



A BETTER WAY TO GIVE. A BETTER KANSAS CITY.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 11, 2010

Contact: Jackie Kindred  
816-627-3443  
*kindred@gkccf.org*

## **GREATER KANSAS CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CELEBRATES AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation is celebrating an increase in donor grants totaling \$175 million and a nearly 40% increase in the number of donors organizing their giving through a fund—the largest number of funds to be opened in a single year in the Community Foundation’s history.

As usual, donors chose to support a wide range of nonprofit organizations including arts organizations, human service organizations, colleges and universities, churches, synagogues and many other charitable organizations in Kansas City and beyond. Individual grants ranged from \$25 to multi-million dollar investments. Grants made in 2008 totaled \$160 million.

In 2009, the Community Foundation also welcomed 220 new donor funds, an increase from 158 new funds in 2008. Funds range in size from a few hundred dollars to tens of millions of dollars, each furthering the causes that are important to the individual, family or business that created the fund. There are more than 3,000 funds housed under the Community Foundation’s umbrella.

“The increase in the number of people organizing their giving through a fund speaks volumes about our region’s commitment to making Kansas City a better place,” said Laura McKnight, president and CEO of the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. “We know that Kansas City is a national leader in philanthropy and to have this level of giving in the midst of a challenging economy demonstrates why Kansas City continues to lead the rest of the country.

“In 2009 we saw an important trend in the corporate sector. Several companies in the area have consolidated their employee volunteer and matching gifts programs, corporate sponsorships, cause marketing, and philanthropic giving under a single strategy that supports the company’s core values,” McKnight said. “This approach increases the return on the company’s investment in community involvement, while at the same time trimming internal costs related to administering a scattershot approach.”

Global Prairie, an integrated marketing communications firm with offices in Kansas City and five other cities around the country, is an example of a company that is giving back to the community and spending less in the process because it found a better way to give. Anne St. Peter, founder of Global Prairie, has just launched her term as chair of the Community Foundation board of directors, one of the many ways the talented people at Global Prairie make it a top priority to give back to their communities across the country.

"Global Prairie was founded almost two years ago with a commitment to give back to the communities where we live and work. Every year, we invest more than 10 percent of our profits back into these communities through Community Foundation funds established in the name of each Global Prairie team member," said Anne St. Peter, founder of Global Prairie. "We also make contributions to individual funds on birthdays and hiring anniversaries. And we have replaced traditional holiday gifts for clients, vendors and friends with Community Foundation Giving Cards. As we have grown, the Community Foundation has provided us with the flexibility and innovation to collectively and individually embrace and live out the idea of corporate philanthropy."

"What we can learn from the inspiring degree of charitable giving that occurred in 2009 is that even in difficult times, those who can give are continuing to invest in the community," McKnight said. "What we have seen over the past year and a half is that individuals, families and companies are being even more deliberate with their giving to make sure they are achieving the greatest impact possible."

In Kansas City, charitable giving is on the rise. Consider the following:

- Individuals with an income of \$100,000 or more gave almost twice the national average in 2007.
- The average gift in the Kansas City area was \$3,375 in 2007, which is 50 percent more than the national average of \$2,247 that year.
- The growth rate of individual giving notably increased by 128 percent after adjusting for inflation between 1997 and 2007. In comparison, the national rate of increase was 30 percent after adjusting for inflation during those same years.
- Foundation assets per capita in Kansas City are extraordinarily high at \$3,239 per person in comparison to the national average of \$2,053 per person.

In the 31 years since a small group of community leaders passed a hat, collecting \$213.19 to establish the Community Foundation in 1978, Community Foundation donors have given more than \$1.5 billion in grants to the nonprofit community.

###

The **Greater Kansas City Community Foundation** offers a better way to give by streamlining the giving process so donors can focus on the causes they care about. The Community Foundation, including its affiliates within the Greater Kansas City area, has ranked among the top ten largest community foundations in America since 1999 and is recognized as a national leader in making sure every philanthropic investment returns the greatest emotional, civic and financial benefit possible. For more information visit [www.gkccf.org](http://www.gkccf.org).