

5.8.08 Editorial by Bob Roepke

One of the key threats of continued growth in our area is the negative impact it can have on our sense of community.....but only if we let it. We can never assume that the feeling and spirit of community is a given and will always be with us. If we do not tend to it, if we do not place the highest priority on it, if we do not commit to not only sustaining it but building it stronger our sense of community will erode over time and will no longer be our strength. What is also critical is that we make such a commitment not only in words but more importantly in our actions. We must understand what community means and what the key components of community are and then plan and take actions that support our definition.

The City of Chaska has a third Commitment to Community task force working to identify ideas and actions which stand in support of building our sense of community. It is good to see this continued commitment to keeping our sense and spirit of community strong. There are many, many components to the concept of community and a tremendous number of opportunities to enhance our sense of community. We should never be shy as to identifying and supporting efforts that make us a stronger community. A sense of community is one of the key factors, along with a quality education system, that people have indicated they are looking for as they look for a place to call home. Today, we provide those things to people in our community, it is important we continue to provide those same things into our future.

As we focus on sustaining our sense of community a new organization has been established which is committed to building the sense of community across all of the communities in Carver County. It is The Community Foundation for Carver County (TCFCC). If you're familiar with the Minneapolis or St Paul Foundations you know that the purpose of such a foundation is to support actions that strengthen the communities it supports. TCFCC is trying to replicate such efforts but at home here in Carver County. Again, there are many opportunities in a number of areas of community interest across Carver County which the Community Foundation is looking to support. What is however, needed is the support of the community that wants to see its community become better and stronger. It requires the support of the community to enable the Foundation to make a difference and reward the efforts of those with ideas and energy but maybe not the resources, to go out there and make a difference in the lives of many across our community. Again, TCFCC is looking to provide support to such situations. We no longer need to go to another Foundation, established for another community, to provide the necessary tools and capabilities to support community building efforts here at home. We can now do that through TCFCC.

One of the critical factors to the effectiveness of such organizations is the strong and early support of the community. I'd be remiss if I did not recognize the support of Paul and Sheila Steiner and their generous gift to TCFCC. Their generosity gives TCFCC the ability to make a difference in the lives of many across Carver County and it lays the foundation for the long-term viability of this foundation. The Steiner gift hopefully models the way for others to provide support to such community building opportunities. If you have interest in supporting or engaging in this important Community building initiative please contact Mary Langworthy at 952-250-5138.

So as you can see, priorities are being set and actions are being taken. Such efforts must continue to be developed, grown and supported by our communities. If we don't, we'll face a far different future that the history of our community has provided to us up to this point. We must all be good stewards of and for our community and its future. We shouldn't accept anything less than all of us caring about our community.

Bob Roepke