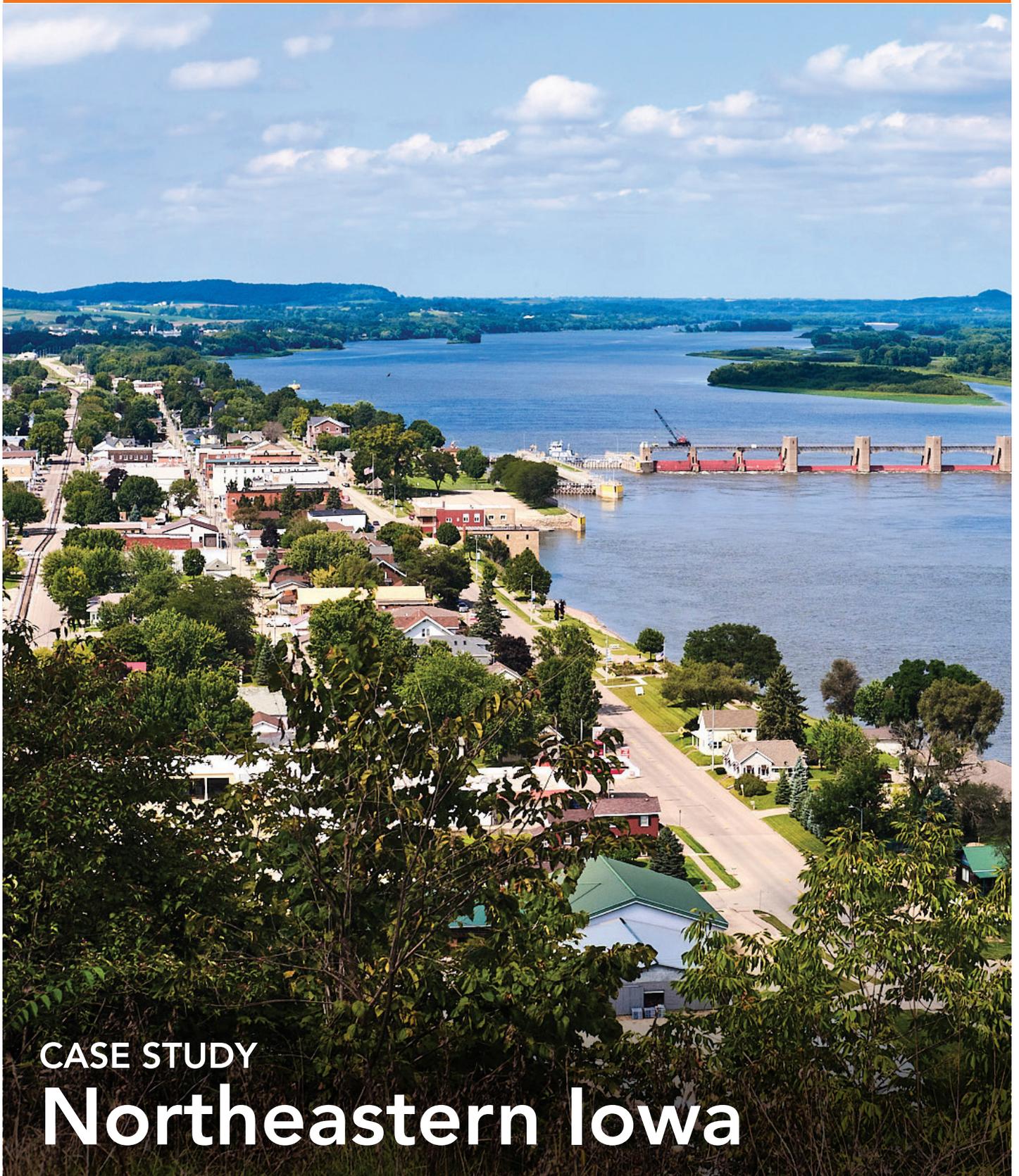




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Rural Philanthropic Analysis



CASE STUDY

Northeastern Iowa



CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY

The Rural Philanthropic Analysis, a project of Campbell University and supported in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, published four field studies representing a powerful collection of stories and lessons to inform the national discussion about rural philanthropy.

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Northeast Iowa

The epitome of American Heartland. It sits on the shoulders of the Mississippi River bluffs overlooking southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois. Its rolling hills are home to dairy farms, corn and soybean fields and other staple crops. Small manufacturing plants anchor picturesque small towns, producing not only components for the area's agricultural economy but also for other industries, such as construction or aerospace. The Office of Rural Philanthropic Analysis takes an in-depth look at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, a group dedicated to bringing the region's rural populations and local government and businesses together.



Eastern Washington

Empire Health Foundation serves seven counties in Eastern Washington with a combined population of more than 650,000 people. Roughly three-quarters of the population live in Spokane County, but drive just 10 minutes in any direction from that urban center, and you'll find yourself deep in rural America. The RPA's field study focused on the EHF board, recognizes the importance of being innovative, risk-taking and opportunistic. Today, the EHF supports an approach to philanthropy that bears a closer resemblance to a venture capital enterprise than a traditional grantmaking foundation.

ABOUT THE COVER

The town of Bellevue, Iowa, which lies along Mississippi River at the border of Iowa and Illinois. The town (population 2,193) and its unique history, architecture and beauty draws visitors year round.



New Mexico

New Mexico is a place of great scenic variety, from dry deserts to snow-capped mountain peaks. Here, a community's "rurality" is defined as much by the mindset of those living there as by any geographic boundary or population size. This means that rural funders must always, first and foremost, be aware of the place and the people they wish to serve, building on existing connections and forging new ones that are rooted in local history and culture. It is in this intersection of cultures and histories that Con Alma Health Foundation — the focus of the RPA's field study — operates.



New England

The states of New Hampshire and Maine share more than just a border. Both states have large tracts of rural landscapes, and in Maine, more people live in rural areas than urban ones. The urban centers are anchored in the southern ends of the states, and in turn serve as the northernmost outposts of the massive New England urban corridor. Operating in this setting are several statewide funders, including two health conversion foundations that were created from the sale of non-profit insurers to private companies. The RPA's field study focuses on both foundations, which are dedicated to addressing the needs and promise of rural places.

Working to enhance the field of rural philanthropy.

Rural Philanthropic Analysis

We are pleased to present you with one of a series of four field studies from the Rural Philanthropic Analysis Project (RPAP) here at Campbell University. These studies represent a powerful collection of stories and lessons to inform the practice of rural philanthropy. Importantly, they document how philanthropy and community can work closely together in respectful and forward-looking ways towards supporting rural vitality.

The field studies were developed from work conducted in summer and fall of 2018 by the team of Betsey Russell (Word Play LLC), Kim Moore (retired President of United Methodist Health Ministry Fund) and Shawn Poynter, photographer. The four reports represent distinctive regional and cultural differences engaged with differing intentional rural philanthropic responses.

The regions selected — eastern New Hampshire/southern Maine; eastern Washington; northeast Iowa and rural New Mexico—were included in the studies in recognition of the important local funder commitments to those places. While there are many more examples around the country, we feel that these particular groups of people and

places can help establish the role of funders in supporting and transforming a change to the sometimes deficit-burdened rural narrative.

Campbell University in rural Harnett County, North Carolina was an ideal setting from which the RPAP was administered. From humble beginnings in the late 1880s to the present, Campbell has strived to offer a personal college experience and academic program offerings tailored to the goals of each student as well as the local needs of all North Carolina communities, rural and urban. The RPAP was a natural fit within the Campbell campus community where so many faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends call “rural” home.

This work was supported in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which is working to help broaden the discussion about what shapes health, and set a new standard of health, equity and well-being for all communities. We're grateful for their support of this project. Please direct any questions or comments to us at orpa@campbell.edu.

Best wishes,



Allen Smart
Director, Rural Philanthropic Analysis Project



Britt Davis
Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Allen Smart



Allen Smart is project director of the Rural Philanthropic Analysis at Campbell University. He has spent over 25 years as a grantmaker with the City of Santa Monica, California, the Rapides Foundation in Louisiana and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust in North Carolina.

He is a frequent contributor to writings on philanthropic strategy and consults with foundations around the country on rural issues. Smart is active in national funder groups, as well as being one of the founders of the annual White House public/private rural partnership meeting.

Britt Davis



Britt Davis is the vice president for institutional advancement and senior advisor to the president at Campbell University. In this role, he

leads the university's development, alumni relations, communications and marketing and admissions departments.

He also represents the Campbell president's office in different capacities, including serving as a liaison to various university constituencies and representing the president on university committees and at special events.



A storefront and bench in the town of Cascade, Iowa, population 2,159.

'More Than Enough'

Leveraging local gifts to make a big impact in rural Northeast Iowa

M.J. Smith is a force to be reckoned with.

On any given day, she'll drive more than 100 miles to meet with people in the many small towns that dot the rural Northeast Iowa landscape. She'll discuss their hopes and dreams and their plans to change their communities for the better.

From rebuilding small downtowns to supporting food pantries; developing recreation and fitness programs to creating new approaches to energy conservation and use — M.J. works with all.

As the manager of affiliate funds for the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD), M.J. doesn't have to be a subject matter expert on any project. Instead, she's an expert at listening and connecting, building the relationships that in turn build the communities in her care. She's also created two tool kits for endowment building and for fundraising — one of which was adopted and published by the Council on Foundations.

There's probably no one who knows her three-county region as deeply or enjoys connecting people as much to solve problems and create new opportunities. Sometimes, it may seem as if things happen here just by the sheer force of M.J.'s will, but it's really just persistence and an ingrained belief that as a woman who feels blessed with plenty, she is bound to ensure that others have access to plenty as well.

"I spent a decade on our school board

working toward a successful rural school merger," she says. "The experience taught me that I had more than enough time, ideas, partners and patience to lead others toward a place they would have otherwise never traveled.

"So it is with rural philanthropy. This is the

place where my greatest talents and joys intersect to inspire and equip others to share."

And she does it all as a three-quarter-time employee of the CFGD and a full-time member of the Northeastern Iowa community.



M.J. Smith, right, is the director of affiliate foundations for the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. Smith and her family reside in Guttenberg, Iowa.



Getting To The Heart Of The Heartland

Northeast Iowa is the epitome of American Heartland. It sits on the shoulders of the Mississippi River bluffs overlooking southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois. Its rolling hills are home to dairy farms, corn and soybean fields and other staple crops. Small manufacturing plants anchor picturesque small towns, producing not only components for the area's agricultural economy but also for other industries, such as construction or aerospace.

Income levels hover around the national average. The jobless rate is low, graduation rates are high, and unlike other rural regions of the country, population rates are relatively stable. Families here trace their heritage to German and Irish ancestors, and as such the region is largely (over 94 percent) white.

But every small town has pockets of need that undermine the overall success and forward mobility of those who live there. Poverty rates among area counties range from 10 to 13 percent, and as high as 19 percent for children. Many counties don't score well on health indicators — roughly one-third of the population is obese.

While this rural setting may appear idyllic, it's not ideal for everyone.

To help address needs and strengthen rural Northeast Iowa communities, the CFGD has stepped into the role of convener, connector and catalyst.

"We are conveners," says Nancy Van Milligen, president and CEO. "We bring together a diverse cross section of community members and leaders to solve issues facing our rural communities in order to broaden our impact. We help local donors and stakeholders strengthen their own communities and own their vision."

CFGD is based in Dubuque, Iowa — population 58,276 — and serves a seven-



In 1999, a group of community leaders met to explore the feasibility of establishing a community foundation in Dubuque, Iowa, and its surrounding communities. After completing its research, the group felt strongly that a community foundation would provide community leadership and nonprofit support essential to Dubuque's future.



A couple takes in the scenery in the town of McGregor, Iowa, a small town located along the Mississippi River (population just under 1,000).

county region. It holds about \$90 million in assets, mostly (80 percent) in endowment funds, and about one-third of that held in eight affiliate funds.

Affiliate funds become a central gathering point for individual communities. Each has its own advisory board, whose members have almost total control in how funds are raised and granted. CFGD provides back-office administrative support and financial management, as well as on-the-ground coaching, coordination and occasional guidance.

“When we opened our doors 15 years ago, we were a leadership organization that happened to have philanthropy as one of our tools and we’ve always thought of ourselves that way,” says Van Milligen. “The money is just one tool in our tool belt, really. Our strategy is to partner with our affiliates to build their capacity to be high-performing organizations. We do that through training, convening, bringing workshops and speakers in, and supporting marketing and communications to help them tell the story to their constituents.”

While the affiliate fund model is common among community foundations across the country, CFGD’s takes advantage of two key influences in the state: gaming revenue

distribution and Endow Iowa tax credits.

Iowa allows most forms of gaming, including casinos, and laws provide for \$125,000 annually from state gaming revenues to counties that have no casinos. Twenty-five percent of that revenue must be put into some form of endowment, but counties may give the rest away.

Over the years, the affiliate funds created by CFGD became recognized as the most trustworthy and perpetual way to receive, steward and administer these funds. So, while CFGD’s modest unrestricted funds lend themselves to about \$40,000 in grantmaking dollars each year, four of the county affiliate advisory boards have nearly \$90,000 each for annual grantmaking to communities throughout the region.

In addition to gaming revenues, the state also allows donors who make gifts to endowed funds held at qualified community foundations to receive a 25-percent state tax credit. Because CFGD meets national standards for community foundations, gifts to any of its affiliate funds qualify for the tax credits.

The financial results are impressive. Counties that are home to small communities of just a few hundred or

a few thousand have raised millions in endowments. Collectively, CFGD’s affiliates hold more than \$93 million, with almost \$64 million in Dubuque County, and balances ranging from \$47,568 to nearly \$10 million in surrounding counties.

But more important — and much more long-lasting — than the fiscal relationship are the bonds of trust that have grown between CFGD and its affiliates. These are what pave the way for community investments in their own futures, and they are bonds that CFGD nurtures very carefully.

Nurturing Local Trust, Leadership

CFGD’s staff structure is designed for working deeply in community. In addition to M.J. Smith, mentioned above, two other staff members assume oversight of multiple counties. Within each county, a part-time coordinator spends approximately 25 hours a month supporting affiliate funds by attending board meetings, processing paperwork, coordinating with the home office in Dubuque, meeting with donors, and helping to make the local connections that ultimately turn ideas into action.

These coordinators meet regularly to

Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Formed in Dubuque, Iowa, in 2002, the Community Foundation has eight affiliates and assets of roughly \$91 million.

STAFF

- Core: 15
- Partner foundations: 2
- Program coordinators: 4

ANNUAL GRANTMAKING (2017)

- Total: \$5,428,265 (2294 grants)
- Donor-advised/directed/endowments: 90%

SPECIAL INFORMATION

- Conducts Heart & Soul community engagement process in five communities
- Facilitates Every Child, Every Promise (youth development program in Dubuque)
- Endow Iowa State Tax Credit Program (eligible recipient organization)

REGION

- Population: 233,478
- Rurality: 44.7% rural population
- Seven counties of Northeast Iowa (populations):
 - Allamakee, (14,330)
 - Clayton (18,129),
 - Clinton (49,116)
 - Delaware (17,764)
 - Dubuque (93,653)
 - Jackson (19,848)
 - Jones (20,638)
- Major city — Dubuque (58,276)
 - Percent of Poverty: County Range of 9.5% to 13.5% (U.S. 11.8%)
 - Household Median Income: County Range: \$48,039 to \$59,452 (U.S. \$54,570)

AREAS OF INTEREST

- Academic Achievement (Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Vision to Learn)
 - Economic Opportunity—Project Hope
 - Equity—Inclusive Dubuque

Source: CFGD 2018



Amy Manternach (right) is vice president of finance and philanthropic services for the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque.

share their experiences and advice, and to share opportunities that exist in their communities or successes that others may wish to replicate.

All staff, even those who commute daily to full-time positions in Dubuque, live in the rural communities they serve. It is also understood that their job includes listening and engaging in community 24/7, so almost all sit on local boards or committees or planning groups of some kind. That makes for a two-way flow of information and ideas.

For example, CFGD's vice president of finance and philanthropic services, Amy Manternach, lives about 20 minutes from downtown Dubuque in the town of Cascade. She says, "I've worked at the Foundation five years now, and I see all the great work we do throughout the region, and I always say, "We gotta do that in Cascade."

The evolution of staff roles away from a traditional program officer model has been organic, says Van Milligen. "Traditional grantmaking is such a small part of our work. Our real value add is community leadership and knowledge, which means we need to be skilled convenors, facilitators and partners. The traditional program officer roles just wouldn't make sense here, since convening and collective impact kinds of work are the bulk of our staff's responsibility."

CFGD also makes a point to include

regional affiliate board members on the CFGD board to share their experiences and perspectives. This makes for a deeper mutual understanding among board members and affiliates and undergirds that sense of trust.

"I think when the community foundation first came out to affiliates and rural counties 15 years ago, it was seen more as an adversary than a resource," says Keith Kramer, who sits on both the CFGD board and the board of the Delaware County Community Foundation (a CFGD affiliate). "Once you start building that trust, you can see we're really all trying to do the same thing. We want to do the right things for the kids and for our communities.

"It took a tremendous amount of time and effort from Nancy and from M.J. to come out and meet with people one-on-one. But without that resource, there's a lot of things that I don't think we would have ever been able to address. They let us do our independent deals. They're not telling us what to do. They're a resource for an idea that we might have."

It's changed for Kramer personally as well.

"When I first joined the board here, I was an outsider — I mean really an outsider. After about three years, I was at a point of resigning, but I knew that there were so many good things that could come out of it, and that I needed to get more engaged and have more side conversations with some of



A planning meeting for the officials and CFGD members in the Town of Cascade.



the board members. I went out for coffee with a couple of them. And with M.J. and Nancy involved I felt hopeful. And now the whole thing has changed. My community and I don't feel left out anymore."

Being intentional about including rural representation on the board has helped it adopt a more regional perspective, says Van Milligen. "If you really think about healthcare, if you think about recreation, if you think about arts and culture — our success will be in a regional approach. Understanding that has helped us invest in our rural communities and it's proven to be a good business model, too."

It also helps rural communities share lessons and ideas with the region's urban center.

"You're taking ideas that come out of Delaware County, and using that in Jones County, which in turn helps Dubuque with what they're dealing with on a daily basis," says Kramer.



CFGD's hyper-local affiliate structure allows for ultimate customization and community ownership, which has resulted in more unique programs and impact than one might easily count. Communities have come together to address immediate needs like hunger, childcare, or the need for a new fire station. But they've also begun to think more deeply about not just meeting needs, but planning for the future. And they've learned to examine national models and customize them in ways that will have the biggest impact for their own populations.

Locally-visualized community dreams are what drives the community foundation, rather than a sterile theory of change created in an office conference room. "We convene communities to determine key issues and then we pursue them," says Van Milligen. "Communities are living, breathing, continually changing environments, so our engagement with them determines where we go. Of course, we always look to see if we have the capacity, or if others are better suited to the work, and determine who the necessary partners may be."



Small manufacturing plants anchor picturesque small river towns in northeast Iowa, producing not only components for the area's agricultural economy but also for other industries, such as construction or aerospace.



M.J. Smith, director of affiliate foundations for the CFGD, chats with Nancy Ruzika, a librarian at the Guttenberg Public Library.

Addressing Unique Local Needs

Sara Palmer and Kay Hoffman share a love of learning — so much so that both are teachers at Cascade Elementary School in the tiny town of Cascade, Iowa. Sara teaches English as a Second Language, and Kay is the Title I reading and recovery specialist.

Together, these two have taught and nurtured dozens of young Spanish-speakers from the town’s mostly Mexican immigrant population. However, they also learned that the parents of their students often had no high school diploma and little or no knowledge of the English language, making it difficult to find and hold the jobs they needed to provide for their families.

“For a long, long time we had been saying, ‘We’ve helped the kids as often and as much as we can, but what can we do to help parents?’” says Kay.

Kay discussed the situation with her sister, Amy Manternach, who serves as the vice president for finance and philanthropic services at the Community Foundation of

Greater Dubuque. Knowing that she was empowered — and indeed expected — to leverage the foundation’s resources however she could in her community, Amy began working with Kay and Sara to find a solution.

“It was all about bringing the right group of people together that really cared about the people we were going to serve,” says Sara. “We all three played totally different but absolutely necessary roles to make it happen.”

Amy found donors and funding from the area CFGD affiliate funds in Jones County and Dubuque County (the town of Cascade sits in both). She also formed a partnership with the local community college to provide ESL and GED instructors and issue completion credits. Kay recruited volunteers to provide food and childcare for adult students, and created a system for managing them. And Sara, a trusted person among Cascade’s immigrant community, reached out to families to assure them that attending classes would be safe and to help them overcome barriers to attendance such as transportation challenges. Cascade Elementary agreed to open its doors for

evening classes, two nights a week for ESL and two nights a week for GED.

One might think that in a small town of 2,000 people, it would be hard to overlook much. But in fact, the majority of the town had no idea of the educational needs of its Mexican residents. When Sara and second grade teacher Tara Noonan began to reach out for volunteers and explain the situation, the response was almost overwhelming. Teachers from Cascade Elementary and other schools, public and private, signed up to volunteer. So did the congregations from the town’s two churches, along with book clubs, coffee groups, friends, neighbors and family members.

“We just reached out,” says Kay. “Amy and I are both from here, have lived here forever. So we reached out to friends who shared with their friends. We’re small enough in Cascade that we know each other, so we trust each other. But we’re big enough that we can draw enough people to make it work.”

The outreach also touched a chord of community pride. In a town with a high school graduation rate of 98 percent, denying

anyone the chance to earn a diploma was unconscionable.

Four nights a week, for three-and-a-half hours, throughout the entire school year, volunteers gathered to help Cascade's native Spanish-speakers learn English and work toward their GED. Some 30 were there at the beginning, eager to work hard and move forward.

Then everything changed.

New laws removed protections for some of the immigrants, and took away existing incentives for continuing education for others. An uptick in ICE activity also frightened some of the adult students away from the classroom.

That shift in policy was an eye-opening experience for the program's volunteers, who realized just how much the Mexican community was a part of Cascade. They also learned that the majority of the Mexican population that lives in Cascade are all from the same small town in Mexico, El Barril — entire families and groups of friends who moved here to escape brutal violence and poverty.

"The community's attitude about immigration has changed dramatically," says Amy. "Everything that they care about and the reasons they live here are all the same reasons we all live here. I think the feeling about immigrants in our town is that 90 percent of the people want to have them have a better life."

The ESL classes led to a new dialog among partners, including local law enforcement, elected officials, community foundation representatives, and others, to discuss the challenges facing immigrants in the community.

At the end of the 2016-17 school year, the Cascade Elementary ESL and GED group celebrated the accomplishments of 11 students who achieved their goals. More than 30 more have indicated an interest in attending classes in 2018-19.

"If we can do it in Cascade, then there's no reason why you can't do it anywhere else, because we don't have a lot of resources right here," says Sara. "It can be done anywhere if you bring the right people together and you're really committed to it and you really, really care about the group of people that you're serving. And we do."



Harry Blobaum is a board member of the Clayton County Foundation for the Future, an affiliate fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque.

Envisioning An Innovative Future

The sun shines in Northeast Iowa roughly 200 days a year. That's enough solar energy to put a big dent in energy expenses for a home, farm or business. Taking steps to improve energy efficiency can also deliver significant cost savings. Economically and environmentally, paying attention to how energy is used and where it comes from is a win-win proposition. And helping more residents in Northeast Iowa to conserve energy and draw it from renewable sources is the goal of the Clayton County Energy District.

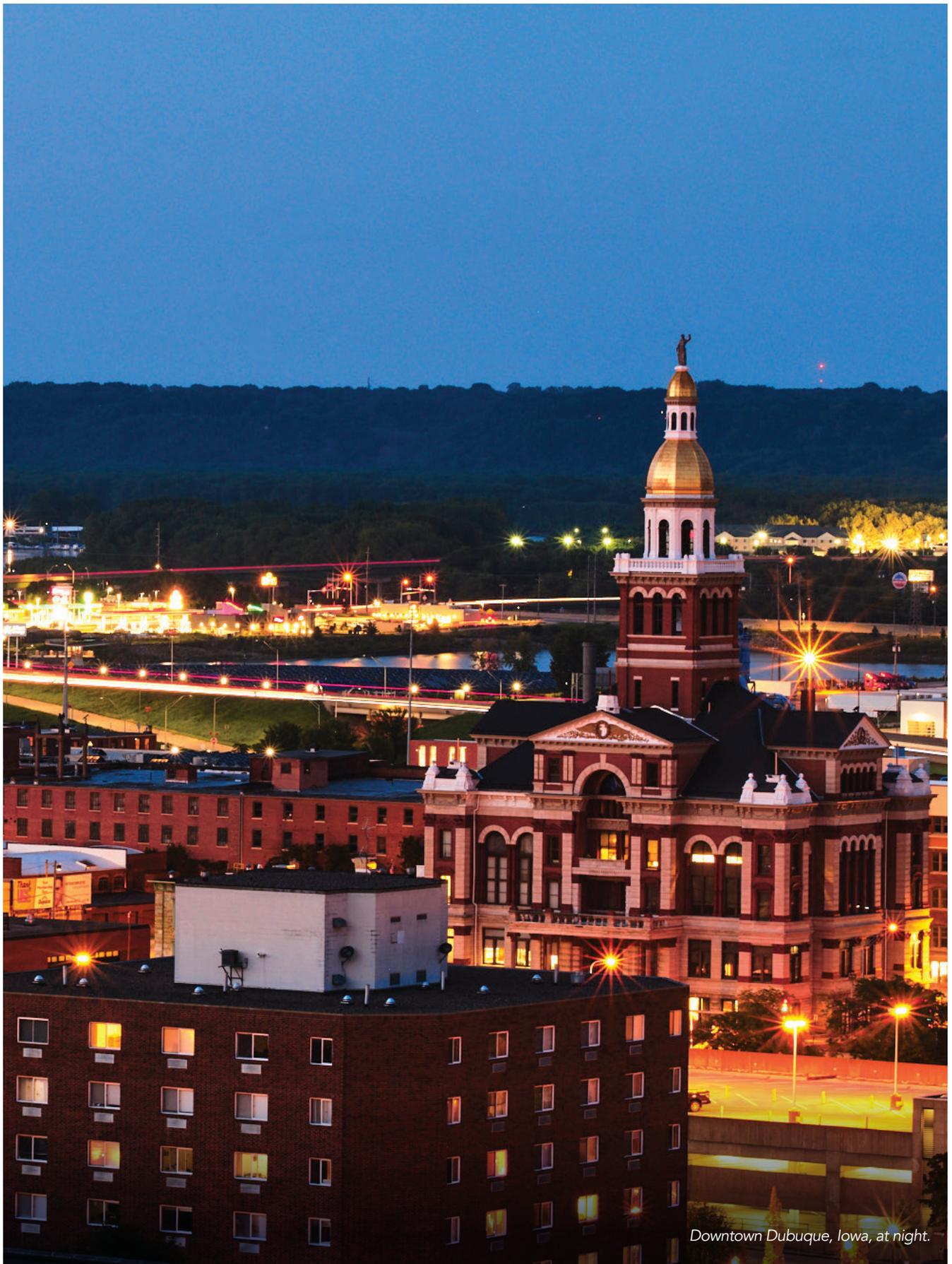
Harry Blobaum, a board member of the Clayton County Foundation for the Future (an affiliate fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque) was attending a meeting of the Northeast Iowa Funder's Network when he became a fan of the energy district idea. He learned about it from Andy Johnson, the man who created the first-ever Energy District in neighboring Winneshiek County. An energy district is modeled after the concept of soil and water conservation districts, which were created in

1937 after the Dustbowl devastated much of the central United States.

The idea was simple: create locally governed agencies in each county that could use federal, state and private dollars to help educate landowners about best practices in soil and water conservation, and help them make smart investments to save these valuable natural resources. The energy district would work much the same way, but focused on energy conservation and production rather than soil and water.

"Andy was very excited about alternative energy and he gave a very nice explanation of what they were doing to form their energy district. He challenged us to go back to our counties and see if we could form our own," says Harry. "I got some people together and in about six months, we had our objectives written up and an outline for our goals. We applied for 501(c)(3) designation and received that. Since then we've been cruising along."

Like the Winneshiek district, the Clayton County Energy District is currently an independent nonprofit organization, but Harry and others are working with Andy to



Downtown Dubuque, Iowa, at night.



Jason Neises (center) is the full-time Community Heart & Soul staff person for the CFGD. Neises currently works directly with five communities that have elected to participate in the Heart & Soul program.

convince the Iowa legislature to make energy districts a legal public entity with elected local boards, just like the existing soil and water conservation districts.

In the meantime, the Clayton County Energy District is focusing on educating residents, building a market pipeline, and encouraging investment. The group has hosted workshops on solar energy, LED lighting and other conservation measures, and even a workshop designed especially for area nonprofit organizations.

“Our primary concern is energy efficiency even though we want to take it as far as we can toward solar to make energy cheap, and make it locally owned and operated, including hiring local contractors to install it,” says Harry. “We’ve talked to electricians to convince them to get themselves certified so that they can install.”

Clayton County Energy District also works with members of the Green Iowa Americorps program, who conduct energy assessments for individual homeowners and provide suggestions for ways they can improve energy efficiency. For low-income

or fixed-income residents, the free service also includes replacing all light bulbs with LEDs and the installation of low-flow water fixtures.

In addition to grant funds from the Clayton County Foundation for the Future, the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque also has provided funds to support a part-time coordinator for the Clayton County Energy District. Harry credits the existence of the affiliate foundation for introducing his county to the idea of energy districts.

“If I hadn’t been on the board of the Clayton County Foundation for the Future, I never would have been involved with the Northeast Iowa Funders Network, and I would never have made this connection,” he says.

He surmises that the energy district approach is well-suited for rural communities, where people are eager to learn from one another and there usually is no municipal utility supplying power. He knows of two cities that are planning to install solar arrays to power the cities’ water pumps.

The ultimate vision?

“We’d like to be energy independent by 2050,” says Harry. “My dream would be that each little town has its own solar array and they are completely off the grid. They can use that solar array to furnish their power during the day, and at night maybe have a windmill.”

Working With National Funders And Programs

Having a foundation like CFGD can make it easy for national funders or programs they fund to make an impact here – as long as they are willing to be flexible to suit individual community cultures. One prime example is the Orton Family Foundation’s Community Heart & Soul® program. Orton, based in Vermont, created this two-year community visioning process to build a sense of pride and common purpose in small towns that might otherwise struggle to define a future for themselves. It now is working on expanding Community Heart & Soul to communities across the country, with the help of local, on-the-ground partners.

CFGD hosts a full-time Community Heart & Soul staff person, Jason Neises, whose position is supported financially by Orton. Neises currently works directly with five communities that have elected to participate in the Heart & Soul program, strengthening connections among community members and developing local leaders.

“I think the thing that’s saving some rural towns is strengthening what they’re proud of instead of always trying to solve issues of employment and brain-drain. All these kinds of things are overwhelming at some point,” says Neises. “Unless you become a community of choice where people want to live, none of your old Band-aids are ever going to solve any of the problems that you have. I think it really gives people a chance to band together, put their arms around each other, and say, ‘Let’s just make this a place where we want to live. If we want to live here, then other people are going to want to live here too.’”

The Orton Heart & Soul emphasizes the participation of everyone in a community, which may not come naturally in some small towns. (Contrary to popular belief, not everyone knows everyone else in a town of 2,000 people.) So CFGD sometimes has to nudge.

“I remember in one community, we asked, ‘Have you invited the Hispanic community?’ It quickly became apparent that they didn’t know anyone in the Hispanic community, nor anyone who knew anyone in the Hispanic community,” says Van Milligen. “So, we just took them by the hand and said, ‘Let’s just go knock on the doors.’ We try to lift up, but sometimes you just have to model good behavior.”

In true connector fashion, Van Miligen observes ways in which the Heart & Soul model in small towns can inform similar work in Dubuque’s urban neighborhoods. “We have adopted Heart and Soul principles as our own, even in Dubuque. We’re doing work right now in a low-income neighborhood. I’ve told Orton that a low-income neighborhood is really a small town. It’s very similar and in fact, it has some of the same challenges of isolation and stigma.”

In addition to Orton’s Community Heart & Soul, CFGD also has served as an intermediary for other national initiatives for rural areas, including the Kendeda Fund’s Grants to Green program (which helps nonprofits become more energy efficient), a Cargill Foundation disaster preparation program via the Funders Network for Smart Growth, and economic development projects

through the Aspen Institute’s RED PIN program (Rural Economic Development Philanthropy Innovator’s Network). CFGD also helped several of its affiliates secure USDA funding for local projects that they would not have qualified for on their own.

The CFGD affiliate structure also offers a unique opportunity to pilot national programs in Dubuque and then roll out regionally. For example, when the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Campaign for Grade Level Reading established a foothold in Dubuque, affiliates noticed the results and asked to roll the program out themselves. The national program Vision to Learn, funded in part by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, which fits elementary school children with free eyeglasses, also was piloted first in Dubuque by CFGD before expanding rapidly to affiliate counties.

Homegrown equity work may be the next regional focus, as county affiliates show interest in CFGD’s leadership to address racial equity through Inclusive Dubuque, a citywide effort to help a growing international workforce feel more welcomed and meaningfully engaged in the urban community. The CFGD board also has named equity as a core value for all its work.

“Our rural areas are going to deal with that





Dave Heiar and Nic Hockenberry run the Jackson County Economic Alliance in Maquoketa, Iowa.

diversity that Dubuque is facing today,” acknowledges Kramer. “It’s something that we don’t face quite yet in small towns, but we know that it’s going to be there in 15 years, if it’s not already. So it helps to know how they’re handling it in Dubuque. That’s why I love sitting on the board here, because I know what’s coming.”

The most important aspect of bringing in a national program is flexibility, says Van Milligen. It’s the same as the flexibility that CFGD offers to its smaller affiliates.

“Funders can come in with a structure, but then we need to be able to say ‘here’s our community, here’s our problem, here’s our size,’ and adapt accordingly. There are ways to take even an evidence-based model and tweak it so it’s more affordable and maybe more effective in meeting the actual needs of the community.”

A More Cohesive Region

CFGD’s affiliate structure and approach are laying the groundwork to build a more cohesive region, which can make it easier for state and local funders to invest in Northeast Iowa more broadly. CFGD’s newest strategic plan and board discussions center around adopting a more regional lens.

“We’ve been working on our narrative

and approach as being more regional in nature, and see that as the brass ring,” says Van Milligen. “In areas like ours, the communities are only as strong as the region, and vice versa. There’s real power in coming together.”

Programs like the Campaign for Grade Level Reading or Vision to Learn only need more funding and manpower to become regional in Northeast Iowa. In other cases, affiliate funds have taken the lead in creating and providing key infrastructure for regional work, with some administrative or coordination support from CFGD. One prime example is the way in which Jackson, Jones and Dubuque Counties came together to create a regional approach to creating more dedicated recreational and green spaces to improve quality of life and help employers attract more talent to fill jobs in the three-county area.

Spearheaded by the Jackson County Economic Alliance, the effort began when communities in Jackson County engaged in visioning processes to set goals for their own economic futures. What began as conversations about revitalizing downtowns quickly expanded to include plans for arts, recreation, and similar quality of life factors. Then, Alliance leaders learned about a new state program, Parks to People, designed to connect parks, people, recreation and arts.



The only catch? The funding was regional.

Dave Heiar and Nic Hockenberry of the Jackson County Economic Alliance immediately reached out to Jones County, and then to Dubuque County, to discuss the potential of taking a regional approach. Both other counties agreed, and the CFGD affiliates in each contributed seed money to get the effort started.

“It’s one thing to draw a line on a map and say okay, these three counties are a region, but you have a lot of territorial kinds of things and silos that need to be opened up and imaginary lines that you draw. Sometimes even cities within the same county didn’t know how to work together,” says Heiar. “So we spent a year on a planning process to

figure out what our common goals might be within the region, really getting to know each other and tearing down those silos, and really building relationships, because it's all about building those relationships.”

Relationships in this case included those between players who hadn't necessarily worked together before, and included city and county governments, the Farm Bureau, the Department of Natural Resources, councils of governments, economic development groups, and the community foundation affiliates, among others.

“It took a while for us to feel like we were really a region, but ultimately not only did we create our initial short term vision and goals, but also we put together our 20-year plan,” says Heiar.

The region received \$1.9 million from the state in Parks to People funding, with the expectation that the region would match five-to-one for a total of \$12 million. The community instead raised more than \$50 million, and has completed more than 70 projects that make up what is now the Grant Wood Loop — spanning three-counties and 4390-miles of waterways together with roads, trails and activities that allow users (via an interactive website) to tailor their experience to their interests — everything from rock climbing to beer drinking to music.

The Parks for People state funding has since expired, but because of their work to create a working regional partnership and identity,

the three counties have received new state funding through Iowa's Hometown Pride program, which will continue to tackle the projects wish list created as part of Parks for People.

In addition to providing initial seed funds, CFGD also served as a fiscal agent before the Grant Wood Mississippi River Region Partnership was formally established, participated with the master planning process, and continues to serve as the regional authority.

Evaluating And Building On Success

The impact of the community projects and slow regional shifts that CFGD fosters aren't easy to measure by traditional quantitative standards. The numbers that individual programs produce may seem small compared to those in larger urban areas. But the depth of impact can be significant in rural places and alter the trajectory for everyone. For example, the small ESL program in Cascade may have only produced 11 graduates in its first year, but that's a considerable percentage of the Spanish-speaking population and has benefits that will echo for generations.

CFGD does use some measures from national program partners — such as the Campaign for Grade Level Reading's results-based accountability system. It also has recently hired a knowledge management director, and

now has more capacity to collect and share data on and among its programs.

But evaluation often depends as much on gut instinct and home-grown knowledge as it does on numbers and formal protocols, says Van Milligen. “Sometimes the results are obvious without having to spend significant money on evaluation.”

The staff at CFGD is gently and consistently working to get communities to look more toward upstream factors, moving affiliate grantmaking from traditional responses to basic needs to addressing issues facing the community with longer-term plans and initiatives. Moving affiliates grantmaking from traditional causes to deal with issues facing the community is a long-term effort. But it's happening, as evidenced by emerging work to address affordable housing, workforce development, and healthy living issues.

When it comes to potential growth, CFGD staff and board view the region not so much in terms of geographic boundaries, but in terms of the ability to make personal connections. When asked whether CFGD would continue to expand its regional affiliate structure and what would be considered the perfect size for its service area, Van Milligen responds this way:

“I think within a two-hour driving distance. That's far enough for any of our staff to go and still be truly present.”





Campbell University

A History of Serving the Underserved

Rural philanthropy has been a part of the Campbell University's mission since founder J.A. Campbell started Buies Creek Academy 131 years ago with the idea that everybody deserves an education, regardless of finances or social standing.

Thirteen years later, the Class of 1900 included 21 young men and women who went on to become teachers in rural Harnett County's public school system. Their education begat the next generation of educated residents.

When Campbell's third president, Norman Adrian Wiggins, established Campbell Law School nearly a century later in 1976, his goal was to train lawyers to practice in smaller communities in eastern North Carolina — while he may have never used the term, “rural strategy,” that was exactly his intent.

The pharmacy school opened its doors to students 10 years later in 1986 and has since graduated nearly 2,500 pharmacists, of which roughly 80 percent still live in North Carolina serving in 90 of the state's 100 counties.

And when Campbell's fourth president Jerry Wallace set out to establish a medical school in 2013, there was pressure from some in the state to build it in Raleigh, where it would have easier access to hospitals and residency programs. Instead, his School of Osteopathic Medicine — the state's first new medical school in 35 years — is centered in Buies Creek. Many of its graduates are choosing to stay in this state, serving in some of the most medically underserved regions in the Southeast.

Rural Philanthropic Analysis

In 2017, Campbell University launched the Rural Philanthropic Analysis, taking the University's 31 years of rural-based education and — through the partnership and support of the Robert Wood Johnson

Foundation — putting it in a national spotlight. The Foundation awarded Campbell a \$730,248 grant to fund an 18-month national exploration designed to create, identify and enhance new ideas and insights to improve the practice and impact of charitable organizations when it comes to supporting healthy, equitable rural communities.

Public Health Program

Campbell's Public Health program is unique in that it is specifically tailored to focus on rural health. Campbell is one of six schools in the nation with a rural focus, only two of which are located east of the Mississippi river, and it is the only Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health-accredited program in the country that both focuses on rural health and is actually located in a rural area.

Campbell Health Center

Campbell's College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, School of Osteopathic Medicine and School of Nursing run the Campbell University Health Center, an outpatient physician practice that provides outstanding health care services to Campbell students, faculty and staff and to the Harnett County community. On Tuesdays, students take over the clinic and provide free healthcare to local residents who are low-income or who lack proper health care. Each week, the students see more than a dozen patients (there are currently 200 active patients in their system) seeking treatment and care for chronic pain, hypertension, diabetes and a slew of other conditions that would otherwise go untreated. In three years, the program has saved residents nearly a half-million dollars in medical costs in a county that ranks 72nd out of 100 in the state when it comes to proper diet and exercise and avoiding negative behaviors like tobacco and alcohol use and 86th in the state in access to clinical care.



CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY

Overview

A thriving private Christian university founded in 1887 committed to creating and expanding opportunities for North Carolina and beyond.

Mission

To graduate students with exemplary academic and professional skills who are prepared for purposeful lives and meaningful service.

Academic Divisions

Over 100 undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees across these academic divisions:

- Adult & Online Education
- Catherine W. Wood School of Nursing
- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences
- Divinity School
- Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine
- Lundy-Fetterman School of Business
- Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law
- School of Education
- School of Engineering

Accreditation

Level VI accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Economic Impact

\$450+ million annual regional impact

Locations

Six campuses in North Carolina, with four of those — including our main campus — located within the state's renowned Research Triangle Region.

EEO/AA/Minorities/Females/Disabled/Protected Veterans www.campbell.edu/employment



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