

The Foundation Review

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Front Matter

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The Foundation Review is the first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards and those who work with them. With a combination of rigorous research and accessible writing, it can help you and your team put new ideas and good practices to work for more effective philanthropy.

The Foundation Review is published quarterly by the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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The Foundation Review is the first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards and those who work with them implementing programs. Each quarterly issue of *The Foundation Review* provides peer-reviewed reports about the field of philanthropy, including reports by foundations on their own work.

Our Mission: To share evaluation results, tools, and knowledge about the philanthropic sector in order to improve the practice of grantmaking, yielding greater impact and innovation.

The Foundation Review is a proud product of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.



Cover Photo:

Grand Valley State University professor Dr. Jenny Jenkins uses a Cooper hawk on the university's Allendale, Mich., campus to aid in her research on chickadees. Photographer: Kendra Stanley-Mills



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Editorial

Dear readers,

I think of this issue of *The Foundation Review* as our pandemic issue. While we have an upcoming issue focused on how foundations responded to the pandemic, this issue was the most *impacted* by it. Authors were working on these papers as their offices and their children's schools shut down. Papers were submitted late, and then reviewers had their own challenges in squeezing in time to thoughtfully read and give feedback. Months later than scheduled, this unthemed issue shares some exciting research and thinking.

Word and Gahre share insights learned from the work of the Wynn Resorts Foundation to support capital improvement projects. While capital funding is not new to philanthropy, this article describes an unusually high level of engagement by the foundation. They essentially project managed these capital projects and brought in other partners, leading to some long-lasting volunteer relationships.

One of the key questions in philanthropy is, "Are we making a difference?" While many of the issues that foundations fund are deeply rooted and require systemic change, **Lynn, Stachowiak, and Coffman** argue that philanthropy can be doing more to assess causality. Being able to clearly attribute change to what foundations funded and grantees did is often seen as impossible. The authors argue that there are more robust approaches to evaluation that should be more widely used that would enable a deeper understanding of causality.

The last two years have brought tremendous disruption to the philanthropic sector (along with the rest of society). **Reichenbach, Lynn, and Heeg** explore the journey Humanity United went through in 2020, focusing on the disruption as a moment to rethink how they might seek to change systems and adapt to emergence and unpredictability.

The reason this journal exists is to disseminate knowledge and improve practice in the philanthropic sector. As such, it is one of the signs of professionalization. An earlier step in this process of professionalizing the sector was the establishment of education programs focused on the sector. **Weber and Long** evaluated the impact of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Building Bridges Initiative, a five-year program to fund nonprofit academic centers as a strategy to increase the nonprofit sector's capacity. They found that the initiative advanced the institutionalization of nonprofit management education by legitimizing grantees both within and outside universities, supporting program delivery and expansion, and fostering collaborative networks.

Lucca-Silveira, Rodrigues, Jerabek, Kalvon Woods, and Vergueiro analyze of the role of Brazilian foundations and their innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors suggests that foundations have been subject to three major innovations: use of social intelligence for the provision of donations and social goods, new technology that can coordinate fundraising campaigns and mobilize civil society support, and shifts in the modus operandi of foundations.

Strawser explores the relationship between taking a leadership role and fundraising outcomes for community foundations. Based on interviews with leaders at 11 community foundations, he found that those that claimed a community leadership role were more successful in fundraising and had a higher profile within their regions that those that did not.

This issue concludes with a review of *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do it Again*. **Layton and Martin** note that authors Putnam and Romney Garrett take a simultaneously broad and richly detailed look at the growth and decline of “community connectedness and social solidarity in America.” The issue of how the culture gets back to being a “we” culture is critical, and one that the philanthropic sector needs to understand and address.

We hope you find that this issue was worth the wait.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Teresa Behrens".

Teresa R. Behrens, Ph.D.
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Executive Director, Dorothy A. Johnson Center
for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University

