



Accessible, Effective Local Philanthropy

For Immediate Release

February 24, 2009

Contact: *Mary Langworthy, Executive Director*

Phone: (952) 250-5138

E-mail: m-langworthy@carvercountyfoundation.org

Web site: www.carvercountyfoundation.org

Community Foundation Grants Funds to Two Organizations

“This grant will help to directly save people’s lives in Carver County,” said Mario Cortolezzis, founder of S.A.F.E.R. (Search and Find Emergency Responders). Cortolezzis is referring to the recent grant his organization received from The Community Foundation for Carver County, a local tax-exempt public charity recently formed to help improve lives in the area.

According to Executive Director Mary Langworthy, The Community Foundation for Carver County “serves donors and the broad needs of our community – the people, organizations, cities and rural areas across Carver County. There are many people who can and want to give, and who want their gift to make a real difference in their own backyards. It’s our role to connect those donors – and their charitable interests and resources – with local needs.”

Saving Lives with S.A.F.E.R.

One of those critical local needs is being met through a \$2000 grant to S.A.F.E.R. of Carver County. S.A.F.E.R. is a new organization that searches for and finds people who have a tendency to wander, including those who may have Autism, Alzheimer’s or Down Syndrome, or who have suffered some type of traumatic brain injury. “Once they get lost, the people we are looking for have no way of finding their way back home or to their caregiver,” said Program Director Mario Cortolezzis. “The Foundation grant is already at work, helping to build a safer community for those who are most at risk.”

S.A.F.E.R. works in collaboration with local emergency responders by providing tracking equipment, training, education and support. S.A.F.E.R. also has a strong volunteer base that has been trained to help, including caregivers and family members.

“The Foundation is pleased to help S.A.F.E.R. of Carver County restore piece of mind for caregivers and family members by providing added protection for their loved ones,” Langworthy added.

“S.A.F.E.R. is really about saving lives, period,” said a passionate Cortolezzis.

Connecting Community

A key focus of The Community Foundation for Carver County is to encourage community connections. That message was heard loud and clear by the Carver County

Health Partnership (CCHP) when the Foundation awarded a \$5000 grant to the Community Engagement Action Team of the CCHP. With the organization's proven successes such as *Eat. Talk. Connect!* and the Senior Commission, the CCHP has a history of tackling big issues by drawing in critical players within the community. This grant assists the CCHP in addressing an overlapping concern of keeping people connected with a sense of belonging in the face of rapid population growth.

"The Community Foundation and our Board of Directors strongly believe that we are here to support and complement all of the important charitable work that is happening in our local area. And our recent grants exemplify that message," said Bob Roepke, chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors.

"What's great about a community foundation is there is so much flexibility. From education to homelessness, youth to seniors, or a particular city in Carver County to the county as a whole, your passions, interests and concerns can be addressed through this one organization. It's just a wonderful county asset," Roepke said.

Langworthy added, "A community foundation garners its support from the public. It grows because individuals, corporations, and even government entities and other nonprofits believe in it and help it to grow year after year. It takes the investment of many over time, for a community foundation to be successful."

In an economy where demand for services is increasing, a local philanthropic resource such as the Community Foundation can play a critical role in consolidating resources and making the most of a contribution. "We have a good start under way, but still have a long way to go," Roepke added. "The needs across Carver County far outweigh the funds that are currently available."

To learn more about The Community Foundation for Carver County, click on "view our video" at www.carvercountyfoundation.org or contact Mary Langworthy at (952) 250-5138 or mlangworthy@carvercountyfoundation.org.