

a magazine for friends of the GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION

# GREATER together

**For us. By us.**

**Residents at the heart  
and helm of Foundation's  
neighborhood work**



Greater Milwaukee  
**FOUNDATION**  
*greater together*

Volume 4 Issue 1 Spring 2019



# WHAT'S inside

Spring 2019



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To catalyze change in Milwaukee neighborhoods that have historically faced barriers to revitalization, the Foundation is turning to and investing in neighborhood residents to take the lead.

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Former Northwestern Mutual president Greg Oberland and his wife, Rhonda, look to the Foundation to help maximize their impact in the community.

# GREATER together

A MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS OF THE  
GREATER MILWAUKEE FOUNDATION  
VOLUME 4 :: ISSUE 1 :: SPRING 2019

**VISION** Greater Milwaukee becomes a vibrant, economically thriving region comprised of welcoming and inclusive communities that provide opportunity, prosperity and a high quality of life for all.

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## ON THE COVER:

Milwaukee artist Muneer Bahauddeen in front of the peace posts he created with residents of Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood.



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Senior Program Officer Darlene C. Russell and President & CEO Ellen Gilligan at Coffee Makes You Black, a community hub within Milwaukee's North Division neighborhood. North Division is one of seven areas the Foundation is focusing on through its neighborhood revitalization work.

**B**efore my career in community foundations, my work brought me to many different places, from rural villages in Alaska to Miami's Little Havana, from the Mississippi River Delta to First Nations reservations in Arizona. These experiences taught me to celebrate differences and to recognize how diverse cultural contributions have shaped and strengthened our country.

At the same time, I learned that people in all communities share a similar, core hope – to build a life of dignity, opportunity and prosperity for themselves and the generations that follow. This is why I believe in all parts of a community working together so a neighborhood, and ultimately a city and region, can reach its full potential.

Such partnership is rising in Milwaukee, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is providing support where it serves community priorities and efforts.

**In Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood, for example, resident visioning sessions led to a neighborhood advisory council that identified youth engagement as its top priority for Foundation investment. Read about that work on page 9.**

The Foundation's impact investing strategy has steeped nearly \$900,000 in projects owned and operated by women and people of color. This infusion of capital has already leveraged an additional \$4.9 million, supporting 47 small businesses and creating more than 85 new jobs. The corporate sector has been an important partner in this effort, including Wells Fargo's recent contribution of

more than \$206,000 to our impact investing pool.

Our donors are similarly joining us in coinvestment that strengthens neighborhoods and public spaces. I'm grateful to generous people like Greg and Rhonda Oberland, whose story you can read on page 21. Their first grant after establishing a fund at the Foundation was in support of the Sherman Phoenix development. Others have supported the Harbor View Plaza, which is adding another key destination to the Milwaukee landscape. Read about this gem on page 25.

The Foundation has always supported the community in its work, and we are finding new ways to deepen strategic investment in the ideas of resident leaders, especially in places where resources have been scarce and barriers to revitalization are common. Our vision for Thriving Communities, one of our strategic funding priorities, specifically focuses on:

- Supporting residential leadership and strengthening opportunities for neighbors to work together toward goals they identify together

- Increasing equitable economic opportunity, access to employment and entrepreneurial support
- Expanding resident access, participation and creation of culturally relevant art and experiences
- Improving the quality, affordability, safety and beauty of housing and whole neighborhoods

Of course, people and place are wholly entwined, which is why we are committed to a complementary focus that doubles down on our investment in young people reaching their full potential in life. In the last issue of our magazine, I told you about our firm commitment to the wellness and education of our youngest learners. **This ensures they enter school healthy and ready to learn, putting them on a path to academic, and ultimately, career success.**

These priorities in our community are interconnected and require a coordinated approach.

**Everything we do, in fact, is an extension of our fundamental promise to honor the intentions of our donors as they seek to**



Whimsical sculptures, created by artist Marina Lee, beautify the 5 Points intersection in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood.

**touch the lives of others through their philanthropy.** We also know many donors connect with the Foundation to make a greater difference together. I invite you to explore where your interests intersect with the needs of people and places in our region and join us in delivering on our common aspirations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen M. Gilligan'.

Ellen M. Gilligan  
President & CEO  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation

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# New Home, Hist

The Gimbels-Schuster's Department Store on North Martin Luther King Jr. Drive was once a key gathering point and connector within Milwaukee's Halyard Park neighborhood.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation will help the iconic site once again bring people together to create a healthier and more equitable future through a new community-based partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin.

In late March, the Foundation announced the building, located about a mile northwest of the

Foundation's existing location in Schlitz Park, as its future home. The announcement followed a yearlong process that included evaluating more than 20 potential locations and gathering feedback from donors, staff and stakeholders.

## LEVERAGING RESOURCES TOGETHER

Strong mission alignment and mutual interest in deeper

community impact led the two organizations to decide to leverage resources together. A shared vision of "a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all" requires focusing on places where investment has been scarce and supporting people of color, who are disproportionately affected by disparities in the community.

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*"Our partnership underscores and amplifies our philosophy that we are greater together, that the legacy we leave by working together is greater than any of us can achieve alone."*

Ellen Gilligan, Foundation president and CEO





# Historic Impact

Similar to a decade ago when the Foundation helped extend the footprint of downtown and served as a catalyst within Schlitz Park, it is once again in a position to help advance the social and economic development of another neighborhood.

“Our partnership underscores and amplifies our philosophy that we are greater together, that the legacy we leave by working together is greater than any of us can achieve alone,” said Ellen Gilligan, Foundation president and CEO. “Our new home is a major milestone in our history,

and we know our aspirations may evolve into more as we unite the neighborhood around our common interests.”

Royal Capital Group will redevelop the property, which also will house MCW’s community engagement programs and provide convening space.

## DEEP NEIGHBORHOOD TIES

The Foundation has deep ties to the neighborhood, which is named for Ardie and Wilbur Halyard. Over the last five years, the Foundation and its donors have invested more than \$5 million in organizations

and programs in Halyard Park, King Drive and adjacent Harambee neighborhoods. A scholarship fund was created at the Foundation in 1974 in honor of the couple, who founded Columbia Savings and Loan. It provides scholarship support to African American students preparing for business or finance careers.

Redevelopment will begin in mid-to-late summer and take an estimated 16 months to complete.

For more information on the partnership, visit [greatermilwaukee.org/mcw-gmf](http://greatermilwaukee.org/mcw-gmf).



# What does it take to create a thriving comm

We all want to live in an area that is safe and welcoming. A place with well-maintained homes, ample green space and nearby quality schools and family-sustaining jobs. A place where neighbors know each other, care about one another and are willing to invest their time, money and energy into beautifying their area.

Data has shown that certain neighborhoods, however, lack those key qualities. Over decades, these areas have lacked access to resources and have experienced systematic disinvestment. Racial and economic segregation have contributed to low homeownership rates and high levels of blight. Unemployment in certain neighborhoods is up to five times greater than Milwaukee's as a whole and poverty rates are more than double the city's rate.

For any community to thrive, residents must have the ability and opportunity to lead. By inviting people most affected to be at the center of planning and decision-making, we ensure they are identifying the priorities, envisioning the solutions and working together to create the long-lasting positive impact they desire.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is using that community engagement approach in seven Milwaukee neighborhoods that have experienced long-term disinvestment – Sherman Park East, North Division, Muskego Way, Metcalfe Park, Silver Spring, Clarke Square and Harambee. This move represents a deepening investment in place, started long ago by our Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative, an asset-based strategy that targeted areas at a tipping point.

Last summer, we began in Sherman Park East, part of a larger neighborhood where we've invested for more than a decade. The following story encapsulates our journey over the past six months in partnership with residents and stakeholders and highlights what they envision for their community to thrive in the long term.





# unity?

Children at the Butterfly Park Summer Festival last July in Milwaukee's Muskego Way neighborhood. The neighborhood, which has experienced long-term disinvestment, is one of seven areas in Milwaukee the Foundation is engaged with through its neighborhood revitalization efforts.

# CHAMPIONING *the* CHANGEMAK

## FOUNDATION INVESTS RESOURCES INTO RESIDENT-LED NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

What are the elements of a thriving neighborhood?

Ask a dozen different people and most likely you'll get as many answers.

Ask residents within Milwaukee's Sherman Park East neighborhood and you might hear the names Camille Mays, Farina Brooks or Vaun Mayes.


Through her Peace Garden Project, Mays has repurposed vacant lots and replaced makeshift memorials with peace-inspired art. Last fall, Brooks helped organize a Thanksgiving dinner for more than 100 residents in a heated tent on an empty lot at 35th and Center streets. Mayes provides positive activities for youth, largely supported through community donations.

These are just a few of the residents who have taken charge to change their neighborhood and its narrative. Through its new Thriving Communities community engagement model, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is aligning its knowledge and financial and other philanthropic resources with these powerful human resources to build on existing resident leadership and help develop the capacity of others to shape long-term change in their neighborhoods.

"Sustainable community change only happens when residents have the opportunity to engage in planning to address the issues facing their neighborhoods," said Darlene C. Russell, the Foundation's senior program officer who oversees its neighborhood revitalization efforts. "We are using our power to create those places for people to have community-driven change."



# ERS



Sherman Park resident and activist Camille Mays works on a beautification project as part of her Peace Garden Project. The initiative, supported by the Foundation's Reasons for Hope MKE Fund, replaces makeshift memorials with perennial and annual plants, stones and other landscaping.





## **HISTORICAL PLACE-BASED INVESTMENT**

The past decade of Foundation-funded neighborhood work has included big investments with noticeable results. Over more than a decade through its Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative, the Foundation invested more than \$5 million in 19 neighborhoods in Milwaukee and Waukesha. Its network of partners helped residents improve more than 1,300 properties, representing more than \$25 million in reinvestment.

Thanks to the initiative, Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation shifted its focus from challenges and barriers to assets and opportunities, executive director Stephanie Harling said. The Foundation's financial and technical support enabled the agency to double its organizational capacity to serve more people in a more comprehensive and intentional way.

Layton Boulevard West Neighbors embraced the initiative's philosophy of focusing on assets, rather than problems, integrating it into its overall culture, said Brianna Sas-Pérez, its executive director.

The Foundation recognized that opportunity gaps existed in other neighborhoods, however, and believes that when everyone has equal opportunity to reach their full potential, no matter

Community members take part in Yoga in the Park, a free eight-week class offered last summer by the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center in Pulaski Park. The Kinnickinnic River Neighborhoods, which encompass Pulaski Park, were part of the Foundation's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative.





the neighborhood, it makes for a stronger, more competitive region. Supporting a resident-led approach, particularly in neighborhoods that have lacked access to resources, would advance the neighborhood work on a deeper level.

### **DATA-INFORMED DECISIONS**

The Foundation spent more than a year analyzing data from more than 39 ZIP codes, researching proven practices in communities like Brooklyn and San Francisco and conducting community outreach to determine where and how to best align Foundation resources with resident needs.

The Foundation selected Sherman Park East as the first neighborhood in its Thriving Communities work in order to build on more than a decade of investment and involvement in the larger four-mile Sherman Park area.

Within the past three years, it also has funded community-based activities through its Reasons for Hope MKE Fund. Much of that

investment focused on the western end of Sherman Park.

The eastern portion, which comprises 96 percent people of color, has experienced a much different reality. The area was hit hard by the loss of manufacturing jobs in Milwaukee over the past 20 years as well as the recent foreclosure crisis. Twenty-three percent of residents are unemployed. Forty-four percent of residents live in poverty. The fatal shooting of Sylville Smith in 2016 sparked unrest, destroyed properties and left a lingering narrative that residents are looking to change.

They have hope.

“The community is so resilient,” said Camille Mays, a community organizer who is frustrated that many people have misconceptions of the neighborhood because of the unrest. “We just keep proving we’re different than what people think we are.”

### **MOVING AT THE SPEED OF TRUST**

This new, community-driven approach takes the Foundation’s

community work to an even deeper, more sustainable level, developing a shared vision and strategy of investment.

“We can’t have a top-down approach with people in high places saying ‘I know what you guys need,’” said longtime resident Wendy Hamilton. “It needs to come from the people who live here. For us. By us. That’s powerful. That makes a thriving community.”

While the Foundation had several established partners in the area, it knew that to build awareness and trust among residents, it needed to turn to people such as neighborhood fellow Keaira Linyard. Linyard works with Middle Ground, a community group that provides summer programming for youth. She and Amari Bell, another neighborhood fellow hired by the Foundation, canvassed the area and conducted nearly two dozen interviews with lifelong residents, business owners, community activists, clergy and educators.

The Foundation conducted three visioning sessions in Sherman Park last year to gather input from residents as to what the challenges and opportunities were in their neighborhood.

### LISTENING TO LEARN

The Foundation also organized three visioning sessions, equal parts storytelling and brainstorming, to celebrate community, create cohesion and cultivate creativity and collective will.

As well as sharing neighborhood concerns and challenges, residents were asked to reflect on a time they thought Sherman Park East was at its best. Having residents highlight the neighborhood's heritage was a good lesson, particularly for youth, said Deonte Lewis, associate director of community relations for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee.

Wendy Hamilton, who attended many community meetings over the years through her neighborhood work, was excited to see many new faces, particularly the youth.

"The dynamic of the room was completely different than what I was used to seeing," she said.

Residents shared practical, bold and wild ideas on how the Foundation might invest \$150,000 in the





neighborhood in 2019. Information gathered confirmed several opportunities for investment.

Vaun Mayes, who runs Program the Parks, attended two of the three visioning sessions, and applauded the approach.

“So many decisions are being made, but the people who do the most work are not at the table, so the people they serve are not represented,” said Mayes, who brought a number of youth with him. “Here, the residents can claim ownership of what comes out of those discussions.”

Seventeen-year-old Meriah Jackson felt her perspective was valued and said her friends who joined her felt the same.

“They felt the adults were finally listening to what we want,” said

Jackson, noting that the youth learned from the adults too.

She said she would like to see more community meetings like that, which would encourage more communication and teamwork from residents.

“No one person can change the whole neighborhood,” she said. “Together as a whole we can do something.”

### **CREATING A COLLECTIVE VISION**

Being part of a group that is creating a collective vision for the neighborhood’s future is exciting, said Farina Brooks, who is a member of the 10-person advisory council overseeing the Foundation’s allocation of funds.

“Instead of sitting back and grumbling, I’m letting my voice be heard,” Brooks said.

What she and other council members have expressed is a need to invest in youth like Jackson. Though specifics will be fleshed out this spring, members agreed on supporting a sustainable program model that creates measurable change for 16- to 24-year-olds.

Ideas offered up at the visioning sessions included mentoring programs and employment opportunities. Jackson said youth are looking for a free after-school program that would offer tutoring, an open gym and computer lab.

“A lot of people live in poverty and can’t afford certain extracurricular activities,” she said. “They need something positive to do instead of just going home or being on the streets.”

"I hope the entire area can become a phoenix, to rise from what happened and for everybody to come out, play their part in bettering the area and build relationships with one another to reengage each other as neighbors and community members." - Vaun Mayes, community activist



Residents gather at Sherman Perk, a popular neighborhood gathering spot within Sherman Park.





## NEIGHBORHOOD NEXT STEPS

The initial investment is but one step toward creating a thriving Sherman Park East, Darlene C. Russell said. Starting this spring, a neighborhood fellow will continue on-the-ground work with residents and other stakeholders and coordinate quarterly neighborhood meetings.

The Foundation also has committed to working with community groups, businesses and others to address housing and employment, the other priority areas residents identified in the visioning sessions. Toward that end, for example, it recently invested in a Housing Resources-led program that will provide education, resources and housing services specifically for interested homebuyers in Sherman Park East.

Beyond grant dollars, Russell said the Foundation will provide leadership development opportunities for residents to build skills in grantwriting, facilitation training and networking with area funders.

That investment is one Camille Mays welcomes enthusiastically. Many grassroots organizers like her have a vision of what they want to accomplish but feel stymied in their efforts to secure funding because they lack the technical support.

Ultimately, Russell hopes to create a resident advisory committee reflective of all neighborhoods that the Foundation will be involved in to share best practices and build community capacity on a much larger scale.

“What we recognize is that it starts with the people, it ends with the people and we are just here to play a supporting role,” she said.

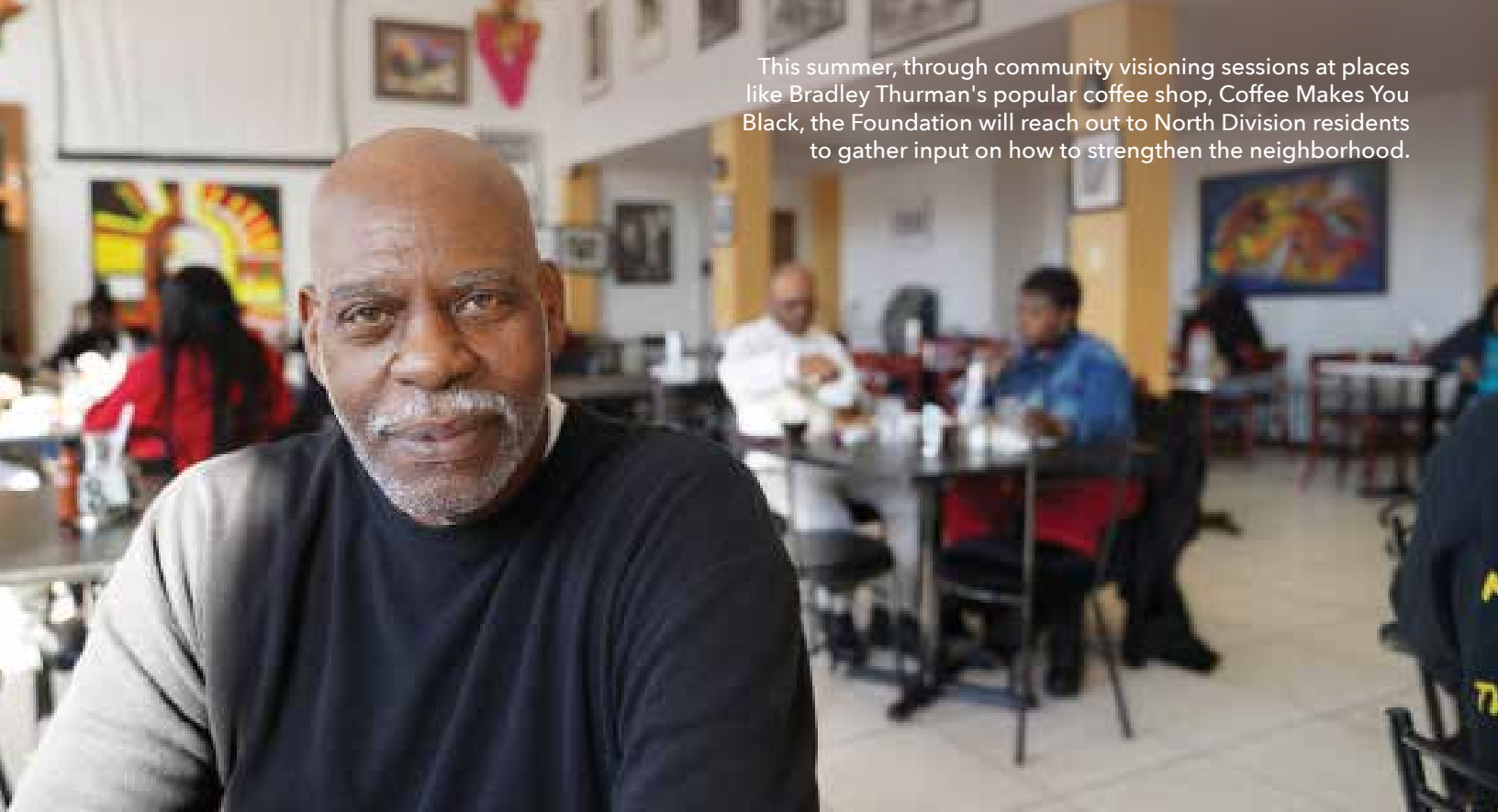
Mayes believes there is opportunity for the neighborhood to become a model for what can happen if the right investments are made and residents are involved in the process.

“I hope the entire area can become a phoenix, to rise from what happened, and for everybody to come out, play their part in bettering the area and build relationships with one another to reengage each other as neighbors and community members,” Mayes said.

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Interested in supporting our neighborhood revitalization work?  
Contact a member of our Development and Philanthropic Services team  
at 414.272.5805 to make gift or a grant from a donor advised fund.

This summer, through community visioning sessions at places like Bradley Thurman's popular coffee shop, Coffee Makes You Black, the Foundation will reach out to North Division residents to gather input on how to strengthen the neighborhood.



As part of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's multi-tiered engagement strategy in Sherman Park East, two neighborhood fellows – Amari Bell and Keaira Linyard – spent the summer interviewing residents and area leaders to gather their thoughts about their neighborhood. Here is some of what they learned.

## What elements do you think are essential to a thriving community?

**"A sense of pride in the community."**

- Yinka Adedokun, General manager, Reynold's Pasty Shop

**"A vibrant space for young people."**

- Deonte Lewis, associate director of community relations, Boys & Girls Clubs of Milwaukee

**"Sharing of resources and access to opportunity."**

- Vaun Mayes, founder, Program the Parks Initiative

## What is one hope you have for the future of Sherman Park?

**"That Sherman Park becomes a stronger business district, particularly in the Burleigh area."**

- David Muhammad, deputy director, Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services

**"Safer neighborhoods where our children can come out and play."**

- Tremerrrell Robinson, 35-year resident

**"That we, as a community, can look within ourselves, next door to our neighbor and become the spark that creates a better environment for Sherman Park. It's got to be a collective effort to create collective impact in Sherman Park."**

- Nicole Gladney, director of community services, Ascension-St. Joseph Hospital



THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES

The Foundation will begin its community engagement work in North Division this spring, with neighborhood visioning sessions planned for the summer. Visit [thrivingcommunitiesgmf.org](http://thrivingcommunitiesgmf.org) for more information.



# CAN ART HELP HEAL A NEIGHBORHOOD?

To Muneer Bahauddeen, art is a healing force and a powerful medium through which a community can express itself.

That belief has inspired hundreds of public art pieces the Milwaukee artist has created in partnership with the community over the past decade. Called peace posts, these dynamic cedar columns have taken root in county-owned parks, along city trails, outside of nonprofits and in other spaces around Milwaukee.

Each post is fashioned with brightly colored and textured mosaic clay tiles created by community members. Hidden behind the tiles, tucked inside small holes that are bored into the cedar chunks, are tightly rolled strips of paper. Each tiny strip contains an aspiration, goal or vision statement known only to the individual who wrote it.

In 2016, following the civic unrest in Sherman Park, Bahauddeen firmly believed the collaborative art process could play a role in beginning to heal the neighborhood. The resulting art could serve as a beacon of hope, providing positive thoughts and energy to passersby.

With support from the Mary L. Nohl Fund and in partnership with the Sherman Park Community Association, Bahauddeen brought his peacemaking project to the neighborhood. He conducted a series of six workshops at Sherman Park and posed three questions to participants: "What is your vision for your family? Yourself? Your community?" He then employed six area teens to help him with the woodworking, glazing and setting of nearly 40 tiles that needed to be affixed to each post.

Lynn Lucius, who oversees the Nohl Fund, said Bahauddeen's efforts created "a permanent visual statement reflecting the power of peace, individually and collectively, within our community."

The posts were installed in fall 2018 on the north and south ends of a small, city-owned lot immediately north of a gas station on Sherman Boulevard.

"For me, it is aesthetic, it is spiritual and it is connective," Bahauddeen said about the project. "It's about connecting people to the art and art to the community."

One of eight peace posts created by Milwaukee artist Muneer Bahauddeen that have been installed in Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood.

Funky Fresh Spring Rolls is one of 29 small black-run businesses that have opened in Sherman Phoenix, a new food and wellness hub in Sherman Park.



# A NEIGHBORHOOD ICON OF REBIRTH & REVITALIZATION

Every day of the week, things are humming at Sherman Phoenix.

At Vibe Creative Arts Space, elementary school kids color enthusiastically on poster paper. A family at a large table shares an order from Funky Fresh Spring Rolls. At Embody Yoga, a group of 20-to-50-somethings, mostly women and mostly of color, relax into a series of restorative poses.

Sherman Phoenix, at 3536 W. Fond du Lac Ave., is a new, \$4.5 million development in Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood. It has transformed the 24,887-sq-ft. BMO Harris Bank building (built in 1920 and damaged by fire in the unrest in August 2016) into commercial space. There are 29 small businesses run by people of color that have created 75-plus jobs.

Among them are shops offering coffee, juice, pizza and ice cream; wellness services, including yoga, physical therapy, and mental health counseling; and hair, nail and lash salons.

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**Visit the Sherman Phoenix and support local small businesses!**

**Open Monday-Saturday 7 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Sunday 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.**

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Sherman Phoenix is the brainchild of developers Juli Kaufmann and JoAnne Sabir. A combination food hall, cultural center, corporate event space, art gallery and wellness center, its grand opening was Nov. 30, 2018.

"Sherman Phoenix is a model for healing our city by generating positive economic and social returns in communities of color," said Sabir.

Added Kaufmann, "Shortly after the unrest, JoAnne and I looked at the building, and we realized how iconic it is, and what a wonderful opportunity it presented. It was a shell. The interior was burned, and there was smoke and water damage. But it didn't have to be torn down. It had good bones."

The project has received enthusiastic buy-in from the community and Foundation donors. A limited amount of debt was secured, but the majority of the funding came from philanthropy, equity and government grants. The Foundation made a \$300,000 loan to the project through its new impact investing





strategy, whereby it invests capital with the intention of generating financial return along with a social, environmental or economic impact.

There were a small number of lead angel investors and nearly 50 local investors at smaller levels – many from the neighborhood – through a crowdfunding campaign. According to Kaufmann, eventually the building will be a self-sustaining, tax-paying, for-profit business that doesn't require ongoing support.

Foundation donors contributed nearly \$500,000. Among those investors are Roger and Cindy Schaus of New Berlin.

"Our involvement with Sherman Phoenix grew out of our interest in finding some real solutions that

would build toward longevity in the community and jobs," Roger said.

The sense of community is drawing a steady stream of customers from the immediate neighborhood, other areas of the city and beyond. On a recent Friday, Angelique Sharpe, who lives in Bronzeville, was paying her third visit that week to get a juice from Shindig Coffee.

"There is a lot of melanin and ambition here," said Sharpe. "It's really great to see such a large collective of businesses that are operated by people of color in one spot."

One of them is Embody Yoga, owned by Joanna Brooks. Her business has evolved from a mobile one to sharing space in the Walnut Way Center and now to Sherman Phoenix.

"It's going incredibly well," said Brooks. "I had concerns about the increase in overhead, but I've had record sales in the first month."

Brooks is also the entrepreneur program manager at Sherman Phoenix, in charge of building additional supports for tenants to combat burnout, with free monthly offerings such as yoga classes and massage services.

Sherman Phoenix represents a transformation that goes beyond the physical. Sabir sums up its impact:

"It goes far beyond brick and mortar, it's both tangible and intangible," she said. "This is a place where everyone's tribe is welcome, where people can find a sense of belonging."



# CONNECTING *on a* DEEPER LEVEL

Through their philanthropy, Whitefish Bay couple looks to leverage connections, drive sustainable change

From the moment Greg and Rhonda Oberland first arrived in Milwaukee, following his job offer from Northwestern Mutual in 1982, they immediately felt a strong sense of community.

Greg, whose family is from Chicago, felt the city offered a welcomed change of pace. Rhonda, a self-described Air Force brat whose father's job led her family to relocate nearly every two years, saw Milwaukee as a place to put down roots.

Over the years, they embraced the community as much as it embraced them. Greg became involved in numerous nonprofit boards. Rhonda has been an active school and church volunteer.

Perhaps it was only natural then that when the couple was interested in getting involved in the community in a deeper way in retirement, they chose to partner with a community foundation. They created a donor advised fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation in 2018, following Greg's retirement from Northwestern Mutual after 36 years.

"The Foundation is even more connected to the community as to where the real needs and opportunities are," Greg said. "It is a great resource to people like us who are trying to figure out what is really going to move the needle."





The couple first met in Innsbruck, Austria, while participating in the University of Notre Dame's study abroad program. Following graduation, they moved to Washington, D.C. where he studied law at Georgetown University and she worked at AT&T as national account manager for the Department of Justice.

Rather than establish roots in a transient place like the nation's capital, they looked for somewhere that would offer more stability for the family they wanted.

They found that in Milwaukee.

Greg started in Northwestern Mutual's law department before switching over to the business side. Over the next 27 years, he rose through the ranks before becoming president in 2014.

One of their shared passions is the arts. Longtime Milwaukee Repertory Theater donors, the Oberlands have helped advance the Rep's mission in multiple ways, executive director Chad Bauman said. Rhonda was a member of the design committee for the \$1.75 million Stackner Cabaret redesign, and Bauman credits Rhonda's eye for aesthetics as valuable throughout the process. As board chair, Greg has served as an exceptional leader and coach, Bauman said. Together, their generosity has helped the Rep develop and produce new plays.

Northwestern Mutual's culture inspired their philanthropic mindset. Greg credits Ed Zore, Skip Poliner and Pete Bruce as leading by example and motivating the couple to do more.

"We're stewards of that legacy we've been given – to cultivate it and pass it on," said Rhonda, who was recognized with Greg in 2018 as COA Youth & Family Center's Parents of the Year for their demonstrated leadership, community commitment and dedication to raising strong families.

Greg, who will join the Foundation's board in July, heard Bruce talk over the years about the

Foundation's solid investment returns, online giving and support for donors like him and his wife. Upon retirement, the Oberlands decided they would more deeply examine starting a fund.

The Oberlands are still exploring the focus of their grantmaking but are particularly interested in projects that help individuals who historically have lacked access to opportunities. They hope to

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**"It is a great resource to people like us who are trying to figure out what is really going to move the needle."**

*~Greg Oberland, Foundation donor*

---

leverage their networks to support more projects like the Sherman Phoenix, a small business incubator where they made their first grant.

"That's how you can start to break down any kind of barriers that exist," Rhonda said. "You have to bring people together over such a positive project."

They admit the Foundation already has opened their minds up to new opportunities.

"I think if we could be part of a bigger movement that is truly changing Milwaukee in a very positive way, then I will feel like we've been successful," Greg said.



**Milwaukee Repertory Theater's production of "The All Night Strut!" in the Stackner Cabaret. The Oberlands were financial supporters of the \$1.75 million redesign of the space and Rhonda was a member of the design committee. Photo by Michael Brosilow**

*Program cultivates new group of*

# LATINO PROFESSIONALS

LOOKING TO LEAD IN NONPROFIT SECTOR



Francesca Mayca Wegner, a graduate of HPGM's Board Pipeline Initiative, is a new board member at the the Washington County Humane Society. She credits the initiative with giving her a better understanding of how an overall fit was a critical component in long-term success and her ability to effectively serve on a board.

Francesca Mayca Wegner has volunteered with a number of community organizations, but she had never served on a nonprofit board. Yet she was eager to share the skills she has acquired as development manager at the Sojourner Family Peace Center.

Through membership in the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee, Wegner learned about its Board Pipeline Initiative, a training program that prepares Hispanic professionals for nonprofit board service. The training gave her a better understanding of what boards are like and the confidence that she could serve.

"The training helped me identify what kind of board I was looking for," says Mayca Wegner, who joined the Washington County Humane Society's board in August 2018.

"I learned that an overall fit was a critical component in long-term success and my ability to effectively serve on a board."

Launched by HPGM in 2016 and fully supported by the Foundation since its inception, the initiative was created after the "Latino Milwaukee: A Statistical Portrait" was released earlier that year. The Foundation-commissioned study found the Latino





The Board Pipeline Initiative holds two training programs each year. Since 2016, more than 50 area Latino professionals have completed the program.

population has experienced substantial growth over the last 25 years, accounting for all net population growth in the region. Yet Latinos ranked low in economic and social indicators such as employment and household income.

The study prompted both organizations to realize that as the Hispanic population grew, so did the opportunity to have more individuals assume leadership roles within the community.

“Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee and the Foundation recognized a need and an opportunity to identify and prepare these young people for leadership roles, which helped move this program from idea to reality,” said Fred Gutierrez, senior program officer at the Foundation.

The Foundation’s support for the initiative has included hosting training sessions at its offices and

providing \$40,000 in start-up funding.

The Pipeline is one of several HPGM initiatives to promote Hispanic advancement opportunities and growth. The initiative has proved popular, with participation doubling from the first year to the second.

“We were thinking that not more than 10 people per training would be interested,” said Griselda Aldrete, president and CEO. “Last October’s cohort had 32.”

Since 2016, more than 50 participants have been matched, 30 with nonprofit boards and another 20 with advisory boards.

Each cohort (there are two training programs per year) meets three times in 1-½-hour sessions spread out over three weeks. The curriculum includes an overview of nonprofits, the role of board members, understanding financial

statements and strategic planning. There are presentations by lawyers, accountants and agency directors who discuss key issues of board service. At a final event, participants mingle with representatives of organizations looking for board members.

Since his pipeline training, Manual (Manny) Lara has joined two boards, Arts@Large and Renaissance Theaterworks.

“The training enabled me to ask the right questions and to understand the monthly financials a lot better,” said Lara, a human resources director at Advocate Aurora Health, which encourages its employees to be connected in the community.

Gutierrez added, “The initiative is being successful in increasing the number of Hispanics who are ready to serve, so we can go beyond the small number who are always being tapped.”





Attendees at the Harbor District's Harbor Fest in September 2018. The festival is one of the ways the nonprofit is reintroducing Milwaukee residents to the inner harbor.

# WELCOME TO THE WATERFRONT

## New \$1.5 million public park will bring new connections, vibrancy to Milwaukee's inner harbor

It's a warm Sunday afternoon in summer. The eastern end of Greenfield Avenue, which stops at the Kinnickinnic River, is closed to traffic. Families, older folks and young professionals are playing street games, launching canoes and kayaks, enjoying treats from food carts, and climbing a "tower," a shipping container turned on its end.

Welcome to Greenfield Avenue Play Streets in Milwaukee's Harbor District!

This activity will take place, if all goes according to plan, at an inviting new waterfront public park, the Harbor View Plaza, adjacent to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences. The Greater Milwaukee

Foundation and its donors are among the funders who have supported the \$1.5 million park, which will create new community connections and bring new vitality to the waterfront.

"The Harbor District project is integral to the efforts to develop and preserve the water resources of our community and to further promote economic and recreational undertakings for the benefit of our citizens," said Foundation donor Marie Weiss. Weiss learned more about the Harbor District at a Foundation event last June at the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences and felt inspired to give a grant from her fund to support the Harbor View Plaza.



The area is small in footprint, 0.4 acres, but has an expansive view of the water all the way to downtown. In addition to the tower, the park, once complete, will include a handicapped-accessible ramp and canoe and kayak launch as well as a water play area.

“The plaza is not very big,” said Lilith Fowler, executive director of Harbor District Inc., the public-private partnership working to redevelop Milwaukee’s inner harbor. “But it’s a toehold. We’re replanting the flag.”

That “flag” needed serious replanting. Once a thriving working waterfront, with foundries, rail yards and tanneries, the inner harbor is now an industrial wasteland of vacant, contaminated industrial sites.

Yet the area has loads of potential. Around 1,000 acres, it is bordered roughly by South First Street, the lakefront, the Milwaukee River, and Bay and Becher streets. It is south of the Historic Third Ward and Walker’s Point and north of Bay View. Most important, it is located at the mouth of Kinnickinnic, Menomonee and Milwaukee rivers, with nine miles of waterfront and a direct link to Lake Michigan.

Work to clean up contaminated sites has been going on for years, and the Harbor District, founded in 2014, has developed a 20-year,



**Harbor View Plaza, a new \$1.5 million park planned for the eastern end of Greenfield Avenue, will provide a play area for children and a public canoe/kayak launch, among other amenities.**

multi-million-dollar redevelopment plan. An important element of this revitalization effort is bringing people back to the area and giving area residents access to the water.

“We have to have people care about what happens out here,” Fowler said, “to have the feeling that they belong to a place and that it belongs to them.”

Currently, there is a lot of development buzz around the area. Freshwater Plaza opened in late 2016 on eight acres at the northeast corner of East Greenfield Avenue and South First Street. It includes a three-story apartment building, ground-level retail and a Cermak Fresh Market.

The Milwaukee RiverWalk will soon be extended into the district.

Three major new developments, totaling \$515 million, are underway, including a new headquarters for Komatsu Mining Corp., a residential development along the Milwaukee River and a mixed-use development along the Kinnickinnic River.

“It’s interesting how much momentum there is in the real estate market in Milwaukee right now,” Fowler said. “Almost all of the major sites in this area are already spoken for, and the plan is just over a year old.”

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## HARBOR DISTRICT FUNDING NEEDS

- \$1,000** Sponsors a boat tour for families who have never been out on the water before.
- \$5,000** Sponsors one day of Greenfield Avenue Play Streets, when the street is closed for playground games and family activities.
- \$10,000** Helps underwrite an artistic gate at Harbor View Plaza that illustrates the fish and ships of the Harbor District.

## INTERESTED IN INVESTING IN THIS PROJECT?

Contact your philanthropic adviser at 414.272.5805 to make a gift from your fund.



## Campbell keeps charitable giving a part of every conversation

When Terry Campbell graduated from Marquette University Law School in 1979, his first job in private practice was at a time when law firms had not begun to specialize.

"I had to do collections, divorce, you name it," said the Ohio native, who earned his undergraduate degree at Ohio State University. "I thought I had made a drastic mistake."

Gradually, though, Campbell gained more exposure to estate planning, elder law, trusts and business succession, which is his niche. In 1980, he joined Moertl, Wilkins & Campbell, S.C., where he is now the managing shareholder.

"That work gravitated more to my skill set, and I loved it," he said.

Campbell's "skill set" includes the ability to relate well to people of all walks of life, and to establish quick rapport, said clients and colleagues.

Campbell said he enjoys helping people with their problems, especially family issues. Changing family structures, for example, have led to divorces, multiple families, blended families and same sex marriages.

"Terry often acts as a mediator," said Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer,

a colleague of Campbell's at the firm and a fellow Herbert J. Mueller Society member. "He helps families work out resolutions."

Campbell has many clients with funds at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and has been bringing up the charitable conversation with them for decades.

"I believe if people are presented with options, they generally like the notion of leaving a legacy, a stamp that is here when they're gone," he said, whether that's providing for education, preventing hunger or supporting a religious belief.

Many clients do not realize that there are options other than a private foundation. Campbell educates his clients about the option of starting a fund at the Foundation. The Foundation's personal approach, Campbell said, provides clients the opportunity to have a real connection with their giving.

After attending the HJM Society luncheon in 2018 and listening to attorney Michael May speak about being more intentional with clients about charitable discussions, Campbell felt inspired to do the same.

As a way of keeping the Foundation top of mind for both his clients and prospects, he included information in a 2018 quarterly newsletter about the benefits of starting a fund with the Foundation.

"For those with charitable concerns, connection to community is important," he said. "It is a proven and trusted organization with ties to the community. Being part of the Foundation offers my clients the opportunity to be part of something greater than themselves and to see the positive results within the community."



Campbell will be honored May 9 as Professional Adviser of the Year at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's 13th Annual Herbert J. Mueller Society luncheon. The recognition society acknowledges the efforts of professional advisers who are committed to their clients, philanthropy and the community.

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## Funding program provides working capital to convert community IDEAS INTO ACTION

Much like the city of Milwaukee itself, the student population at Carmen Schools of Science and Technology represents a rich diversity.

But with five schools spread across four campuses on Milwaukee's north and south sides, staff wanted to give students a greater chance to interact, learn from and respect each other's different perspectives.

"We want to start setting up the next generation to be successful," said Bevin Christie, Carmen's director of career readiness and community engagement. "What that success looks like is collaboration. Our students have got to start seeing the benefits of coming together."

With funding from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Carmen staff made that collaboration happen this spring. It's a continuation of the conversation begun last fall at its *On the Table MKE* event when nearly 90 students from Carmen's high schools and the

Hmong American Peace Academy joined the Milwaukee Police Department officers in a discussion about racial stereotypes. Carmen was one of 16 organizations to receive Ideas to Action funding as part of *On the Table MKE*, which was designed to accelerate the ideas discussed last fall. Funding ranged from \$500 to \$2,500.

Carmen took students on a bus tour around Milwaukee, led by storyteller Adam Carr, to learn more about its diverse history. Students from its northwest campus, which is predominantly African American, and its southeast campus, which is predominantly Latino, also heard from local civil rights activists Jesus Salas and Fred Reed.

Matters of race or racial equity were discussed at 77 percent of the tables in 2018 and several Ideas to Action projects focused on ways groups could advance racial equity. Creating that opportunity for dialogue is a personal passion for Christie, who is Latina and white.

"I move in a lot of different circles culturally, and I know there are so many shared experiences. If we would just talk, some of those walls would come down," said Christie, who hopes to build on the conversations started this spring.

That momentum-building was a reason May yer Thao, executive director of the Hmong Chamber of Commerce, was excited to participate as an Ideas to Action advisory committee member.

"So many folks need that little bit of capital to get that great idea off the ground," said Thao. "Giving them the opportunity to voice their ideas and implement their ideas is empowering."

Read more about the funded projects at [onthetablemke.org](http://onthetablemke.org).

SAVE THE DATE  
**on the table** MKE  
 returns  
 OCT. 10, 2019

Thanks to Ideas to Action funding, staff and students from Carmen Schools of Science and Technology were able to continue the conversation about stereotypes that they started at an *On the Table MKE* event at Marquette University last fall.

# Couple possess a passion for building community's future talent pipeline

## John and Irma Daniels



To John and Irma Daniels, there is nothing quite like the power of education.

Irma witnessed its transformative nature over the quarter century she spent as a teacher at the former Lady Pitts School, a high school in Milwaukee for pregnant teens.

John, chairman emeritus at Quarles & Brady, has seen its life-changing effects through MKE Fellows, a program he helped develop that offers scholarship, mentorship and professional development opportunities to help African American males graduate from college.

That joint passion has been a driving force in their civic engagement in Milwaukee and one of the reasons why they value their relationship with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. John spent a decade on the Board, including two years as chair. The couple has two scholarship funds – the Levester and Daisy Hall Scholarship Fund, created in honor

of Irma's father, and the John and Irma Daniels Clark Atlanta Scholarship, which supports students at Clark Atlanta University where John once served as board trustee.

### What started the wheels in motion for you to start a scholarship fund?

John: We're both from Milwaukee, so our desire to see other young people have the same



*MKE Fellows, an initiative that helps prepare African American young men for future careers, is one of many areas in which John and Irma Daniels give back to a community they said has given so much to them.*

educational opportunities we had is a huge motivator. You can see the transformative effect of education and what it provides people. There were lots of people who helped us, and so it is just a function of trying to give something back.

### What excites you most about being part of the Foundation family?

Irma: Just knowing there are people there who care about the things that are going on in our community and are willing to work with you to solve some of those problems.

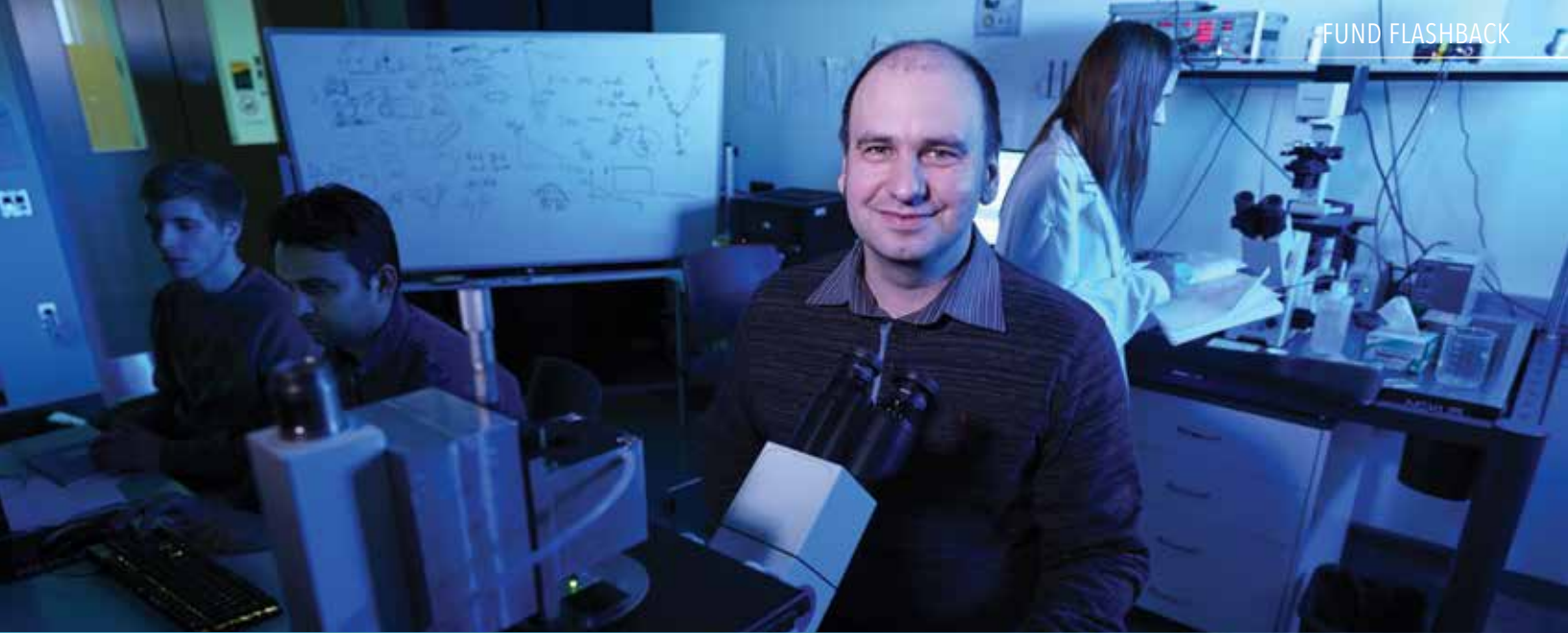
### What kind of impact do you think a community foundation should have?

Irma: Leading the way in some of these important issues for the community to grow and develop. I think the Foundation is definitely doing that and being a voice for those who don't have one.

### How has the Foundation grown and evolved from when you first became involved?

John: In my view, the Foundation is much more a leader in helping to solve problems and bring people together in the community. It's in a unique position in terms of having the ability to make the community stronger but also is not afraid to focus on those things that are more of a challenge. It has done a remarkable job, whether Milwaukee Succeeds or other initiatives. It's not easy to do something that takes a sustained effort over a number of years with the need to have a deep commitment. The Foundation does that – and does it better than any other organization that I'm aware of.





## *Donor's final wish fuels* YOUNG SCIENTISTS' INNOVATION

Shaw Scientist Ionel Popa credits the grant he received in 2017 as a validation of his research as well as instrumental in helping him secure a \$740,000 federal grant.

**D**orothy Shaw's charitable bequest, which occupied no more than 121 words in her 10-page will, was straightforward: Support research in biochemistry, biological science or cancer.

The quiet and conservative widow of Milwaukee attorney James D. Shaw perhaps understood the critical role research could play in eradicating diseases as she lost two sisters to cancer. But outside of specifying that her \$4.3 million gift to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation support research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she provided no parameters for how it should be distributed.

What the Foundation ultimately designed to carry out her legacy, with guidance from leading researchers and scientists, was a grant program that has invested more than \$14.3 million in the careers of 75 young scientists since 1982. Shaw's fund also has given out \$2 million in special grants. Despite these large investments, it is valued at more than \$15 million.

"It is a gift that keeps giving back," said John Corbett, chair of the program's advisory panel and chair of the Medical College of Wisconsin's biochemistry department. "It affords the best and the brightest in the state the opportunity to achieve wonderful success and do the science for that question that they've always wanted to ask."

Each scientist receives \$200,000 in unrestricted support, which enables them to hire research assistants or purchase equipment needed to gather enough preliminary data to compete for larger scale, highly competitive federal grants.

That's exactly what Ionel Popa, UWM's assistant professor of physics, has done since winning the award in 2017. His research focuses on developing and implementing new technologies to study the mechano-biology of proteins and their relation to cancer, muscular dystrophy or inflammatory diseases. Popa said the grant, his first outside of university funding, was instrumental in hiring an assistant

and developing data that led to a prestigious National Science Foundation CAREER Award in 2018.


Shaw's generosity has enabled the universities to retain some of their best young stars, leverage millions in additional funding and advance discoveries that can be felt worldwide, said John Lipscomb, a biochemistry, molecular biology and biophysics professor at the University of Minnesota who has served on the advisory panel since 1995.

Geoffrey Letchworth, a 1984 recipient, described the award as "manna from heaven." He spent 17 years at UW-Madison's veterinary medicine/animal health and biomedical sciences department studying herpes viruses.

"It got things started, it helped make sure things continued and, in the end, it helped me publish," said Letchworth, who was so inspired by Shaw's generosity that he is leaving money in his will to support the program.

Learn more about the 2018 Shaw Scientists at [GreaterMilwaukeeFoundation.org/Shaw2018](http://GreaterMilwaukeeFoundation.org/Shaw2018)

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## Learning by design

Whether an indoor classroom or an outdoor space, a child care center's physical environment matters, setting the tone for the overall development of our community's youngest learners.

A \$96,500 grant enabled St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care to complete a classroom for 1- and 2-year-olds, allowing it to increase enrollment to 160 at its Bucyrus Campus. Ninety-five percent of families come from the surrounding 53205 and 53206 ZIP codes.

Since 2018, the Foundation has invested nearly \$523,000 in more than a dozen capital projects – from new equipment to make a playground fully accessible for children of all abilities, to in-classroom bathrooms, which saves time for teachers and allows students to hone personal hygiene habits. In total, these projects will enhance the learning environments for more than 1,200 children.

"I am excited that early childhood education has become a priority for the Foundation," said donor Dick Weiss. "I've been researching and learning about early childhood education for 20 years and am a true believer that it is the area we can do more for Wisconsin by working and investing together."

