

Annual Big Questions

Reflections on 2023



Our Mission

We support people working together to build healthy, sustainable communities
in East Central Illinois and across the United States.

1. Did we deliver on our work plan objectives and achieve our intended outcomes for the year?

OPERATIONS, GOVERNANCE, AND ACTIVITIES

Yes!

Operations



- **Christina Krost** ([Biography](#)) was hired in September as the new Program Officer for Local Programs. She now oversees the Land, Health, Community, Good Food Policy, and Untold Stories programs.



- Krost and Daniel Doyle both attended the Environmental Grantmakers Association's 2023 Fall Retreat in Montgomery, AL.
- **Daniel Doyle** left the Foundation at the end of 2023 to focus on consulting work in sustainable agriculture.
- Longtime Foundation Board Secretary and Assistant Treasurer, **Steve Grissom**, retired at the end of the year. A donation of \$11,000 was made in his honor to the [International Waldenstrom's Macrobullimia Foundation](#).

Governance



- **Amarilis Pullen** ([Biography](#)) joined the board as an independent trustee. Her personal mission is to help BIPOC leaders leverage their identity and lived experience as a leadership strength, and to create organizational cultures that foster equity, inclusion, and liberation.
- Consultant Renee Michaels worked with the Evaluation and Learning Advisory committee to complete their toolkit for the Foundations internal equity audit. The Advisory Team formally became the **Committee on Learning & Evaluation Practice** ([Terms of Reference](#)) and continued to define Foundation success and established a framework for continuous learning.

Guide to Trusteeship & Board Participation

- The Committee on Trusteeship created a set of guidelines and expectations for participation for the Foundation Board of Trustees. The committee also approved a comprehensive orientation guide to facilitate the onboarding process.

Activities

- The Foundation was due for a new, full strategic planning process this year. However, affirming its commitment to the current direction, the board approved an update of the most recent plan with some modifications.
- Staff reviewed the grant programs' Letter of Inquiry and Application processes to center equity and the grantee experience. As part of the review, staff cut down the amount of information required of potential grantees, reducing the amount of time necessary to complete their request.

Strategic Plan Update & 2023 Activity Report

IMPACT INVESTING

- The first installment (\$500,000) of the Foundation's investment in **Proofing Station** was completed with a second planned for 2024. Bruce is serving on the board as Treasurer and interim President.
- The Foundation signed an agreement with Builders Vision for access to their due diligence work which we used in deciding to invest in **MAD Capital** with a \$500,000 loan to their investment fund for organic farm operating and capacity building loans.

RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY ACTIVITIES

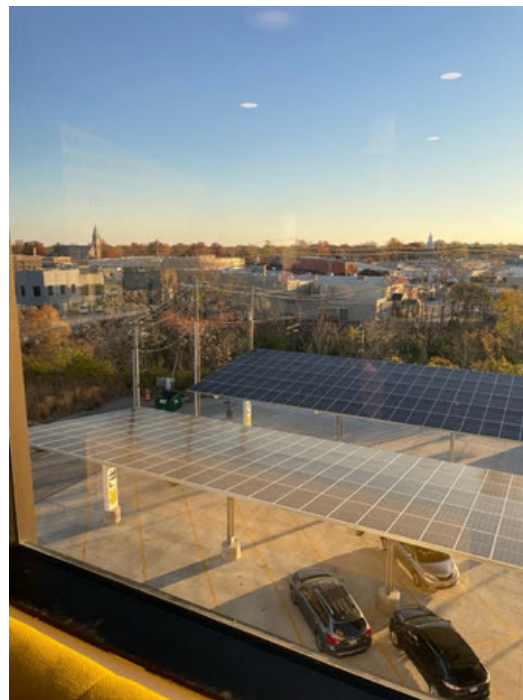
- The Foundation adopted an [Equity Rubric](#) to guide future action and support an audit of Foundation practices with respect to racial equity, social justice and a lens towards rural equity. In 2023, staff advanced the equity work by creating a preliminary set of strategic learning questions based on the rubric for consideration by the Committee on Learning & Evaluation Practice (LEP). The committee also commenced its work of examining our programs through an equity lens in hopes of developing recommendations for possible future actions to be considered by the LFF staff and Board.

GRANTMAKING

Coles County and East Central Illinois (\$1,373,922)

- The **City of Mattoon** has now planted 214 trees since 2020 with Foundation support. Multi-year funding will provide for an additional 100 tree plantings in the area through 2025. In 2023, the foundation also granted the city funds to extend the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail six blocks to the Mattoon Area Family YMCA.

- **LIFT Academy** was granted \$500,000 for a solar canopy and EV charging stations at the former CCI building. The new academy integrates the study of alternative energy and electric charging into its vocational curriculum for a high-growth industry. LIFT recently entered the project for consideration in the [National Electric Contractors Association's \(NECA\) Project Excellence Award](#).
- Pledged \$1M over 3 years for **Emerald Acres Sports Connection** construction. The non-profit overseeing the project received the first installment (\$333,334) in March 2023.
- **Camp New Hope** received \$30,000 toward the cost of an accessible nature trail and parking lot improvements.



LIFT Academy Solar Canopy

Chicago, Statewide, and Beyond

- Continued support for **Fresh Taste** programs Austin Fresh and North Lawndale Fresh.
- Renewed commitment to **Chicago Region Food System Fund** with other Fresh Taste partners.
- Continued funding for **Illinois Regenerative Agriculture Initiative (I-Regen)** at UIUC with other Fresh Taste partners.
- Continued membership in the **Re-AMP Network** to support climate smart ag opportunities in the Midwest. Staff followed their activities and that of the **Food and Farm Communications Fund (FFCF)** via email and newsletter updates.
- Continued engagement with affinity groups and collaborative grantmaking opportunities, including a virtual meeting with **Funders of Regenerative Agriculture (FORA)** and an in-person convening hosted by **Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Funders (SAFSF)**.

Programs in Development



*A collaboration between Lumpkin Family Foundation
and Community Foundations in East Central IL*

Christina Krost worked with community foundations, local historical society leaders, EIU professors, and museum curators to communicate the Untold Stories program goals and assemble an advisory committee.

After crafting a Terms of Reference document, Untold Stories community learning grants were awarded to three local Community Foundations in December 2023. The [advisory committee](#) will meet quarterly in 2024 and early 2025 to deepen community connections and share learning with East Central IL communities.

2a.+b. *How have we contributed to the growth of our grantees and moved the needle on leadership (in ECI)?*

TOTAL GRANTS GIVEN IN ECI IN 2023: \$1,069,590

*Including LHC, Nature Based Climate Action (NBCA), Donor Directed, Matching, Discretionary, and Staff Matching funds.

Emerald Acres Sports Connection

\$1M over 3 years (in partnership with DDFs) Crews broke ground for the indoor facility at the end of May. Fully supported by earned revenue, Emerald Acres is expected to have an enormous, multimillion-dollar economic impact on Coles County, attracting more businesses and adding jobs.

[\[Link to Report\]](#)



Fieldhouse Under Construction

Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Foundation – Hospice House

Following a planning process that began in 2017, Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Foundation's (SBLHF) Willow Breeze Hospice House opened in fall 2023. A five-year funding pledge from members of the Foundation helped to construct the new facility. SBLHF received the last available state license for a hospice house, and it will be the only one located between Peoria and St. Louis.



Willow Breeze Hospice House



Eastern Illinois University – Gail & Richard Lumpkin School of Nursing

In April 2023, Bess Celio, Ben Lumpkin, LFF Board Trustee Chigozirim Sodeke, and LFF staff attended the dedication of the Richard & Gail Lumpkin School of Nursing. After remarks by EIU President Glassman and others, the sign was unveiled, and attendees were invited to tour the school's simulation laboratories.

GAIL & RICHARD LUMPKIN SCHOOL OF NURSING



DDF, Discretionary, and Matching – 7 Local Organizations - \$66,000

Eastern Illinois Foodbank
The Haven (Mattoon Areas PADS)
Mattoon Community Food Center
Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Foundation

Mattoon High School Spectrum Club
Mattoon Area Family YMCA
Mattoon Public Library



Land, Health, Community

\$684,756 – 23 GRANTS TO 22 GRANTEES

This year, the LHC program's focus widened into funding for initiatives to incorporate nature and outdoor green spaces into mental health programs and support. New grants included projects for school gardens and natural play areas, free community wellness sessions, and youth mentorship training.

Five core grantees were each awarded or renewed for five-year general operating grants to continue their efforts to improve soil and water quality across the state through stakeholder education and media.



Prairie Rivers Network – supports continued leadership on important issues like herbicide and pesticide use, river and wetland protection and the protection of biodiversity

throughout Illinois. It will result in increased influence on Illinois state policy related to agriculture, conservation, and water quality.

Illinois Environmental Council – continues the group's successful work to educate lawmakers and introduce them to real businesses and farmers in the sustainable, local food movement, with a focus on leaders in East Central Illinois, as well as strengthen the Illinois Outdoor and Green Caucuses.

Illinois Stewardship Alliance – supports staff to identify, recruit, and train farmers to engage in their work through member caucuses; participate in coalitions; work closely with policymakers and their staff; communicate stories and produce reports on food system issues; and provide opportunities for engagement online and in-person.

The Land Connection – to engage with and support beginning and retiring farmers' land transitions through the creation of a centralized database to connect landowners and land seekers and train additional staff to support these services that would make those connections possible.



Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting – serves the public as a watchdog over influential corporations and institutions through in-depth and data-driven investigative journalism. Stories have ranged from industrial ag runoff resulting in elevated nitrate levels in private drinking water wells to how three widely-used pesticides are driving hundreds of endangered species toward extinction.

2c. How have we moved the needle on our mission areas?

East Central Illinois Health & Community Development

In 2023, the Land, Health, Community Committee discussed the goals and strategy for this program and expanded the focus of support for grantmaking to include efforts to address mental wellness and prevention through individual and community engagement with the natural environment. Six organizations received funding for their projects.

Mid-Illinois Big Brothers/Big Sisters received \$5,000 to recruit and train 10 mentors for at-risk youth, ages 5-18.

Four approved grant proposals will lead to the creation of new outdoor or garden spaces for nature-based learning to promote physical health and mental wellness among school and community participants.

The **Lincoln Log Cabin Historic Site** will receive \$150,000 over three years for the construction of a natural playscape at the site that will provide children with the opportunity to experience nature, stimulate creativity and imagination, and promote environmental responsibility and physical activity, while also offering lessons on local history and conservation.



Lincoln Log Cabin Playscape Rendering

Climate Action & Regenerative Agriculture

Illinois Regenerative Agriculture Initiative (I-Regen) – LHC Grantee

On November 7, 2023, IRAI announced a name change to I-Regen to reflect an ongoing commitment to the future of regenerative agriculture in the Midwest. Collaborating with Extension and University partners, I-Regen provides a regional approach to research, education, and outreach. Through seed grants, community engagement, public convenings, and innovative projects, I-Regen is strategically positioned to develop regenerative agriculture partnerships across the “I” states.





Nature-Based Climate Action Program

\$623,166 - 22 GRANTS TO 20 GRANTEES



*Ben Lumpkin and Foundation Staff with
Grand Prairie Friends*



Grand Prairie Friends

GPF is celebrating 40 years! The organization received project funds in 2023 for the restoration of 8-acres of forest and grassland at Ambraw Woods Land & Water Reserve along the Embarras River (Coles County). A second operating grant will support their community outreach and public education efforts and supplement general operation expenses. Their footprint now covers over 1200 acres across six counties.

Savanna Institute

In 2023, the Foundation awarded a second grant of \$35,000 for three years to implement agroforestry education and outreach programs in Illinois. The new grant will supplement their previously awarded long-term grant to establish and maintain 250 acres of agroforestry in Champaign and Piatt Counties. Their 10-year project focuses on alley cropping and windbreaks implemented across 2-3 privately owned farms under long-term leases by the institute.

Sola Gratia Farm

Sola Gratia recently purchased 29 acres adjacent to their existing operation. LFF funds will support the management of the nearly 1,250 trees and shrubs they plan to plant over the next 4 years. The farm plans to showcase urban regenerative farming techniques including use of greenhouses and high tunnels, agroforestry, long term cover cropping, strategic use of berms and swales, and targeted perennial plantings.

National Food Policy

Good Food Policy Program



**In the program's sixth year:
Awarded \$315,000 to 16 organizations**

The Good Food Policy Program (GFPP) makes grants to support efforts aimed at federal policy changes, whether place-based and grass roots or top-down and national in approach, that encourage and promote regenerative farming practices and equitable food policy across the country with an emphasis on aspects of movement building. The program also supports narrative shifting efforts through grants to grassroots communication networks.

The GFPP Committee did not meet in 2023. Individual committee members continued to pursue personal learning on food policy-related issues and organizations for group discussion in 2024. Meanwhile, grantees received continued support in 2023 as part of the committee's multi-year strategy.

Food and Farm Communications Fund (FFCF)

2023 Impact Report

FFCF advances strategic, grassroots communications and media projects to shift narrative, build power, and embolden transformative change in our food and farm systems through collaborative grantmaking.



In 2023, FFCF served as the inaugural funder of the Kansha Open History Project, a data activism project to create a publicly searchable and accessible database of 7,800 War Relocation Authority farm transfer records concerning the Japanese-American-owned farms and crops seized in California during World War II. The project received coverage in an [excellent article featured in The Guardian](#).

Fellow sub-grantee, Community Farm Alliance (CFA), produced a podcast series called [Blacker Berries](#), amplifying the diverse voices present in Kentucky farming, providing participating farmers with agency in guiding the framing of their stories, including the obstacles they have experienced, and to organize around solutions with emerging farmer leaders.

Healthy Food Access

Chicago Programs

The [Chicago Region Food System Fund](#) (CRFSF) addresses hunger and business disruption by bolstering the region's communities and local food system.



The Fund uses a reform and investment approach to support a more equitable, adaptive, and resilient Chicago region food system. This approach embraces experimentation, promotes BIPOC leadership and ownership, and encourages long-term collaboration.

The total support granted by the Fund is \$14,098,150 to 166 non-profit organizations since June 2020.

In January 2023, CRFSF announced an [additional \\$10 million in funding](#), the bulk of which will be distributed in three rounds of grantmaking through April 2024. The first round awarded [\\$2,150,000 to 23 organizations](#) for projects that guide Chicago's food system away from extractive, commercial agriculture and food systems towards cooperative models and sustainability for both land and livelihoods. Grant amounts ranged from \$150,000 to \$25,000.

A second round in September 2023 focused on growing food system resources. Specific goals for the round included developing technology and other innovations to support new value chain and social movement integrations, and increasing participation by those who have been marginalized in the system.

Aspiramos Juntos

[Aspiramos Juntos](#) [2023 Post Grant Reports](#)

\$330,000

The Aspiramos Juntos program continues to support organizations and initiatives in the Chicagoland area that provide nutrition programs to youth, those that develop urban gardens and farms that serve as a source of health and wellness for communities that face food and economic insecurity, and others geared towards stewarding our natural environment.



17
PROJECTS
FUNDED



139
JOB SEEKERS
TRAINED



14
NEW GREEN
SPACES



101,384
INDIVIDUALS
IMPACTED



121
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS



41,490
POUNDS OF HEALTHY
FOOD GROWN

In 2023, Abraham Celio joined the committee and has proven to be a valuable addition due to his experience with the non-profit environment of the area. Many first-time applicants participated during the 2023 Letter of Inquiry stage, which is evidence of word getting out about this funding opportunity.

Site Visit with Stein Learning Gardens
at St. Sabina.



Growing Home's Food Access Program found success working towards and passing their 3-step GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certification which allows them to sell to more wholesale buyers and was a key goal for expanding their social value-added enterprises and wholesale strategies in the years to come.

Funding for **People Matter's** Build My Block youth gardens program helped to set up this newly-established grassroots organization for success. Feedback from the organization stated that LFF funding played a pivotal role in their ability to build board capacity, hire needed staff and consultants, and plan for the sustainability of the organization.

Neighborhood Fresh Programs

Austin Fresh

\$1,725,000

In its 3rd year of funding, the Austin Fresh funders collaborative made 6 grant awards. One of the grantees, [Austin Coming Together](#) (ACT), received a two-year grant of \$450,000 for each year. This collaborative worked with community partners to support programming that included nutrition education for children and adults, gardening programs, a community incubator kitchen, and much more.

2023 Austin and North Lawndale Fresh Grantees

North Lawndale Fresh

\$1,222,000

Following the collaborative funding model of Austin Fresh, North Lawndale Fresh (NLF) is in its first year of a 5-year commitment, representing a collaboration between five funders: Builder's Initiative, Food:Land:Opportunity, Steans Family Foundation, Walter Mander Foundation, and The Lumpkin Family Foundation. The partnership will work to expand healthy retail options, support community gardens and local food production, grow food enterprises, and protect and strengthen food assistance programs in the North Lawndale neighborhood.

2d. *How have the communities (including family member communities) in which we work benefitted from their relationship with LFF?*

Individual member support in 2023 went to local community organizations and national groups in the following issue areas: environmental conservation, youth arts and education, amplifying marginalized voices, alternative medicine, and mental health.

2023 Discretionary and Matching Program Grants - \$94,642

Reproductive Justice

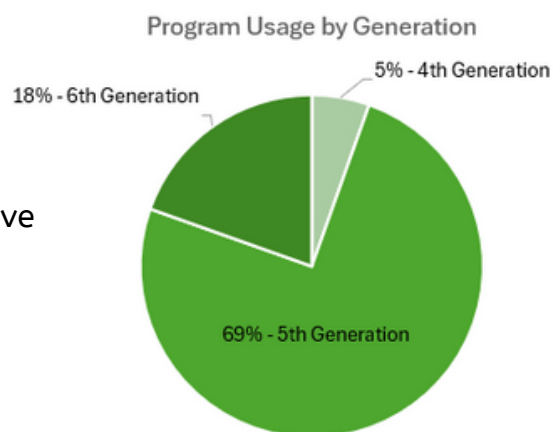
Lumpkin Family Foundation members gave a collective \$16,000 toward reproductive justice to Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Reproductive Freedom for All Foundation (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice America).

Emergency Assistance

Members also contributed \$14,750 toward the essential activities of World Central Kitchen, an organization providing emergency meals worldwide to regions experiencing natural disasters and war.

Regional Giving

Local organizations in Foundation member communities also received funds for wildlife conservation, community arts and history, equal justice initiatives, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental protection, and independent media.



Disaster Grantmaking 2023: Syrian Earthquakes and Maui Fire

Lumpkin Family Foundation members donated \$16,750 for recovery efforts in Southern Turkey and Northern Syria after suffering high-magnitude earthquakes and aftershocks in February 2023. Recipients included World Central Kitchen, Doctors Without Borders, and the International Rescue Committee.

In August, The Hawaiʻian Island of Maui was devastated by fire. Former Foundation staff member Annie Hernandez helped organize the Maui Organizer Mālama Fund to support local community organizers in their care and relief efforts while centering native Hawaiʻian leadership. Foundation members sent \$7,000 toward the fund.



3. Member Engagement – Are family members adequately engaged in our work?

Informed Membership

- WOOP Stats (44 Sends) – Average Open Rate: 82% – Increase of 9% over 2022; Click Rate: 10%
- Members who went to conferences – Ila Duncan @ Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders (SAFSF), National Council of Family Philanthropy (NCFP); Scarlett DeWyngaert attended Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders (SAFSF) in June.
- Two Mission Forum Panels on Mental Health
 - Ted Allen, Assurance Home (May 2023).
 - Dr. Danessa Carter, Assistant Professor and Counselor Education Coordinator at EIU's Department of Counseling and Higher Education (December 2023).



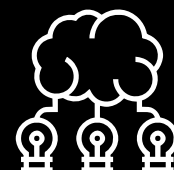
Dynamic and Knowledgeable Leadership

- Evaluation and Learning Advisory Team met five times in 2023 to wrap up their learning with Renee Michaels in a [Summary Report](#) released in July.
- The Advisory team became the Committee on Learning & Evaluation Practice in November and met twice, electing Pam Keon as chair. Monique Schlichtman facilitates the group's continued program assessment and discussion.



Vibrant, Collaborative Culture

- 2023 Discretionary & Matching Fund participation was down slightly from 2022 while the amount of giving increased.
- 19 Members requested \$54,500 in discretionary funds – 48% of Members
- 15 Members requested \$40,142 in matching funds



If you'd like to learn more about joining any of the Foundation's work, please contact Bruce.

4. How well did our investments & managers perform?

| Manager | Market Value | % of Total | 2023 | | | Inception | |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|
| | | | Fund | Benchmark | | Fund | Benchmark |
| Total Managed Assets | \$45,647,291 | 100.00% | 17.80% | 17.10% | ● | | |
| Harris Bank | \$8,943,998 | 19.59% | 6.20% | 5.20% | ● | 3.40% | 3.30% |
| Hedge Funds | \$2,693,735 | 5.90% | 5.87% | 6.30% | ● | 0.65% | 2.31% |
| Neuberger Berman | \$9,284,194 | 20.34% | 26.80% | 26.30% | ● | 9.10% | 8.50% |
| Parametric | \$7,853,943 | 17.21% | 26.00% | 26.30% | ● | 13.50% | 14.10% |
| KLD 2500 Index Fund | \$4,899,953 | 10.73% | 17.20% | 17.40% | ● | 8.40% | 7.90% |
| Trillium | \$4,689,095 | 10.27% | 9.80% | 14.30% | ● | 9.00% | 8.60% |
| Brandes | \$4,179,708 | 9.16% | 30.80% | 19.80% | ● | 6.20% | 5.30% |
| BNY Mellon Intl Stock Fund | \$3,102,665 | 6.80% | 18.50% | 18.00% | ● | 8.30% | 8.40% |



MET OR EXCEEDED BENCHMARK



BENCHMARK NOT MET

For 2023, the Foundation's investment portfolio returned +17.8% and outperformed the benchmark return of +17.1%. The strong performance was primarily driven by the easing of inflation, a resilient consumer driven economy, and the prospect that the Fed will lower interest rates in 2024 and stick a soft landing.

Neuberger Berman, Brandes, and BNY Mellon outperformed their benchmarks for the year, while Parametric, the KLD 2500 Index Fund, Trillium, and the Hedge Fund portfolio all lagged their benchmarks.

Over a longer time horizon, i.e. the inception of each manager, Neuberger Berman, KLD, Trillium, and Brandes all beat their inception benchmarks while Parametric, BNY Mellon, and the Hedge Fund portfolio trailed their inception benchmarks.