

SOUTH BROWN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



THE CONNECTION

Quarterly Newsletter



Emaleigh and Josie Baker participating in SBCCF's 2024 Match Days

GROWING UP GIVING: SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH PHILANTHROPY

by Ivy Stone

Community foundations play a vital role in fostering generosity and strengthening local communities. One way we achieve this goal is by investing in the next generation. The South Brown County Community Foundation believes that when young people learn to give—whether through time, talent, or treasure—they develop empathy, responsibility, and a deeper connection to their community. Encouraging youth to give fosters a lifelong habit of service, shaping future leaders committed to making a difference. In this edition of *The Connection*, we explore how connecting our youth to philanthropy benefits both the young givers and the community. Together, we can inspire the changemakers of tomorrow.

YOUNG CITIZENS



“What do you love about your community?”

“What do you hope for the future of South Brown County?”

“I love the nature, animals and churches. What I hope for our community is to have a trampoline park for kids!”

-Laylah Jelks, 8 yrs

“I love the birds, the animals, the trees and the river flowing. I hope for the future that South Brown County gets cleaner and no more trash. That’s what I hope for.”

-Langston Stirton, 11 yrs

“What I love about my community is that everyone helps everyone in some kind of way.” -Berkleigh Wischropp, 12 yrs

“I love that Everest has a library and a restaurant with good food! The people are so nice and helpful and considerate. Everest has a great park and a nice school.” -Liesl Gigstad, 12 yrs

“We have a very close-knit community. The people here put the well-being of others first. My hope for our community is to see growth in business.”

-Tori Jelks, 17 yrs



“Living in South Brown County means being a part of a close-knit community where people look out for each other, and life is simple, convenient and peaceful.”

-Connor Wenger, 17 yrs

“I like my community because there are a lot of nice people and I like all the open space. It is very restful.”

-Cal Gigstad, 9 yrs

“What I love about my community is that there is not a lot of vandalism and crime as a bigger city or community might have.”

-Stryder Christian, 11 yrs

“This is my home. It feels like home. It feels safe.”

-Avaylia Jelks, 11yrs



“I enjoy how our community supports each other, whether it's coming out to support sporting events, helping raise money, or supporting small businesses.”

-Ellah Stirton, 16 yrs

“One of my favorite things about our community is the annual fishing derby at Mission Lake. I’m thankful for all those who work to put it together.” -Ben Selland, 17 yrs

Instilling A Spirit Of Giving In Our Youth

by Dr. Rebecca Kramer, SBCCF Board Member, Superintendent of USD #430



In a world that's constantly evolving, student success hinges on more than just academic learning. Public schools play a crucial role in shaping responsible, engaged citizens by fostering civic responsibility and charitable experiences. When students actively participate in community service, fundraising initiatives, and volunteerism, they develop essential life skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

Today's youth are inundated with social media platforms that inhibit face-to-face time spent connecting with friends, family, and community members as compared to past generations. Online social interactions are shown not to be as fulfilling as in-person connections. With that in mind, partnering families and nonprofit organizations with local schools can promote experiential learning that benefits students and the community alike.

Our mission at USD 430 is "to provide a safe, challenging environment to prepare all students as independent learners and positive, productive citizens." To meet that mission, we work diligently to provide various opportunities for our staff and students at all levels to engage in community service. Teaching students about philanthropy goes beyond donating money; it's about inspiring them to use their time, talents, and resources to help others. School systems incorporate philanthropy programs, provide opportunities for civic engagement, or implement service-learning projects that help prepare students for a more rewarding future. I believe students who are connected to their community are more likely to help sustain it in adulthood. Providing opportunities for students to contribute to their communities instills a deep sense of responsibility and belonging.



There are several benefits associated with philanthropic education. Students learn to understand the challenges others face, develop empathy skills, and create a greater appreciation for varied perspectives. Engaging in community service helps to enhance employability skills like leadership, collaboration, communication, adaptability, time management and problem-solving skills. Students who engage in service learning also build strong civic engagement habits and are likelier to vote, participate in community outreach, and find valuable causes to support throughout their lives. Strengthening academic and career readiness are other valuable benefits to philanthropic activities. Service learning opportunities align directly with core content standards while connecting to real-world scenarios.

Service-learning programs, student-led initiatives, and partnerships with local organizations give students meaningful opportunities to contribute to society. Whether it's a food drive, local handiwork, community clean-up, manufacturing signage, fundraising or an advocacy campaign, South Brown County Schools seek to provide experiences that empower students to see themselves as change-makers and help them believe they can positively contribute to the world around them. When students see the direct impact of their generous actions, they are more likely to be motivated to continue making a difference beyond their schooling years. Acts of kindness and generosity have a contagious effect. Witnessing such acts tends to send ripples of positivity and encourages others to perform acts as well. I can think of nothing better than a community that continually takes care of each other. I am grateful for the opportunities afforded to our students and staff within South Brown County and look forward to continued experiences that promote our district's mission while supporting our worthy community.



“When students actively participate in community service, fundraising initiatives, and volunteerism, they develop essential life skills that extend far beyond the classroom.”

-Dr. Rebecca Kramer



SOUTH BROWN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

2025 Educational Events

SAVE THE DATES!



Growing Up Giving

An Introduction to philanthropy (specified youth event)

Monday, April 7: 4th Grade, Horton Elementary School, 1:15pm

Tuesday, April 8: 11th grade, Horton High School, 11:05am

Wednesday, April 9: 5th grade, Everest Middle School, 2:50pm

Meet Our Nonprofits!

Meet Our Nonprofits!

Meet local nonprofits, hear their missions and enjoy a complimentary breakfast!

Saturday, June 21 7:30am - 10:30am

Horton Blue Building



Gift of Grain Breakfast & Presentation

Enjoy a complimentary breakfast and learn how gifting grain benefits you and your community!

Saturday, August 23 8:30am

Willis Co-Op



End-of-Year Giving & Tax Strategies Seminar

Learn smart giving strategies and tax benefits from local financial experts.

Refreshments provided.

November 2025

Date, time and location, TBD

For more information, contact Ivy Stone at 217-778-4895 or ivys@southbrowncountycf.org.

FEATURE FUND OF THE FOUNDATION

MISSION TRAILS

by Ivy Stone

Mission Trails is dedicated to developing trails that inspire a safe outdoor experience, creating community access to nature with a learning environment and respect for the land and its scenery. The organization's board consists of Dr. Larissa Rice Forsberg, Trina Rice, Michele Crouse, and Cheryl Soderlund.

The roots of Mission Trails can be traced back to a simple conversation in a coffee shop in Horton, KS. Maxine Rice, the shop's owner, spoke with a customer, Mike Goodwin of the Kansas Trails Council, who shared his expertise in trail development. Inspired by this, Maxine's daughter, Dr. Larissa Rice Forsberg, connected with Mike, and he helped her with a project for Jackson Park in Atchison, KS. Years later, this experience would inspire Dr. Forsberg to bring a similar idea to South Brown County, leading to the creation of Mission Trails in 2022. Since that time, the group has developed plans to create walking trails around Mission Lake in Horton. In addition, they have been actively raising funds to carry out their vision.



The process began with selecting a location and securing approval from the City of Horton. On Saturday, March 1, 2025, volunteers came together for a workday at the lake to help establish a new trail. Leading the instruction was Mike Goodwin with the Kansas Trails Council. Mike brought the Trail In A Box trailer with him, which provided essential tools for the task at hand. Equipment available for trail work included trimmers, mowers, tamping steel, clippers, and leaf blowers—all provided at no cost. Using the Trail-in-a-Box system, Mike provided hands-on guidance for planning and constructing trails. With 15 people participating, including kids, the team worked efficiently for four hours. Their efforts laid the literal groundwork for a future trail. The group cleared a path for a two to four foot wide trail. This process included trimming upper branches, and preparing the ground using specialized equipment. *(continued)*

Once the path is fully established, a horticulturalist will be invited to identify and highlight native plants along the route. Landscaping plans are in the works to enhance the natural beauty of the trails.

**The next workday is planned for
Saturday, March 29, 2025 from 10am - 12pm.
Volunteers of all skill levels are encouraged to join.**

From 2022 to the present, Mission Trails has been a fund of SBCCF and has participated in the foundation's Match Days fundraiser. Over the course of three years, Mission Trails raised \$11,083.97. They intend to purchase benches, signage, tools and accessories to create and maintain beautiful walking trails for the community.



Mission Trails is actively applying for grants to fund future projects and ensure continued progress. Stay tuned to the South Brown County Community Foundation Facebook page for updates and join in creating trails for everyone to enjoy!

INTRODUCING TIERED MATCH SPONSORSHIP

SBCCF is now offering match sponsors different levels of support to contribute. This approach encourages broader participation, strengthens our foundation's initiatives, and fosters sustainable growth for future community projects and programs.



FRIENDS

\$500 - \$999

Friends are compassionate supporters who provide critical funding to support the foundation's mission. Their contributions help foster local programs, initiatives, and services that make a meaningful difference in the community.



ADVOCATES

\$1,000 - \$4,999

Advocates are passionate donors who champion the foundation's work by providing significant financial support. Their generosity enables the foundation to expand its reach and impact through strategic partnerships and innovative projects.



VISIONARIES

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Visionaries are forward-thinking benefactors whose investments help drive transformative change. Their contributions allow the foundation to take on ambitious initiatives that create lasting improvements in the community.



LEGACY PARTNERS

\$10,000+

Legacy Partners are the cornerstone of the foundation's philanthropic efforts. Their extraordinary generosity ensures the sustainability of the foundation's mission, enabling large-scale programs and long-term solutions that benefit current and future generations.

The South Brown County Community Foundation empowers growth and positive change in our community. Every Match Sponsor makes an impact, whether you're a Friend, Advocate, Visionary or Legacy Partner.

Contact Us: Ivy Stone, Executive Director
Make a difference today!

217-778-4895

ivys@southbrowncountycf.org



MUSINGS FROM A MATCH SPONSOR

with GN Bank (Horton)



GN BANK (HORTON) TEAM INTERVIEW

Reba Matthias (Loan Officer)
Derek Richardson (Credit Analyst),
Greg Rodvelt
(Community Bank President, Brown County),
Ronni Strube (Vice President, Brown County),
Colton Oswald (Vice President of Lending),

(All interviewees were raised in South Brown County and are Horton High School alumni.)

GN Bank has been a part of the community for many years. Can you share about the history of the bank and how it has evolved?

Greg: The bank was established as the Bank of Horton in 1887 with the Norris family. At one time the bank was the second servicer of student loans in the nation. Later, it changed hands and became Kansas State Bank. In 2002, the Shifferdecker family acquired the bank, officially bringing it into the GN Bank family.

Visiting the bank is always friendly and inviting. What can you tell me about the work environment here?

Greg: The culture of the bank is God, family, work, in that order. This is part of the success and the culture at the bank. We have lots of individuals who are from Horton and have come back to work at the bank. We're proud of those priorities. Ronni and I lead with those priorities. Everyone practices that and it makes for a great environment.

What are the feature services of the bank?

Colton: We do all types of ag and commercial loans, consumer loans, and home mortgages.

Ronni: We offer online banking, mobile deposit, remote deposit capture, various types of checking accounts and cash management products.

Reba: We're a personal bank, and we work together to not only find good solutions for our customers, but the *best* solutions for them.

You have been a generous match sponsor for our foundation's Match Days over the years. What inspires your company to invest in local philanthropy?

Colton: You have to give back to where you're from. If you don't support your local community, it won't always be there. *(continued)*



Greg: As individuals, we have to give back to the community to keep it thriving and growing. It's up to each generation to step up and take the place of the ones before to continue to give back and keep that generational wealth in the community. I think what's good about the foundation is that it's able to do that.

Derek: Match Days provides a sense of unity and belonging by bringing people together for a common goal. It also helps strengthen our community ties and provides a positive atmosphere.

GN Staff: (left to right)
Amanda Hutchinson, Ronni Strube,
Morgan Hammersmith, Holly Isaacs,
Colton Oswald, Greg Rodvelt,
Phyllis Slipke, Derek Richardson,
Gabrielle Riddle, Rebecca Lentz,
Reba Matthias

What impact have you seen Match Days make on our community?

Greg: There are a lot of small nonprofits that need funding. Having the South Brown County Community Foundation available to those groups helps to pull people and donors in. Our bank enjoys being a sponsor that can positively impact all of those nonprofits of the foundation and in turn, the community as a whole.

Reba: Match Days also helps to keep the community engaged, and it keeps *us* engaged in the community.

What would you say to any other businesses who are considering becoming a Match Sponsor in 2025?

Colton: Find a way to budget for it and plan to do it every year. It's a good cause.

Reba: We provide opportunities for each employee at GN Bank to give to nonprofits during Match Days and allow them to see what is available through the community foundation.

Greg: We appreciate the leadership of the SBCCF Board. You have a lot of individuals on that board who are very giving themselves. It takes that kind of leadership and commitment. These community benefits don't just happen without work. You have to organize and plan and get information out into the community. It takes time and effort, so from our side, we appreciate what you all have done to enable us to give back.

1. HOW CAN I OPEN A FUND WITH SBCCF?

Contact SBCCF's director, Ivy Stone to set up a meeting (ivys@southbrowncountycf.org. or 217-778-4895). Ivy will explain the Fund Agreement, Investment Policy and fee.

2. HOW CAN MY NONPROFIT RECEIVE FUNDS FROM MATCH DAYS?

The nonprofit needs to first open a fund with SBCCF. From there, the nonprofit will fill out a Match Days Participation Agreement Form. After that, the nonprofit should invite donors to give to their fund during Match Days, held during the Brown County Fair.

3. WHAT IS A MATCH SPONSOR? WHAT IS A MATCH DONOR?

Match Sponsors are those businesses or individuals who give \$500 or more to SBCCF for the purpose of building up the pool of Match Dollars. These Match Dollars are used as a 50% match on donations that are given during Match Days. Match Donors are those who give to specific funds during Match Days.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS MATCH SPONSORS!



GIL & MICHELE CROUSE



KIRK PEDERSON



JASON & RONDA SMITH



MITCH & SARAH GERVING

MARK & JACKIE PETERSEN



BROWN-ATCHISON
ELECTRIC CO-OP



WINDOW BOX COTTAGE
Home Décor, Linens, Furniture & Antiques

