



Fund Advisory Committee
Jarrod McCartney, President
Danny Bengt, Vice President
Stacie Heldt, Secretary
Dennis Hansen, Treasurer
Ashley Armstrong
Kim Ely
Kyle Klein
Kory McCracken
Miles McDole
Ashley Olson
Adam Vetter
John A (Jay) Yost

November 30, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

On November 14, around 80 people gathered in downtown Red Cloud to tour several old buildings, most of which are still a year or more away from being capable of hosting a business or providing lodging for visitors. On the surface this doesn't sound terribly exciting, but there was a palpable buzz in the air that night as everyone gathered for a champagne toast at On the Brix—RC's wine bar in the National Willa Cather Center (NWCC)—and dreamt about a future Red Cloud with a vibrant downtown full of activity and amenities. The "Downtown Revitalization Tour" was hosted by the Red Cloud Community Fund (RCCF) and served as a sneak peek of the work going on in 6 different buildings in Red Cloud's downtown. In 2019, RCCF identified creating a Thriving Downtown as one of its community priorities. Thanks to the support of generous donors, we are closer than ever to a vision of Red Cloud with storefronts full of businesses and sidewalks full of shoppers and visitors.

That vision of the future is not far-fetched, though it might have seemed so just a few years ago. After all, the NWCC proved what can be accomplished in our community and one of the buildings on the tour will soon see the transformation of the former Brenda's Shoppe location into the Hotel Garber, a 26 room boutique hotel in the heart of downtown. But what was perhaps most intriguing during the tour was not the buildings belonging to organizations but rather those owned by individuals inspired by the community development work going on in Red Cloud. Local families like the Hansens, Mahins, and Freys have committed to the future of Red Cloud and are dedicated towards making it one of the best small towns in America. What might be most significant about their involvement is that the people who live and work here are really starting to believe that their families have a future in this community. We are also seeing their enthusiasm serve as a magnet for people attraction, as homes are being restored and additional storefronts are being purchased and undergoing transformation.

RCCF has been at the forefront of fostering community development, primarily through the creation of the Heritage Tourism Development Office and The Valley Child Development Center (TVCDC). *Heritage Tourism has helped generate over \$5.5 million in direct revenue for the community since its inception and has played a part in at least another \$6 million generated indirectly or that is presently pending, for a total of nearly \$11.5 million.* These figures are even more impressive when you consider that they do not include funds raised by the Willa Cather Foundation, other than those earmarked for the hotel project. TVCDC continues to grow, serving the needs of 114 children over the past year. The standards for the facility and its staff continue to make it the standard bearer for high quality childcare in rural Nebraska.

RCCF has also helped the community through events like our September Month of Giving Campaign. Just in its 2nd year, this month saw RCCF raise nearly \$24,000 for improvements to the Ballfields off Locust Street, funding for Phase I of a proposed recreation trail, TVCDC, Heritage Tourism, Red Cloud

P.O. Box 263 | Red Cloud, NE 68970 | 402-746-2600 |

The Red Cloud Community Foundation Fund is an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation.



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Youth, the City's Historic Preservation Commission, and the Hotel Garber! In the last two years, RCCF has raised nearly \$39,000 for immediate needs of the community during the September give campaigns. All of this is in addition to our ongoing management of scholarships for both traditional and non-traditional students.

Now, that version of Red Cloud may make it sound like community development is an irresistible force. The truth, however, is that this progress is tentative and its momentum is constantly at risk of being thwarted. The sustainability of Red Cloud and its development continues to be contingent on ongoing support from the people who love their hometown. We cannot continue to do the high quality work we do and meet our mission to make Red Cloud a better place to live, work, play, and visit without your help.

Despite our success, our need for your help is more urgent now than ever as RCCF begins to grapple with more complex projects like ongoing support for Heritage Tourism, TVCDC, and our Legacy Endowment which will ensure that there is a perpetual fund to support the needs of Red Cloud. RCCF is also branching out, having recently added a Hotel Garber account to ensure that vital economic and community development project gets underway ASAP. RCCF has also added a Youth Philanthropy account that will be overseen by Red Cloud youth with grants going towards projects that engage and retain youth. All of these projects are critical to make sure that the community thrives and continues to be the sort of place people want to raise families and call home for generations to come.

We wish we could replicate the energy and enthusiasm from the downtown revitalization tours in this letter. We know that if we could you would be inspired to make a year-end contribution to RCCF to aid in our efforts to make Red Cloud a place everyone is proud to call home and where everyone wants to return. With your support, we know we will soon be hosting another gathering celebrating the grand opening of the Hotel Garber, sitting in new bleachers at the RC Ballfields, attending a ribbon cutting for the Red Cloud Recreation Trail, and improving the lives of Red Cloud youth. Please make a donation and invest in the future of Red Cloud today!

Sincerely,

Jarrod McCartney
President

Danny Benge
Vice President

Dennis Hansen
Treasurer

Stacie Heldt
Secretary

P.S. Even if don't plan on itemizing your deductions, contributions to RCCF will still potentially qualify you for a \$300 above the line income tax deduction (\$600 if married, filing jointly) if you donate before Dec. 31st!

P.P.S. Your 2021 contribution will also count towards our "150 for 150 Campaign." RCCF is attempting to match \$150,000 in donations with another \$150,000 to celebrate Red Cloud's 150th birthday. As of November 29, 2021 we have raised \$122,586 meaning we only need \$27,413 to reach our goal!

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