. I’m willing to say there are some things that need doing that can’t be measured. Gordon Elwood would be proud of what we have been able to do to leverage impact on the lives of kids and families,” Heverly says.

Mike Heverly
Founding Board Member



“That was an ‘aha moment’ for me,” says Boyarsky. “What’s unique for me from other (boards) is that you get to focus on where the critical needs are, find this critical leverage point to create a sustainable service in the community that is focused on community.”

The Elwood board’s ability to do that - identify leverage points and be creative in using them, is based in two things. First, Heverly says, “It was by design (of the founding board) to have a broad and open mission statement.” The initial board members, he said, “had the wisdom (or the dumb luck) in a blank-sheet opportunity, to determine the core values” that remain in place 15 years later.

Second, Boyarsky quickly adds, Gordon Elwood’s executive director, Kathy Bryon “has deep ears in the community. The board realizes her strong connections in the community are a special asset and perhaps the best thing we can do is make Kathy available to our community partners.”

So the transition that will eventually come from the founding board and from Bryon’s tenure is an open discussion among the Elwood team members.

“I fear that we will evolve into a funding organization,” worries Heverly. “If we do that, we’re going to allocate all of the resources based on reaction to requests. We lose the ability to be proactive; we want to look for those opportunities.”

Boyarsky will take the pro-active nature of the board discussions into the future. “It’s fascinating to me to hear the different perspectives, different experiences. I learn so much at our meetings and site visits.”

One of the key questions, he adds, is simple: “If we don’t give them money, would this project fail?” That often leads to offer more than money to a critical community program. That could be support for a consultant, coach or bookkeeper, it all depends on the situation of the organization at hand.



Steve Boyarsky, Board Member

OUR PROGRAM GOALS:

INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Provide access for adults and families to education, training and life skills they need to be successful in life.

Reduce obstacles to succeeding in the workplace or in higher education and training.

Reduce economic barriers to educational opportunities and training for self and family



Camp Invention
Klamath Falls



Brookings Food Bank



Family Nurturing Center



Heart of
Oregon Corps



CASA Klamath County



Bear Creek Stewards Greenway Clean-up

Academia Latina



Academia Latina immerses Latino students in a university setting, exposing them to the learning and career possibilities of college. This program provides an integrated experience with classes, field trips, cultural experiences and recreational activities.

In 1999, Southern Oregon University, Southern Oregon Educational Service District, and Rogue Community College collaborated to host a Latino Education Symposium.

The result of this joint effort was the development of Academia Latina, a one-week summer academic residential program for Latino youth in southern Oregon. The program immerses Latino students on the Southern Oregon University campus, exposing them to the learning and career possibilities of college.

When the program first started in 2000, the model was to accept sixth through eighth grade students. However, after two years of using this model it became clear to program leadership that sixth grade was too young for students to be away from home.

Additionally, with some research of National data regarding Latino culture and education, Academia Latina leadership learned that 55% of Latino students nationwide did not enroll in ninth grade.

For these reasons, the model for the program was changed to focus on grades seventh, eighth, and ninth. The goal being to help Latino students experience support after eighth grade and into ninth grade.

“We wanted to follow up on our ninth grade students and become a support system for them.” says Rachel Jones, Director of SOU Youth Programs .

Once a shift was made to take students in the higher grade levels and the program was delivered for a couple of years, another major need was identified. While the program was seeing great success for students attending during seventh through ninth grade, there was no opportunity for contact with the graduates after leaving the program, until they were in twelfth grade and eligible to apply as a junior counselor.

To increase both high school graduation and college enrollment, the Academia Latina program launched the Academia Leadership Program in 2013, which served students in grades tenth and eleventh. This program offered a new experience for participants with classes focused on cultivating leadership skills, postsecondary careers, and community service projects.

Jones recalls, "We discovered that many students were taking on summer jobs and could not afford to spend a week on campus. Because this component was brand new, students didn't know what to expect."

To address this issue, Academia Latina had to consistently deliver a well-rounded program that proved beneficial to the students.

"Academia marked its 15th year in 2015 by throwing a Quinceanera party for current students and program alumni. In 2016 we strove to innovate and excel. We added two days to the Academia Leadership program, making it a 9-day residential camp. The focus for the additional days were in-depth workshops that touched on the arts, STEM, physical fitness, and college prep. Students participated in a hike/scavenger hunt in Lithia Park, learned about diversity from OSF acting company, and worked with the Ashland High School robotics team. The Academia Latina Leadership students spent part of the additional days in an extended session on writing college scholarship essays."

"In 2016 we accepted 100 students for the second time in the program history, and had 99% program attendance. This is the highest attendance rate since our program began. In addition, Academia Leadership had a full cohort of 20 students for the first time and 100% program attendance," says Jones.

ACADEMIA LATINA 2014

High School Graduation Rate: 93.75%

Enrolled in College: 58.33%

ACADEMIA LATINA 2015

High School Graduation Rate: 100%

(eligible students)

Enrolled in College: 64.1%

ACADEMIA LATINA 2016

High School Graduation Rate: 100%

(eligible students)

Enrolled in College: 93.3%

THE COLLEGE DREAMS IMPACT

Six years after high school graduation, 84 percent of College Dreamers have a bachelors degree, compared to the national average of 56 percent, and only 30 percent nationally of first-generation college students.

College Dreams leverages support in numerous ways for their students:

- College Incentive Program
- TRiO Talent Search
- Youth Individual Development Account Program
- Career Build
- Southern Oregon Wraparound Mentoring
- Whatever It Takes at Central Medford High School

collegedreams.org



Dan Kosmatka chats with Judie and Tom Drummond.

family to graduate from college,” he tells them, “but a lot of that (success) came from people around me, giving me that encouragement.

“You guys have boundaries to cross that we might not have had,” he adds. “We are here to help each other. What can we do to help the next generations?”

The founders of College Dreams, Tom and Judie Drummond, were also first-generation college students, “We hoped to change the life of a student or two” when they started the program with just 33 students 16 years ago. “We had enough money for one year,” says Judie. “The Elwood Foundation came along the second year.”

Now College Dreams incorporates several programs at many high schools. While some of their programs have specific clientele or guidelines, College Dreams tries to help any student. “We spend a little money helping them reach their dreams, or spend a lot of money helping them later on,” explains Tom.

College Dreams

Of all the programs benefitting from the Gordon Elwood Foundation, College Dreams has been a favorite of Dan Kosmatka and other board members. “Seeing what they do for children, it’s touched my life,” he says.

It’s because he can relate. This is apparent when he meets Phoenix High School students who are in the College Dreams program. He tells them, “My dad worked in the mill. I worked in the orchards. I had that life.”

The students are sophomore girls, all Hispanic, all with additional challenges, and all who would be the first in their family to go to college. “I’m the first one in my

“Elwood has been there for us at every single level,” he says. “We have dialogued more with the Elwood Board than anyone else.

It’s the same role that the Drummonds and their programs have played for a full generation of students in Josephine and Jackson counties. There are 1,064 students enrolled for 2015-16; there are now 1,366 alumni.

One alum is Arturo Onesto, who started with College Dreams activities in the seventh grade, and now is working for the program 11 years later after earning a journalism degree at the University of Oregon.

He talks to the students about getting out of the social stigma of being a minority. “I didn’t know where I fit in. I was really good, but nobody wanted to give me credit for being good, because I’m a minority.” The College Dreams support was crucial during his first years at college, Onesto says. “I had no idea what was going on.”

Why is Onesto back with College Dreams? “I’m building a better future for my kid.” Kosmatka emphasizes that point to the students. “You all have mentors. Do you all understand you are mentors to the younger kids?”

The Drummonds delight in showcasing the students, asking them about their plans and praising their goals. “You’re all super bright,” Judie tells a group of students. “You can do anything you want.”

Kosmatka, in turn, is pleased that the flexibility and creativity of the Elwood Foundation board has been important to College Dreams. The Elwood board, for example, surprised the Drummonds with the foundation's first (and so far only) \$25,000 award of excellence.

“We don’t have a cookie-cutter approach,” says Kosmatka of the Elwood board. “We look for these opportunities to pay it forward.”

"As a first generation college student, College Dreams helped out so much when it came to paying for school. If it wasn't for them I don't think I would have been able to go to college. Through their mentoring in high school and with help through their IDA program, everything College Dreams did helped prepare me for life after high school and set me up for success."

Melissa Myers, a 2017 graduate from Grants Pass





Curry County CASA volunteers

Court Appointed Special Advocates work to ensure that the best interests of the child are being represented in the courtroom. CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children, to make sure they don't get lost in the overburdened legal and social service system or languish in inappropriate group or foster homes.

Volunteers stay with each case until it is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer will be the one constant adult presence in their lives.

Curry County CASA: Giving More Than Money

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a national network of nearly 1,000 community-based programs that recruit, train, and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities.

A CASA office serving Curry County was established a few decades ago and existed as an extension of the Southwest Oregon Community Action Organization in Coos County. Existence was a struggle with limited volunteer and staff capacity to serve the children who needed an advocate and a small closet for an office at the Gold Beach Court House.

Then things changed. Reborn from an interdepartmental agreement in 2008 between the Curry County Commission on Children and Families and the Juvenile Department of Curry County, CASA of Curry County has been protecting the best interests of children in Curry County for more than eight years.

CASA volunteer advocates provide judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care.

In February 2008, after an exhaustive interview process, Mona Chandler was appointed as the coordinator of CASA of Curry County. "This is a career that I deeply love and enjoy," says Chandler

"This CASA program strives to aid the child and the family by being active listeners, objective in our decision-making and recognize their needs to help them grow and prosper in their everyday lives." says Chandler

At the beginning of her career as the coordinator of CASA, Mona was given the important tasks of developing policies and a training manual for CASA volunteers. However, with budget restrictions only allowing her to work 20 hours per week, these tasks would prove to be difficult to complete because of the direct needs of the children and volunteers for her time. Gordon Elwood executive director, Kathy Bryon, encouraged Mona to outline what would help her to both support the children and support the program infrastructure.

Subsequently, The Board of Trustees of the Gordon Elwood Foundation awarded CASA of Curry County a grant to help support additional hours for Mona to develop organizational capacity.

As a result, internal initiatives such as volunteer training manuals, and general volunteer training were developed and implemented by the summer of 2008.

Today, CASA has a larger office space for partnering agencies to meet with CASA advocates. Also, all technology for the CASA office has been updated allowing them to e-file all court documents.

In 2011, with financial support and coaching support from the Elwood Foundation, CASA of Curry County was able to raise the funding necessary to hire an administrative assistant to help maintain records and organize the volunteer activities. This was a pivotal development within the CASA program as it allowed for more strategic fundraising activities.

“With the addition of the administrative position, I was able to focus on fundraising and introduce the community to the CASA co-ed softball tournament.” says Chandler “The tournament was a success. Each year that we had the tournament, the funds that were raised grew and the level of community awareness about CASA grew with it”

As an ongoing resource and financial supporter, Kathy and the foundation supported Mona to go "outside her comfort zone" which in turn increased CASA's community awareness and fundraising success.

As a result, the CASA of Curry County program is viewed by the Oregon CASA Network as one of the most successful small rural CASA programs in the state. The program is also viewed by the county, court system and DHS as critical for the children in the Curry County foster care system.

In October 2012, CASA of Curry County was released from the County Juvenile Program in response to the closure of the State Commission of Children and Families. It partnered with Douglas County CASA to strengthen capacity through shared administrative and programmatic support services to children and volunteers. These changes pivoted Mona into a Director role allowing her more autonomy to improve and expand the CASA program for the Curry County children.

Many changes have been implemented since 2012, including hiring a program supervisor, implementing a peer coordinator, swearing in five new advocates, and enacting a volunteer recruitment plan.

“Without ongoing financial support from the Gordon Elwood Foundation, the growth we have experienced and the changes we have made would not have been possible.” says Mona Chandler

The Gordon Elwood Foundation mission to invest in southern Oregon’s youth, individuals, families, and communities directly aligns with the CASA values and purpose. This is a natural and mutually beneficial relationship that will continue to improve the lives of children in southern Oregon.

CURRY COUNTY REALITIES AND CASA

In Curry County, there are between 35 and 50 children in the foster care system at any given time.

In 2015, 53 children were being served by 19 CASA volunteers spending 4,449 hours advocating for children.



**Students mob Stephanie Johnson
at Kids Unlimited**

Kids Unlimited

Stephanie Johnson remembers meeting Tom Cole in 1999, when as the principal of a poverty-stricken elementary school she was searching for tools to help her disadvantaged students. And then she remembers with astonishment: “There was nothing; there really wasn’t anything.”

“There was not the awareness, not the services,” agrees Cole, who convinced Johnson to bring the second year of his after-school program to her school.

“We wanted to create places where kids could feel they were getting the help they needed to be successful in school,” Cole explains. The result was Kids Unlimited, created to offer success to “the most vulnerable children in our community.” The original after-school program became more: tutoring, a summer program, sports programs, and a charter school, all with Cole as the executive director.

“The need just got greater and greater,” says Johnson. “Anything with poverty and children, I’m always involved.”

Nearly 50 years into her career as an educator, she served as temporary founding principal of the charter school for a year; two years later, the students still mob her with hugs in the halls.

Johnson joined both the Kids Unlimited and Gordon Elwood Foundation boards at the beginning in 1999. “Both organizations were navigating unknown futures,” says Cole. “They were beginning something, and we were still in our infancy.”

It’s not just the age of the two organizations. Without realizing it, Cole and Johnson use many of the same concepts to describe both what Kids Unlimited does for children, and for what Gordon Elwood Foundation has done for Kids Unlimited: Creating a trust relationship with honesty, reliability, flexibility and innovation.

The root causes are similar. “If your parents don’t have the skills, it prohibits kids from getting opportunity,” says Cole. In turn, all involved remember when Cole didn’t know his program needed a boost toward the future. The Elwood Board volunteered funds to revise Kids Unlimited’s financial structure, so that the fledgling program could build the capacity needed for long-term funding from other sources.

The “relationship education” model is used by Kids Unlimited to promote student achievement. The “power of the relationship” has made the Elwood Foundation an important factor in the success of Kids Unlimited.

"The "unlimited" for us is we have to constantly create opportunities for students," says Cole of his program. A few moments later, he praises the creativity of the Elwood Foundation of going outside the normal grant model to offer what his program really needed, which wasn't always funding.

At 15 years, both agencies are clearly successful. The Kids Unlimited Academy is a charter school with 300 students in kindergarten through third grade, in session 10 hours a day, 11 months a year, and with a long waiting list from across the economic spectrum. Kids Unlimited students are out-achieving other schools.

“It isn’t numbers,” says Johnson. “It’s the growth for children of poverty. The only way out of poverty is education.” Cole calls the Elwood Foundation a partner in that success — “a game changer” in the community.

And looking forward, Cole and Johnson recognize that both Kids Unlimited and the Gordon Elwood Foundation need to consider the future. "Are you a norm in the community?" offers Cole as one measure of whether an agency can prosper after the founders leave.

Johnson adds two more: Is the agency contingent on the dreams of one person and is it making a difference?

2009

Kids Unlimited opens first suspension and expulsion program and begins SES tutoring services for turnaround schools in the Medford School District

2011

Tom Cole appointed Governor Kitzhaber’s OEIB development board

2012

Kids Unlimited expands elementary school and summer program youth development model to the community of White City

2013

Kids Unlimited opens VIBES public Charter school open to 150 students 1st through 3rd

2014

VIBES public charter school is officially renamed Kids Unlimited Academy and expands to kindergarten through 4th grade with 250 students

2015

Kids Unlimited Academy opens year three of charter school open to grades kindergarten through 5th grade, serving 300 students

The Elwood board "always had the autonomy to do the right thing. They positioned themselves to be responsive."

Tom Cole

**We encourage & empower
all children to learn & grow
through creative play.**

Kid Time's History

1998

Kid Time was founded by a Board of Directors as a non-profit entity.

2002

Secured a West Medford location.

2004

We announced our existence to the public using mobile exhibits at various locations around the Rogue Valley.

Kid Time! Children's Museum

Hands-on Help for hands-on kids

In brochures, the adults call Kid Time! “a hands-on discovery space that stimulates brain development in young children.” The kids who visit simply call it fun.

“It’s all about early learning,” says Kid Time! Director Sunny Spicer, standing amid the colorful open myriad of kid-friendly hands-on play spaces. “They need to play, productive playing, to be learning. Kids want to be in here.”

And Kid Time! is not just for the children. “We see our role as also educating the parents, to help them be engaged with their children,” explains Spicer.

Since Kid Time! was founded 10 years ago, Spicer says the Gordon Elwood Foundation has been a special source of help — in advice, in grants, in planning and in some hands-on help.

While Kid Time! has many larger financial donors, Spicer says, she’s never had a site visit from any other foundation. All of the Elwood board members have been here. “Nobody else does that,” says Spicer. “Nobody. And the Elwood board members care about the long-term outcome.”

“Gordon Elwood Foundation, within the very first years, understood that we would never be a large funder,” explains Annette Batzer, foundation board member. “So we always ask ‘What could we add?’ beyond funding.”

One of those additions was some help setting up the right kind of financial reports to help Kid Time! track its progress. That help has been provided by the Gordon Elwood Foundation’s office manager, Rhonda Gressett.

“I knew we needed Rhonda’s help,” admits Spicer. “We are an organization that does a lot with no money and very little staff.” Tracking the membership fees for 1,500 families and admissions for 5,000 annual visits, along with fees from the associated preschool, was daunting.

“It’s been a good fit for me,” says Gressett, who enjoys bringing her granddaughter to Kid Time!. “I could help them see what they needed.”

“There are many, many people who say that kind of understanding and help is more valuable than what the Elwood Foundation has to give in dollars,” explains Batzer. “And it allows us to make these connections with the community.”

Like all the other board members, Batzer cites the culture of the Elwood board — the flexibility, the respect, the learning community — for being able to discover those needs and offer help. “How do we pass on that culture?” she asks. “It’s a difference between seeing the world as black and white, and seeing a world of color. The principle is to ‘do good’ and that one guiding principle ... we’ve seen the benefit.”

“This is what we need to be doing,” she says, adding that the Elwood team is very quiet about what it does. “That’s okay. That’s an important piece of getting people to move forward. This is what creates change, and we’re okay with that.



Rhonda Gressett (left) and Sunny Spicer watch Annette Batzer play with her granddaughter.

2005

Kid Time opened its doors on a limited basis using a portion of our first location at 226 N. Ross Lane

2006

Kid Time expanded filling that space with exhibits and displays.

2010

Kid Time expanded into the current location in the historic JC Penney building at 106 N. Central.

2013

The additional space allowed us to open The Learning Loft Preschool.

SMART by the Numbers

Statewide in Oregon

2015

9,600 Children

268 Sites

4,800 Volunteers



2015

Curry County

305 Children

10 Sites

Klamath County

618 Children

20 Sites

Jackson & Josephine Counties

1264 Children

36 Sites

SMART

In 1991, Governor Neil Goldschmidt led a group of concerned business leaders in an effort to address the growing concern that Oregon's children were consistently reading below grade level.

In response, Start Making A Reader Today or SMART was created based on a unique volunteer model, which blended adult mentorship with early childhood reading support and community engagement. The result is a literacy program that has grown to more than 268 sites statewide and impacts the lives of more than 10,000 children a year.

Each year since inception, classroom teachers select students to participate in the program, and volunteers read for one hour each week, one-on-one with the same one or two assigned children throughout the school year. In 1992, SMART served 585 children at eight schools in two cities. Today, over 179,570 children have participated in the program, 120,525 volunteers have read over 4,234,270 hours and 2,656,253 books have gone home with children so they can share their reading improvements with their families.

As national research on the importance of early learning and its relationship to graduation from high school has come to light, the state of Oregon made another bold move. Officials asked SMART to assist in reaching children earlier.

At the same time influenced by the changing demographics among Oregon public school students, literacy support programs in the school system changed and expanded. SMART has been able to change and expand with them to fill the gaps and serve the needs of children that are outside the criteria of other programs or that need additional reading support.

Meeting this concern, SMART created the KSMART model, serving an entire kindergarten classroom, providing literacy support and books to take home and keep. During this time, the Pre-K SMART program also began to serve children in Head Start and other early childhood development programs, serving three to five year olds.

The flexibility of the SMART program is due largely to the support and collaboration SMART leadership has received from philanthropic donors and volunteers over many years.

The Gordon Elwood Foundation has supported the SMART programs in Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Curry Counties in different ways. The Jackson and Josephine County SMART program continues to receive in-kind office space and supplies since the foundation established its office location in 2001. In 2008, as the entire country was hit by the economic downturn, SMART was forced to change its school coordination structure from paid positions to volunteers. The global economic dynamics hit everyone, and Rogue Valley SMART was forced to reduce the number of school sites served from nearly 40 to only 20. However, with time and some facilitated new thinking supported by the foundation, the Rogue Valley SMART has been able to regrow the number of students served to over 1260 children at 36 school sites and early learning centers in 2015.

The Klamath County SMART program which started in 1993, serving students at four school sites has grown today to serve over 600 children at 20 sites in the Klamath Basin. The Curry Coos Counties SMART began serving children in 2002 in one school and now reaches over 300 children each year at ten school sites along the coast.

“The Gordon Elwood Foundation does so much for so many in southern Oregon. Beyond the grant funds that are given, I think most importantly is the support and collaboration that Kathy Bryon and her Board of Directors bring to our community,” says Julie Brimble, Rogue Valley Area Manager.

THE JOURNEY OF DEVELOPING BASIC LIFE SKILLS: READING AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



The foundation's program goal to support children by providing access to life skills they need to be successful, makes the SMART reading program serving children in Curry, Klamath, Jackson and Josephine Counties a *smart* investment.

OUR PROGRAM GOALS: COMMUNITY

Leverage resources to bring attention to community health & vitalization opportunities.

Create opportunities for new thinking and innovative approaches on community issues.

Partner with public and private funders for learning and achieving greater impact on community and regional issues.

Act as convenors to surface underlying causes of community issues and the opportunity for creative resolution.

Collaboration As A Catalyst For Community Transformation

"Communities are not ephemeral," says Burke Raymond, one of the founding board members of the Gordon Elwood Foundation. "They exist in time and place. Everything in it impacts everything else."

He's not necessarily describing physical communities, though as a former city and county manager, he knows those very well.

Burke makes the "community argument" at foundation meetings, leading the board and executive director Kathy Bryon to watch for the person or the catalyst that will encourage people to come together toward common goals.

Four key collaborations in the region have emerged from Gordon Elwood Foundation's investment in complex community issues including: health care, public education, work force, food insecurities, and philanthropy.

"It's about collective impact," explains Raymond. "There has to be a backbone, some organization that provides the administrative leadership and the push to make things happen." So Gordon Elwood Foundation encourages things to happen by providing staff time to support people coming together or funding - what Raymond calls "the backbone of these efforts."

Jefferson Funders Forum

A learning community of regional funding organizations that make grants outside of themselves for the purpose of:

- Building leadership, resources and capacity to support the nonprofit sector.
- Sharing information and perspectives on local philanthropy and the intersection with public funding.
- Cooperatively exploring and developing comprehensive and effective approaches to funding viable community programs or projects.
- Sharing experiences and leveraging impact on the communities we represent and support.
- Bringing together representation from all aspects of philanthropy for the purpose of communicating needs, and bringing about change and shared responsibility in and for our community.

Jefferson Funders Forum: Sharing and Learning



Bill Thorndike shares observations at a JeFF meeting.

"We are co-equal in our aspiration to do good," Burke Raymond tells the group in his reflection that opened a recent JeFF meeting hosted by The Ford Family Foundation.

"It's a networking, sharing, learning organization," says Bill Thorndike, trustee for the Northwest Area Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation. One of the main emphases is and continues to be education.

Kathy Bryon, executive director of the Gordon Elwood Foundation, serves as the convener, engaging others to set the agendas and create the meeting structures.

Participants in the Jefferson Funders Forum (JeFF) are not asked to make recommendations, take actions together, or create committees. Instead, they convene and communicate simply to hear about each other's work, learn together about regional issues, and sometimes plan joint actions on a shared interest.

In short, they take advantage of all three words in the name of the group. They share their thoughts as philanthropy organizations in the mythical "State of Jefferson" - Southern Oregon and Northern California.

Levels of Engagement

I. Communication & Information Sharing

II. Learning Together

III. Planning for Collective Action &

IV. Collective Action

At the fall 2015 JeFF meeting, Kathy Bryon opens with the question Ralph Waldo Emerson used when he greeted friends: What has become clearer to you since last we met? As the funders introduce themselves, Bryon suggests that they share what their boards and organizations are thinking about as they practice philanthropy in these times.

So the focus bounces around the circle representing 20 funding organizations, allowing the group to hear about topics such as re-inventing public library services and special youth training projects, mental health care, lack of capital, listening, positive thinking, opening up to possibilities, upcoming conferences, relationships and collaboration.

As host and the "learning topic" for this particular JeFF meeting, The Ford Family Foundation President Anne Kubisch leads several Ford staff members in describing changes in how their organization will be working on its core mission of creating "successful citizens and vital rural communities." Anne recognizes the value of having new Ford Family Foundation staff members hear from JeFF members who are living and working in Southern Oregon and Northern California; she also acknowledges Bryon's key role in "keeping us all organized." For her part, Bryon tells the JeFF participants about one clear result of the education-workforce collaboration that was the topic of an earlier day-long JeFF retreat. "I met a 28-year-old woman whose four children were at risk two years ago of being taken away from her and her husband. Now she is clean and sober for two years, a member of the Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub's parent advisory committee and she got a job yesterday with the YMCA."

"Encouraging people to think in new ways is sometimes more important than money, so it is appropriate for the Gordon Elwood Foundation to support new thinking. We help to convene the Southern Oregon Grantmakers Affinity Group (now Jefferson Funders Forum) for funding organizations and we supported the Building a Learning Community for Southern Oregon's leaders in 2004. Facilitating sessions among leaders to expand their thinking, we feel is more effective in the long run, than monetary contributions."

– Mike Heverly

2005 Founding Partners

Asante Health System
Ashland Community Hospital

Providence Health System

Jackson County
Health & Human Services

Pacificsource
Southern Oregon University

Community Health Center

La Clinica

Medford Fabrication
Gordon Elwood Foundation

Jefferson Regional Health Alliance: Partnering for Health

“The Jefferson Regional Health Alliance,” says former board chair Bill Thorndike Jr., “was born out of a “perfect storm.” Health care delivery systems were at odds. Public resources were dwindling while the demand for indigent care was increasing. Emergency rooms were filled with people using them for primary care or behavioral issues. This in turn was creating a sharp rise in costs to both the patient and hospital.

There was competition between the two largest Medford hospitals at the same time as uncompensated care debt increased at both institutions. Private insurance was declining while lower Medicare payments were increasing. The payment “mix” was more and more challenging and paperwork created more need for back office staff, increasing costs as payment's declined.

“And there were trends -- tension and change -- with public health and the role of the county in providing basic care from general funds, even as they lost federal timber revenues.”

Meanwhile, the Elwood Foundation executive director had been informally convening what was fondly called the “Apple Cellar Gang,” a small group of local and international system transformation consultants and healthcare leaders. An opportune “disruption” presented itself in January 2004 when a well know systems guru, Peter Senge, was in Medford to facilitate a multi-sector training on “Building a Learning Community.” A close colleague with members of the Apple Cellar Gang, Senge was asked to facilitate a meeting with local healthcare leadership Saturday morning before heading back to the east coast.

About fifty key leaders from healthcare and the largest Rogue Valley employers met with Senge. Together they looked at a conundrum of the United States healthcare system and the unintended consequence of many patients returning back to high cost intervention and care instead of returning to health. His overarching intent was to help healthcare leaders to “see the system” and recognize how interactions among all the independent players in “the system” influence “the system.”

2015 Partners

Asante Health System
Ashland Community Hospital
Providence Health System
Community Health Center
Jackson County Health & Human Services
Pacificsource
Southern Oregon University
La Clinica
Medford Fabrication
Gordon Elwood Foundation
MRIPA-AllCare
Josephine County Public Health
Jackson Care Connect
Primary Health
PrimeCare
Siskiyou Community Health
Jackson County Mental Health
Kairos
OnTrack
Options of Southern Oregon
Addictions Recovery Center
Rogue Valley Council of Governments

Jefferson Regional Health Alliance: Partnering for Health *(continued)*

“Initially, it was those from the acute care setting that agreed to come together with county public health and see what would emerge from 1) getting to know each other and 2) learning together about regional health and health care delivery and access issues,” says Kathy Bryon, executive director of the Elwood Foundation.

A year later, she says, a group of seven -- including three hospital CEOs -- created an independent think tank and “learning community.” Subsequently, a few community minded doctors who were active volunteers for community-based clinics joined in.

After the first year the Elwood Foundation supported the emerging platform with Bryon’s time serving as secretary of the board. When national and state health reform took hold, the emerging collaborative shifted gears to assist the Oregon Health Plan transformation process. It launched workgroups focused on numerous health care reform issues with the help of contracted facilitators.

The initial board that started as seven members soon grew to 17 board members and, in the last three years of health care reform, has expanded to include more than 25 organizations. To streamline decision-making, governance is set up with two types of board members: 17 Voting and over 10 Ex-Officio-Non-Voting, representing critical community partner perspectives.

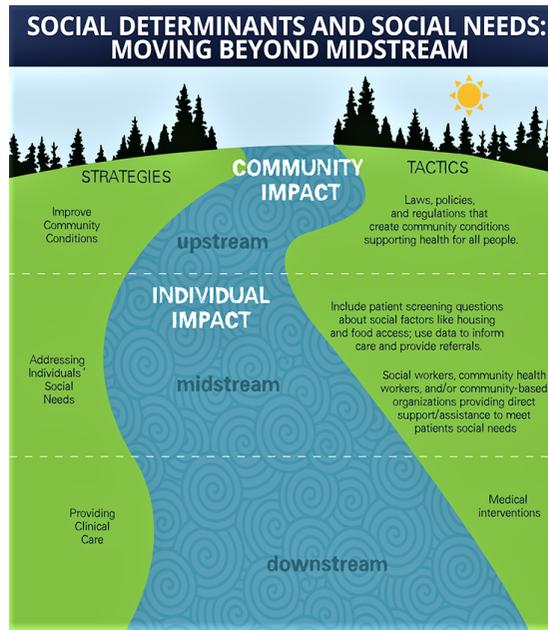
“The learning community model gives us a safe place to learn about affecting health,” Thorndike says of all the players. “It takes a lot of work to create trust and to work together on regional health care delivery systems.”

“Health is not determined by medical care alone,” explains Bryon. “More than 80 percent of one’s health status is affected by Social Determinants” .

2015 Focus Areas

And like the national health care system, the Jefferson Regional Health Alliance is still “evolving,” says Thorndike. Still, JRHA has been successful enough that the collaboration model has received support and recognition for its projects throughout the state. Now JRHA is helping link healthcare and education leadership through an organizing grant from the Northwest Health Foundation, where Thorndike is also a board member.

“There’s always been these dreams to make things better,” says Thorndike. “But great ideas need partners.”



Source: "Brian Castrucci & John Auerbach" *Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short Of Addressing Social Determinants Of Health, Health Affairs*

- End of Life Community Education - Choosing Options Honoring Options (COHO) <http://cohoroguevalley.org/>
- Emergency Room Utilization Pilot Project
- Regional Health Information Exchange project (<http://reliancehie.org/>)
- Mental Health & Primary Care integration project
- Opioid Prescribers Group <http://www.oregonpainguidance.org/regions/southern-oregon/>
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Study - regional education
- Trauma Informed education and training
- Collective Impact education and training
- National Healthcare - Oregon Healthcare Reform
- Regional Coordinated Care Organization integration - AllCare, Jackson Care Connect, Primary Health

Create opportunities for new thinking and innovative approaches on community issues.

During a 2010 foundation board retreat foundation trustee, Burke Raymond, shared an education and workforce initiative from Atlanta, Georgia. The initiative was STRIVE, a business and workforce coordinated program designed to increase graduation and workforce readiness. Paired with the organizing tenets of Collective Impact, the notion of STRIVE inspired the Elwood trustees to start wondering:

- What if our community could support a Collective Impact backbone to facilitate conversations among The Job Council, Rogue Workforce Partnership, the eleven school districts and the two higher education institutions in the Rogue Valley?
- What if we worked together to change our education and workforce readiness and employment realities?
- What if we made a five-year commitment of resources, staff time and funding to support a backbone?

Southern Oregon Success: A Preconception 24 Collective Impact Initiative

Tracks to Success

"It's a grindingly slow process," according to Jim Fong, executive director of The Job Council and Rogue Workforce Partnership. "There are no quick fixes."

Fong is referring to the task of *systems change* by bringing different leaders and sectors (non-profit, education, and business) together to address a complex issue. The complex issue in our case being the appallingly low high school graduation rate in Oregon.

Southern Oregon Success kicked off in 2012, but the seeds for this multi-sector initiative were planted during the 2009 Jackson County Youth Summit. The 2009 cross-sector event was successful in bringing together school superintendents and administrators, community-based youth service providers, philanthropic leaders and business leaders to talk about how to improve the pathway from education into the local workforce.

These realities, and a whole host of other obstacles to success in life for many families in Oregon, spurred Governor Kitzhaber to initiate sweeping reforms in Education¹, Workforce and Healthcare. By 2012, extensive public education reform was on its way.

Footnote:

1. In early 2012 Governor Kitzhaber declared his K-12 Education Goals for 2025: 100% of Oregonians will earn a high school diploma or its equivalent, 40% earn a post-secondary credential, and 40% obtain a bachelor's degree of higher education.

Although it was Governor Kitzhaber's call to education reform in 2011 that compelled the State's Oregon Education Investment Board to restructure, there was already considerable movement underway by regional leaders in Southern Oregon including The Job Council, Rogue Workforce Partnership, Southern Oregon Educational Services District, the Commission of Children & Families, Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College and the Gordon Elwood Foundation.

Beginning in 2011 and building on earlier cooperation between education and workforce interests, these regional cross sector leaders wanted to initiate an expansive vision for Southern Oregon, underscoring goals for student educational success and workforce readiness. By the year's end, an invitation to create a shared vision for the emerging future for Southern Oregon's youth was accepted by 90 Southern Oregon cross-sector leaders. The question posed was, "what if Southern Oregon chartered a unified, regional vision for the future of our youth in anticipation of new expectations from the newly created Oregon Education Investment Board, as well as the concurrent Oregon Workforce and Healthcare initiatives?"

***"We've got to start thinking of 0-24, as thriving humans –
not as 'early learning', 'K-12', 'social services' projects."
– Mary-Curtis Gramley, Family Nurturing Center 2012***

2012 Vision & Goals

Southern Oregon Success Vision:

We envision flourishing children, youth and families from prenatal to 24 years in Jackson & Josephine Counties.

Goals:

- All families receive the support they need to nurture their children.
- All children are ready for kindergarten.
- All youth succeed in school and in life.
- We live in a thriving economy

Collective Impact Framework

1. Shared Agenda
2. Shared Measurement
3. Mutually Reinforcing Activities
4. Continuous Communication
5. Backbone support

"We intentionally bridge early childhood, K-12, post-secondary and workforce readiness; integrating our collective mindsets to become family-centered, holistic, and strength-based across the entire age continuum while concurrently focusing on business needs."

-Margie McNabb, Job Council 2013

Southern Oregon Success: *(continued)*

"People get very territorial," admits Fong as he lists all the reasons why, "even though they recognize the same problem."

Understanding that State funded organizations go immediately into a competitive mode during State reforms, it was key to use a very inclusive organizing process. Fear over scarcity of resources is common among State funded programs particularly in rural counties located far from urban financial resources and influence.

Using the recent publication on Collective Impact published by Mark Kramer and John Kania of FSG Consulting Group in 2011, initiators created a Planning and Process group to lead the organizing forward.



It took a year of meeting twice or three times weekly as the Planning and Process team, and monthly as 75-90 multi-sector participants, to outline a shared regional vision for the initiative. Everyone brought their work experience, personal philosophies and passion to the table. By embracing the merits of "collective wisdom," this alliance of Southern Oregon stakeholders turned the simple language of the governor's goals into a bold regional and rural-conscious initiative.

www.soesd.k12.or.us/sosuccess/

2013 Highlights

Shared time at the white boards, concrete projects demanding teamwork, misunderstandings due to assumptions and different expectations-are really the foundation for building this kind of work, and it takes time.

- Jim Fong, Rogue Workforce Partnership 2014

As an organizing tool, the Collective Impact (CI) framework was successfully driving cross sector collaboration between leaders in education, business and workforce in primarily urban centers around the country. The Process and Planning Team felt it was worth trying the CI organizing process in our more rural Southern Oregon, despite facing significant limitations in backbone funding and qualified personnel.

“Using the Collective Impact framework enabled us to ease some of the inherent obstacles to working together in such chaotic State reform times,” reveals Kathy Bryon, of the Gordon Elwood Foundation.

Fong credits the Gordon Elwood Foundation’s inventive approach to supporting system and community change. Particularly, the foundation’s provision of staff time and funding to "connect the dots" among a host of potential partners.

"What starts happening is that participants frame a common vision. People start partnering on problems, solutions, resources. Somebody's got to convene the meetings, set the agendas and take minutes,” proclaims Jim Fong.

- Klamath Promise partners with Southern Oregon Success.
- All higher education partners across four counties become more involved in K-16 strategies for increased success based on data.
- Oregon Education Investment Board provides backbone financial support.
- Ongoing learning and cross fertilization of ideas and relationships at all meetings.
- All schools/students fill out Post-Secondary Education Tool.
- Two School/Community Convocations are held in Jackson County.
- Scott Perry, SOESD Superintendent names Southern Oregon Success.

2014 Highlights

- Increased parent/guardian attendance at post-secondary preparation events in more than one school district.
- Workforce Investment Act funds invested into in-school mentoring programs like College Dreams.
- The National Career Readiness Certificate implemented in high schools.
- Careers in Gear scales up additional Career Fairs.
- Grants Pass High School expands the invitation to Career Day in all Josephine County schools.
- Hidden Valley High School in Josephine County begins developing “WIT – Whatever It Takes”².
- Five schools participate in Student Entrepreneur Business Development, which led to a regional “pitch day” featuring prizes that enabled winners to start their own businesses.
- Three of eleven high schools and community partners create Student Services Teams to support students with behavioral health issues and community resources.
- The Governor’s office offers \$40,000 for backbone support.

Southern Oregon Success: *(continued)*

It became evident that if each of the organizations actively participated in the collective process and remained dedicated to the Southern Oregon Success Vision, the goals would guide generative steps towards significant and lasting change.

“It’s a marathon, not a sprint, to work inclusively,” Bryon suggests, “the Collective Impact organizing process requires leadership that can be “eco-system” focused vs the usual “ego-system” way of doing business. With such a diversity of key players, we first have to learn together, plan together and then take action together-- using our different perspectives to drive what we see and agree to forward.”

Ultimately, it’s the relationships and continuing to cultivate trust that are the essential ingredients to collaboration.

“Southern Oregon Success weaves together the talent, expertise and resources of the entire community to promote the well-being, academic and life success of our children, youth and families.”

- Sue Parrish, Process & Planning Committee Team member



Footnote:

2. WIT-A strategy to expand opportunities and horizons for youth who have grown up in poverty. Community volunteers are recruited to meet with a student every Friday for lunch, building relationships and asking about their future.

2015 Highlights

- Governor Kitzhaber visits in January to witness the signing of regional Declaration of Cooperation process.
- Meyer Memorial Trust awards funds for Community-School project.
- Cross Sector Regional Leaders Summit, 85 attendees.
- Kairos and Phoenix Talent District partner on Trauma Informed education practices.
- Grants Pass School District initiates Josephine County Network to coordinate resources and connection to community services for students/families.
- All Care and Jackson Care Connect fund research on adverse childhood experiences in Jackson and Josephine County populations.



Mission

The Rogue Valley Food System Council networks stakeholders to increase collaboration and to provide leadership in developing and advocating for solutions to our food system challenges in Josephine and Jackson Counties.

Vision

The Rogue Valley has a strong, vibrant regional food system that results in abundant local food production, equitable food access, a healthier community and economic vitality in our communities.

Rogue Valley Food System Story: What is a Food System?

“The thing about bringing people together to learn about a complex issue is that together you can begin to see new possibilities,” says Burke Raymond, trustee with Gordon Elwood Foundation. That’s what happened during a 2008 meeting when the “learning community of funders” - Jefferson Funders Forum, began talking about food insecurity. Immediately, everyone agreed this was not a singular issue.

Food insecurity directly connects the importance of a healthy diet, as well as sourcing enough local organic food and the regional agricultural economy. One thought led to another very quickly, and a small steering committee of funders was charged with researching the regional food insecurity issues.

Polly Williams, program officer for the Carpenter Foundation; Candace Bartow, program officer for Oregon Community Foundation and Burke Raymond, trustee with the Gordon Elwood Foundation took the lead for the funders. They invited Philip Yates of ACCESS Food Share, (the Community Action Organization that serves Jackson County) and Wendy Siporen, founder of THRIVE (a local non-profit spearheading numerous food and local economy related initiatives) to join the Ad Hoc Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee organized two “hunger forums” in the summer and fall of 2009 to learn about the adequacy of emergency food resources during what became known as a historic economic and global recession. About thirty-eight individuals representing more than eighteen stakeholders attended the forums. **The essential finding was, of course, MORE is needed.**

Our communities need...

- more collection of nutritious food for food pantries.
- more food pantry distribution sites.
- more capacity for locally grown food storage through warehouse and freezer space.
- more volunteers (especially younger volunteers).
- more education (especially education about nutrition and food preparation).
- more engagement of community members (including our Hispanic/Latino community members).
- more involvement with local growers and farmers’ markets.

The foremost strength witnessed during the hunger forum discussions was the proclivity toward collaboration among participants. Prior to the hunger forums, an earlier effort to collaborate organized by emergency food groups faltered. No one was able to staff the collaborative effort; all participants were stretched to their limits by their regular responsibilities. This lack of collaborative infrastructure, specifically coordination and staff, is where the potential of working together had stalled. **The forums also revealed our community's STRENGTHS:**

Our Communities have....

- the simple and successful involvement of neighborhoods providing bi-monthly food bags to Ashland's Emergency Food Bank;
- the generosity of Jackson County growers who donate their surplus following local growers' markets;
- the innovative local use of food stamps at growers' markets; the coordination of multiple service referrals at food pantries - just to name a few.

When the Jefferson Funders Forum held their January 2010 Food and Farming Retreat, they included people who were heavily involved in food insecurity and farming programs. Keavy Cook, program officer with The Ford Family Foundation, kicked off the retreat with a comment from another colleague Kim Thomas at Meyer Memorial Trust: "We can't food box our way out of hunger."

Community Strategies

Leadership & Collaboration

Work together across sectors to move projects forward.

Healthy Eating

Provide nutrition education for consumers to help them make a healthier choice

Local Food

Build infrastructure and increase local food production

Social Equity

Provide access to food and food security for all

Economic Vitality

Promote a thriving local economy

Rogue Valley Community Food System



Rogue Valley Food System Story:

What is a Food System? *(continued)*

Sharon Thornberry from Oregon Food Bank presented a process for educating communities on Food Systems. THRIVE director Wendy Siporen discussed the Farmer Incubation Project that was being introduced by her organization. And, the Food Insecurity Steering Committee shared the outcome of the two local hunger forums.

Meyer Memorial Trust program officer, Sally Yee, attended the January gathering and took what she learned back to her Portland office. Subsequently, Meyer Memorial Trust launched into a year-long research project on Oregon's Food Systems and by 2011 offered funding for regional food system organizing and planning work.

New Resources to Grow the System:

A grant awarded to ACCESS in late 2011 by Meyer Memorial Trust allowed for the hiring of a collaboration coordinator in January 2012. Jefferson Funders Forum partners provided an additional \$25,000 to support three key community stakeholders to lead the process. Oregon Food Bank supported Sharon Thornberry's time to facilitate the Rogue Valley FEAST planning process with the newly hired coordinator, Hannah Ancel.

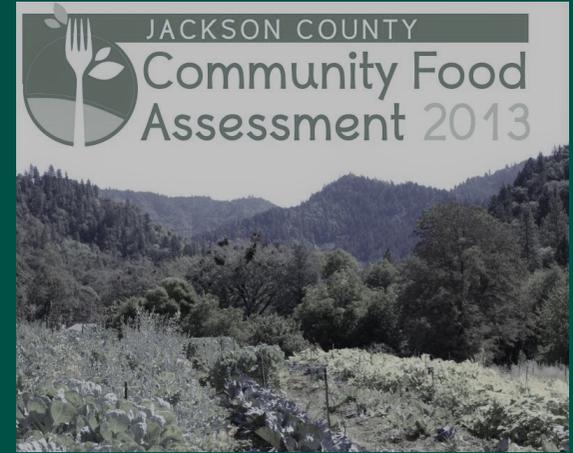
With Thornberry's planning process and a coordinator, the lead stakeholder committee, consisting of ACCESS, THRIVE, UCAN & Gordon Elwood Foundation, then quickly kicked off the Rogue Valley Food System Planning Process. The FEAST planning process gathered information in numerous ways to make sure that diverse voices, perspectives and experiences from throughout the Rogue Valley were represented.

To provide expanded leadership perspectives to the FEAST planning process a Food System Planning Council was created. Their main role was to review all the material gathered from the community FEASTS and individual interviews. They completed the Rogue Valley Food System Action Plan in December 2013. With the 2013 Action Plan outlined, the Food System Planning Council morphed into the Rogue Valley Food System Network. Some of the same members continued as leaders to steward the Action Plan into the future. Under their stewardship, pilot projects were initiated with new local funding. By 2015, these pilot projects had grown and evolved leading to the Network's landmark reception of funds for continued staff support from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA.)

“We can't food box our way out of hunger.”

Kim Thomas, Meyer Memorial Trust

rvfoodsystem.org



Follow the link below to access the two reports from 2012 and 2013 that assess the state of Rogue Valley food system.

<https://rvfoodsystem.org/about/whatisafoodsystem>

Valuing Open-Mindedness

When John Duke talks about the Gordon Elwood Foundation, he consistently highlights two things. First, he explains “the whole Elwood evolution” — its board and its process, and its quest to follow Gordon Elwood’s simple instruction to “do good.” And then he points to how proud Gordon would be of his money’s ability to make a difference to so many people.

Duke joined the board at the beginning, invited by his close friend Bob Hutchins. He was off the board for a short while, and returned, even though he keeps trying to “simplify” his life. It is both the board’s successful ability to “do good” and the camaraderie of the group that keeps him involved.

“We’re all different — politics, religion, education, professions, backgrounds,” Duke explains. Duke himself is a retired hospital administrator from California, and now a successful regional businessman.

Duke believes the board members share “an open mindedness to what is best for the intent of the mission statement.” That attitude allows them to discuss, consider, create and unite toward a goal.

While it may sound trite, Duke insists that in board discussions, “there are no dumb questions.” The result is a rare kind of philanthropy, according to Duke. “I would like to think we’re more hands-on (with agencies and their needs), and that instead of funding a project, we’re looking inside at what they’re doing.” Duke also praises the work of Kathy Bryon, the foundation’s executive director. Early on, he recalls, the initial board “saw the need for a very capable director.” “I don’t know what we’d do without her,” citing her ability to gather information, her drive to do the best work possible, and her communication skills. “Kathy’s good at leading us into these things where we can leverage the little money we have into something more.” What would Duke see as a key skill for the next generation of board members? “Be a good listener; make an assessment of the real need before you share your thoughts.”



“I’ve seen so many foundations that did not end up doing what was intended,” Duke explains. “Overall, I think he (Gordon) would be overjoyed.”
- John Duke, Board Member



Board Member - John Duke

Listening to Learn

From her own perspective, Julia Beattie is a relative newcomer on the board of the Gordon Elwood Foundation. She joined the board in 2012 after two years on the foundation's Grants Committee.

A commercial lender with People's Bank, Beattie learned over her time on the Grants Committee that it was a challenge to speak up in the discussions among people who had so much experience in philanthropy and helping those in need.

Then she remembers a really interesting question during her interview for the board position: "What do you find most challenging?"

Beattie says her first challenge was finding the standards among a group that openly talks about a "no rules" culture. "It's interesting as a newbie," she says, "it's a very steep learning curve." Three years later, she still finds herself learning and appreciates some of the practices that guide the foundation.

"They're very inviting of your openness and your thoughts," Beattie says "Every member of the team is respected for what they bring to the table and their many years of experience."

"You have to let go of paradigms that you might have so that you can learn, rather than react. To do that, Beattie says, she had to find "an open heart, open mind and empathy for those who face so many barriers in life."

By listening respectfully and openly learning about the needs in the community, Beattie believes the foundation board members apply a deep understanding of the mission and what they want to accomplish.

Beyond the mission, the Elwood team is looking for what she calls "upstreaming" work that can make a deep and long-term difference. "Who can make a difference? How can we change the drivers that lead to a negative outcome rather than addressing the results of that negative outcome. What is the greatest return on our investment?"

"I'm in awe of the thoughtful consideration that the grants committee and the board members give every discussion," she says, "going above and beyond — to think out of the box and look at the not so obvious."



Board Member - Julia Beattie

"There's a tremendous amount of responsibility to carry the mission statement forward successfully, the new board members have to listen and observe intently to learn as much as we can from the long-term board members - especially those who knew Gordon personally - in order to preserve the Foundation's culture and philosophy."

- Julia Beattie, Board Member



Board Members, Stephanie Johnson
& Julia Beattie

Reflections at 15 years

The 2015 Annual Meeting of the Gordon Elwood Foundation Board starts with a tour of a community project before noon, and closes with a celebratory sunset dinner in a home-style setting, with friends and family arriving to join in the festivities.

In the hours between, board members have shared personal news in their traditional opening “check-in” time, reviewed foundation investments, taken care of some office issues, approved a lengthy report documenting the past year’s “giving-more-than-money” activities, shared updates about particular grantees and projects, heard news about “a whole bunch of stuff” that’s making a difference in the community, and discussed progress on yet one more project with its executive director.

And, as part of the "reflections" portion of the agenda, board member's reviewed the past 15 years of using Gordon Elwood’s estate to “do good” in Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Curry counties. In tangible numbers, there have been 400 monetary grants totaling \$3.1 million. But the “do good” in foundation activity is about more than giving monetary grants.

“The numbers don’t begin to do it justice,” says Bob Hutchins, Gordon Elwood’s financial advisor who worked with him in setting up the foundation.

There are countless other ways in which the foundation has had a role in significant projects – as a thought partner and facilitator, through creating networks and supporting emerging collaborations, and through free rent and special services.

**Board Member Annette Batzer and
Financial Advisor Robert Hutchins**



Board members visit at the Holly Theatre project.



“That’s so much more important,” says Hutchins. “I don’t think the dollars matter at all. In the scope of things, what’s \$3 million?”

The board members balk at the idea of “taking credit” for all the projects and progress that they can track, because they know real change takes time and involves many people.

Still, they know that their work on the Gordon Elwood Foundation makes a difference.

In short, the board members know that they have been part of something special, something effective and something that started from the most simple of instructions: "Do good."

**“Gordon Elwood would be proud of what we have been able to do
to leverage impact on the lives of kids and families.”**

- Jan Murphy, Board Member



Board Member, Jan Murphy & Grant
Committee Member, Lilia Caballero

Board of Trustees

Annette Batzer ~ 2008-Present
Julia Beattie ~ 2012-Present
Steve Boyarsky ~ 2012-Present
John Duke ~ 1999-Present
John Harmon ~ 1999-Present
Mike Heverly ~ 1999-Present
Stephanie Johnson ~ 1999-Present
Daniel Kosmatka ~ 1999-Present
Janet Murphy ~ 1999-Present
Burke Raymond ~ 1999-Present

Grants Committee Members

Annette Batzer ~ Julia Beattie
Steve Boyarsky ~ Lilia Caballero
Derek DeBoer ~ Don Hildebrand
Charlie Kocher ~ Gerry Livingston
Jim Maddux ~ Lance Reyes
Chela Sanchez ~ Rachelle Schaaf
Richard Schaefer ~ Mike Wisnovsky

Staff

Kathy Bryon, Executive Director
Rhonda Gressett, Office Manager

*We want to acknowledge our appreciation for the many minds,
hands and hearts involved in the creation and production
of the programs and stories shared in this report
that will serve to keep alive
Gordon Elwood's evolving investment in the residents of
Klamath, Curry, Josephine and Jackson Counties.*

Design: 2005 design by Gary Sanpei & 2015 design Laurel Briggs, Creative Marketing & Design LLC
Interviews/Writing: Charlie Kocher
Editing/Production: Kathy Bryon, Jennifer Staton, and Jeremy Kotler
Web Design/Publisher: Laurel Briggs & Bailey McWhorter



For more details grant awards see Grant Giving History: gordonselwoodfoundation.org/award_history
For more details on annual non-grant foundation investments: gordonselwoodfoundation.org/nongrant

**"Perhaps there's another gift
that Gordon has given us –
the gift of understanding.
How many times have we
looked away as a
down-and-out
sort drew near?
These are folks who
often have many needs,
perhaps chief among
them the need for the
occasional friendly word
from their fellow citizens."**

The Mail Tribune
January 2000