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By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

Across the high plains, groups and organizations are looking for ways to make life better.

Many of those groups start fund-raising efforts to gather money for services to seniors, playground equipment for youngsters, scholarships, preservation of a historical building and the list goes on.



When these nonprofit groups start to organize, they realize the costs involved with forming a 501(c)3 organization to receive donations and to make them tax deductible.

Dejected by the paperwork and management of the funding, some shy away, or the burning passion to make a difference wanes.

That's why the High Plains Heritage Foundation began.

“There are a lot of organizations trying to do good things,” HPH Foundation executive director Sarah Thompson said. “As a community foundation, we allow people to work together for a common goal. Somebody may have a little to give, others may have a lot. With a community foundation, people can pool their funds for a specific cause, whether it be a youth program, beautification project — it allows people to determine what they are passionate about in their community, and still have control to what they giving, and they may even have a larger impact by pooling their funds with others.”

Those with a cause can use the HPH Foundation rather than forming their own non-profit organization. HPHF can be the holder of the funds, which allows donors to receive the tax benefits, and the organization can fulfill its mission of providing the work or service they originally intended.

“We’ve had different funds set up for a specific projects,” Thompson said. “Like the fairgrounds, we set up a fund to redo the barn stables. We have a fund set up to benefit the local Babe Ruth League. Pretty much, with a community foundation, they can decide where they want to contribute their funds, but they don’t have to do the work.”

Using the HPHF allows the donor to earmark their funds for specific purposes, and the donor can establish criteria for use of the funds. Or, a donor can provide funds with no specific criteria, and the HPHF board can decide the use of the funds with the various grant requests they receive.

But the donor can know that their funds will be used on the high plains in one of the many communities served by HPHF. That will become more and more important in the near future as one of the largest transfers of wealth has been projected to take place.

In Kansas alone, \$545 billion is expected to be transferred to the next generation.

“Unfortunately, a really high amount of that, because of the way community and our society is more transient now, will not stay in Kansas,” Thompson said. “With a community foundation, this gives the people in our community the opportunity to give now so they can see the benefits, and be assured it stays in their community. We want people to think ahead and know that if they want to make an impact in their community, they need to plan for it.”

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more about the HPHF, or how to get involved, see the group's annual report inside today's Daily Leader.

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