



BRET BICOY
DOOR COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION, INC.

Gift to charity is investment in county's economy

an investment in our economic development. They're the economic engine at the heart of our tourist economy which ultimately leads to jobs and prosperity for us all.

However, charity is more than just an economic development tool.

A hotel front desk job in Green Bay, Milwaukee or Chicago is often a full-time, year-round position. In Door County, our seasonal nature leads to seasonal jobs, and that creates stresses for those at the bottom rung of the economic ladder. There is poverty everywhere, but Door County is heavily reliant on charities to help ease the challenges for our seasonal economy.

In winter we count on Lakeshore CAP and Feed & Clothe My People to fill a family's cabinet with groceries when the summer's wages are finally gone. We ask the Community Clinic and Door County Medical Center Foundation to assist people whose seasonal jobs don't provide benefits. Our human service organizations work hard to make life easier for those who serve during the summer but are often unemployed in the winter.

Thus, when we say that charity is more important to Door County than any other community in Wisconsin, it's not hyperbole. It's the truth. These organizations are nonprofits because there is no profit to be made. Their future is dependent on the generosity of people like you.

And no institution does more to stimulate and facilitate charitable giving in Door County than the Door County Community Foundation. Our mission is simple – to inspire people to give back to sustain and advance the community we love.

The Door County Community Foundation was originally created as an affiliate of another institution in 1999. It was seven years ago, however, when we became a fully independent corporation exclusively governed by Door County

residents. Since that time, we have redefined our role in the community into four parts.

• **We are a custodian of charitable assets.** The foundation holds millions of dollars of charitable assets, some of which are immediately distributed, such as when we administer the settlement of an estate for the benefit of many different charities.

Other moneys form the principal of endowment funds, forever making distributions in the names of our donors. We also hold more than 50 endowments on behalf of local nonprofits. Since we became a completely independent corporation seven years ago, we've grown from less than \$4 million in assets to nearly \$15 million today. And our growth rate is only accelerating. Our family of charitable funds received \$3 million in contributions last fiscal year alone. Our role is to be a good steward of the assets entrusted to us so we can do more to give back to this community we love.

• **We are a champion of philanthropy.** The foundation encourages giving for the benefit of every charity, to address every issue, and to impact the quality of life of every citizen of Door County.

We keep track of more than 360 local nonprofit groups and write articles and radio commentaries highlighting their good work. We provide quality training, counsel and education for nonprofit boards and staffs so they can become more effective in their work. Our Philanthropist of the Year award celebrates generous people in Door County. Today, we offer counsel to charities as our staff time permits. In the coming decade our goal is to become an even greater champion and advocate for giving in Door County.

• **We are a facilitator of giving.** Over the last seven years, the people of our community have distributed nearly \$5 million to charity through the Community Founda-

tion. We provide a means for giving back which is both easy and highly tax-efficient. From the use of simple tools such as a Donor Advised Fund, to the most complex estates and planned giving vehicles, the foundation raises the level of giving in Door County for the benefit of all charities. People don't just give to us, they give through us. Last year alone, we distributed a record \$1.6 million to local charities on behalf of our many generous donors.

• **We are a convener of the community.** A community foundation's greatest impact often comes from its ability to convene people and organizations around common issues. We have brought folks together to look at a variety of issues.

Those convenings have led to the creation of important initiatives, such as the Women's Fund of Door County, Healthy Water Door County, Door County COIN, and the Door County Scholarship Network, just to name a few. We are now exploring ways to provide both shared administrative services and shared facilities to other charities, thereby minimizing administrative costs for everyone involved. Over the next decade our role as a convener will likely be the most impactful and recognizable thing we do.

The Community Foundation exists to promote charitable giving for the benefit of the entire community. Recently, we realized something truly unique about the name "Door County Community Foundation." The first 10 letters spell out "Door County," the last 10 spell out "foundation." That means "community" quite literally is our middle name.

Bret Bicoy is president and CEO of the Door County Community Foundation.

For more information, call 920-746-1786 or go to www.givedoorcounty.org.

At the Door County Community Foundation, there's a simple truth that guides everything we do – Charity is more important to Door County than any other community in Wisconsin. That's a bold statement, but if you ponder a bit you'll see just how truthful it really is.

The main engine that drives our tourist-based economy is intimately tied to the charities of Door County. Consider that the great arts and cultural organizations that bring visitors here and keep our seasonal residents coming back year after year are charities. There are the terrific performing arts nonprofits like Peninsula Players, Northern Sky Theater and Door Shakespeare, just to name a few. Birch Creek, Midsummer's Music and Peninsula Music Festival provide the soundtrack for our summer. These arts and cultural charities are one of the major draws that bring countless people to Door County.

Yet our reliance on charity goes beyond the arts. The stewards and guardians of our environmental treasures are also charities. Crossroads at Big Creek and The Ridges Sanctuary are important environmental education centers. The Door County Land Trust works to conserve biologically important places. Our state parks may be funded by tax dollars, but tight budgets and fiscal restraints mean that we need vibrant friends groups like the Friends of Peninsula State Park, Newport Wilderness Society, and Friends of Toft Point, among many others, to keep our parks healthy and strong.

A gift to charity in Door County is not only a contribution, it's also