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southcumberlandcommunityfund.org | Fall 2017/Winter 2018

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SCCF Welcomes New Director

Around the time our youngest daughter entered college in 2010, my husband, Brown, and I began contemplating how we might return to the mountain. My love of the South Cumberland Plateau and its natural beauty began when my father, the newly-elected dean of the School of Theology at The University of the South, moved my family to Sewanee in 1973. This attachment never waned throughout the 36 years that I spent in Fort Worth, Texas after graduating from The University of the South. Brown's and my dream of moving back to the mountain was realized this past January, and I am happy to be able to call the Plateau home again.

Yet, I am a different person in many ways from the girl who swam at Foster Falls, hiked the Fiery Gizzard Trail, explored Natural Bridge, and attended political science classes in the second floor classrooms of Walsh-Ellett. After a career devoted to the nonprofit sector, I look at the Plateau with new eyes...and I see many opportunities to expand upon the cultural richness which exists in its communities and in its residents.

I am delighted to be allowed to be part of this movement to recognize the potential and outreach of the organizations that serve the Plateau, a commitment which is generously supported by South Cumberland Community Fund. I am also grateful to the SCCF board for giving me the opportunity to work with them and the community toward the goal of creating fulfilling and meaningful lives for all of us who make our home on the South Cumberland Plateau.

- Janet Cooper, SCCF Director

The VISION of the South Cumberland Community Fund is that the Plateau be a place of hope and prosperity for all its residents and communities, inspired by the Fund's philanthropic and regional leadership.



Innovative Philanthropy Internship Program

Awards First Round of Grants

Philanthropy Internship Program grant recipients were presented with their awards by student participants of the program at the Know Your Worth Conference, celebrating SCCF's 5th year anniversary.

The Philanthropy Internship Program awarded its first-ever round of grants this fall to seven local organizations across the Plateau. Representing a new and innovative expansion of SCCF's partnership with The University of the South, the Philanthropy Internship Program was developed to provide an opportunity for University students to learn firsthand about community-based philanthropy. "We believe this is an excellent way to expand the funds available to our community partners and an opportunity for SCCF to share what it has learned about grant-making on the Plateau," said Marshall Graves, SCCF board chair.

Thanks to the funds provided by a generous donor, the participating students distributed \$28,306 in grants to the following seven organizations: Beersheba Medical Clinic, Folks at Home, Mountain Goat Trail Alliance, Pelham Elementary School, Swiss Memorial Elementary School, Tracy City Elementary School, and the Town of Tracy City. Please visit our website to learn more about each project.

The Internship Program is led by Nicky Hamilton, Director of Capacity Building, who holds a joint position with the University and SCCF. The students participating in the Philanthropy Internship Program were: Kelsey Arbuckle (C'19), James Jurgensen(C'18), Clara Kim(C'18), Ashley Krueger(C'18), Anna McClain (C'18), and Hadley Montgomery (C'18).



After shadowing SCCF's grants process and studying philanthropy academically in spring 2016, this fall the students in the Philanthropy Internship Program conducted their own round of grant-giving.

Philanthropy Internship Program

2017 Grant Recipients

Beersheba Springs Medical Clinic	\$5,000
Folks at Home	\$4,383
Pelham Elementary School	\$4,890
Mountain Goat Trail Alliance	\$2,200
Swiss Memorial Elementary School	\$5,000
Tracy City Elementary School	\$4,833
The Town of Tracy City	\$2,000

\$28,306

"The internship allowed me to explore the intricacies of philanthropy and, through that exploration, foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for issues surrounding strategy, outcome measurements, and community agency." - James Jurgensen (Philanthropy Intern)



Becca Stevens

“Know Your Worth: Recognizing the Impact of Rural Nonprofits,” held October 11th in Sewanee, capped off SCCF’s 5th year celebration and brought together more than 90 people from organizations across the Plateau.

Becca Stevens, CNN hero, and founder and president of Thistle Farms, and Karen Proctor, special assistant to the Provost at The University of the South, led workshops that were focused on how to make your organization relevant and the importance of collaborative leadership in working toward a common goal. In the afternoon, presidents from the community foundations of Chattanooga, Memphis, Huntsville, and the Benwood Foundation, as well as other local leaders, presented panel discussions on the challenges of rural funding. Given that most philanthropy is urban-based, the conference focused on how grantseekers in rural areas can craft strong and compelling proposals.

“It was inspiring, well-organized, brought in key leaders, and created a much-needed discussion on obstacles and need for collaboration on the Plateau.”

The conference ended with a keynote speech by Becca Stevens about “love’s escalating power” in community work. She spoke of her organization’s entrepreneurial efforts working with Syrian refugees in Greece and the ever-vital role of sharing love.

Local Leaders Receive Nonprofit Leadership Certificates

At the *Know Your Worth Conference*, 10 individuals working in the nonprofit sector received certificates from Nashville’s Center for Nonprofit Management (CNM) for completing at least six classes offered on the Plateau in 2016-2017.

Betty Carpenter, Patrick Dean, Millicent Foreman, Nicky Hamilton, Julie Keel, Kathleen O’Donohue, and Christy Teasley, current and former AmeriCorps VISTA members Spike Hosch, Jennifer Horton, and Hilda Vaughan were recipients of the CNM nonprofit leadership certificate.



Becca Stevens’ advice to leaders of organizations with a social mission: make it edgy, relevant, and hospitable.



Workshop leader Karen Proctor used puzzles and quilts to illustrate key skills of collaborative leadership: building trust, engaging diverse talents, sharing control, and fostering shared purpose.



VISTA FOCUS:

Meet Spike Hosch

Nick Babson with Spike Hosch

Spike Hosch graduated from The University of the South in 2012 with a degree in the interdisciplinary major of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. He went on to spend two years in Mongolia, where he worked on green energy, microfinance, and carbon finance projects. It was this experience and classes with Sewanee professors Drs. Mohiuddin and Gottfried that sparked his passion for working with sustainable systems and impact investment. He brought this new-found experience to the mountain when he returned in 2015 to serve as the AmeriCorps VISTA Economic Development Coordinator. SCCF and the University co-sponsor the AmeriCorps VISTA program across the Plateau with 18 VISTAs currently serving nonprofits throughout the community. Since his return, Spike has worked on projects that he hopes will encourage and guide economic development in Grundy, Franklin, and Marion counties. He has also formed collaborations with the University's Babson Center for Global Commerce and the Grundy County Mayor's Office to establish an economic development plan with the hope of producing increased job opportunities for low income individuals.

Spike has been working alongside Sewanee alumni and Babson Center board members Nick Babson and Jerry Adams on a project he has named "BetterFi." As Spike explained, BetterFi is a community development financial institution (CDFI) that will act as an alternative to payday and title pledge loans; these loans carry high interest rates that are often detrimental to the financial stability of their customers. Initially, BetterFi will work primarily through partners with the aim to eventually compete with the title pledge and payday lenders that currently operate in the area. "The average BetterFi borrower will pay more than 100% less over the term of the loan – more than 240% less on an annualized rate," Spike said.

Spike is also working with Nick and Jerry to identify different University models that could be used to incorporate the BetterFi program into the University's extracurricular programming. "We are hoping to one day offer extracurricular courses that teach students about the financial layout of rural America, and that include a practical component through which students learn financial coaching, how to offer income tax assistance, and how to underwrite loans," Spike explains. The hope is that students will function as fellows or interns and potentially make a career in finance after graduation.

"One of the big keys in terms of making all this happen is being able to work with Jerry Adams and Nick Babson," Spike says. "Both Jerry and Nick have extensive experience in community development finance. Their expertise has been a huge asset in terms of advising me through this entire process, and they have put me in touch with a wonderful network of people across the country who have experience working with CDFI's and business lending, community development, and especially with incorporating the educational piece into all of these things as well," says Spike.

This is Spike's second and final year with the South Cumberland Plateau VISTA program, though he would like to remain on the mountain to continue his valuable work for the Plateau. Spike's devotion to the this area is inspiring, and there is no doubt that through his commitment he has done much to strengthen our Home, our Mountain, and our Future.



L-R: BetterFi board members Bill Harper, Nicky Hamilton, David Shipps, Charlene Butner, Tom Sanders, Jerry Adams, John Goodson, and Spike Hosch. Not pictured: Nick Babson, DeDe Clements, and Sarah Lodge.



Our Grants At Work

AmeriCorps VISTAs working on hoop garden at Tracy City Elementary School.

2017 SCCF
Grants Committee

Mary Jo Gallagher, Chair
Jade Berry
Daniel Crabtree
Don Hutchinson
Elizabeth Masters
Marietta Poteet
Valerie Sanders



On September 23rd, the Mountain Goat Trail Alliance broke ground in Tracy City for the next segment of the Mountain Goat Trail.



Grundy County 4th graders participating in the Friends of South Cumberland State Park program Every Child in the Park.



Third grade students from Coalmont, North, Palmer, Pelham, Sewanee, Swiss, and Tracy City elementary schools attended a Halloween concert performed by the Sewanee Symphony on October 31st in Guerry Hall on the campus of The University of the South. The students were able to attend the concert through a grant funded by the South Cumberland Community Fund in conjunction with the McConnell Trust.

Donor Spotlight



Joan & Clopper Almon

The Almon's connections to the area reach back to Clopper's summer vacations with his family in Beersheba Springs. They were aware of the need for a community fund from early on, with Clopper recalling in a recent conversation, "We were 'there' before you existed." Joan added, "I was President of the Beersheba Springs Historical Society and people came to us looking for funding for special events and activities. It became clear we needed a community fund."

The Almon's were first in making a planned gift to SCCF. They understand that such a gift provides a sense of permanency. "We believe that by making a planned gift we express our optimism and confidence in the Fund and the work it will continue to do for many years to come," Joan explained.

This past spring Joan assisted in bringing a delegation of kindergarten teachers and school leaders from Grundy County to a NYC conference that included workshops on innovative play. These opportunities have led to new approaches to summer programs in the area and new kindergarten initiatives aimed at improving student skills.

Joan reflected, "We love the Community Fund and are so impressed with how it's taken off. I'm particularly impressed with the strategic planning work and the decision to put funds into Capacity Building. This makes great sense - I love pioneer work of any kind and know from my own experience that young nonprofits need help to become strong, sustainable organizations."

Carolyn & Dan Hatfield

There are many ways to support South Cumberland Community Fund, and Carolyn and Dan have shared time and talent to help the Swiss Memorial Elementary School library get a new lease on life.

A retired librarian, Carolyn assisted Coalmont Elementary School in organizing their library during SCCF's *Make a Difference Day* in March 2017. This past summer, Swiss Elementary School secretary Felicia Birdwell reached out to SCCF to see if Carolyn might help the school update their library. Carolyn led 10 community volunteers over 19 days and contributed 157 hours to clearing out books that were no longer useable after many years. Carolyn noted, "Volunteering our time for worthwhile community projects is something we all can do. It is so rewarding."

The school also received a \$5,000 grant this fall through the inaugural Philanthropy Internship Grants program, an innovative collaboration between SCCF and The University of the South, to enhance the school's library with a scanning system, a spine label maker, shelves, and other supplies.

See p. 7 for a photo of Carolyn and other community volunteers for this project.





An Evening with Jon Meacham

L-R: SCCF board member Nancy Bowden, Nick Babson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham, and the University's Vice Chancellor John McCardell share a light moment at SCCF's fundraiser held September 30th in the homes of Mary and Nick Babson and Laura and Scott Anderson. SCCF raised more than \$17,000 for the annual fund from this event.

Make A Difference Day March 3, 2018

In spring 2017 more than 400 community members came together to Make A Difference at elementary schools across the Plateau. Parents, teachers, students, and community members spent a morning completing projects ranging from building a bridge across a stream, to spreading mulch on playgrounds, to painting murals in school cafeterias. The phenomenal success of this event prompted the call for another Make A Difference Day, which is set for Saturday, March 3, 2018. Watch for sign-up announcements.



2017 Make A Difference Day at Tracy City Elementary School

SCCF 2017 Annual Fund Drive Coming to a Close

There is still time to make a gift to this year's annual fund drive. You may use the enclosed return mailer to send your check to SCCF or go to our website at www.southcumberlandcommunityfund.org and click "Support Us" to make your donation. And, don't forget to watch your email for an exciting announcement about the success of this year's endowment fund campaign! Thank you for your support.

New Opportunities for SCCF Donor Outreach

SCCF has recently created a Professional Advising Network for those in the community with special skills to share. Your donation of time and talent is most welcome - please contact SCCF if you are interested.



Professional advisor Carolyn Hatfield, second from left, with volunteers Renee Grooms, Felicia Birdwell, Bonnie McCardell, and Anne Davis; and Swiss Elementary principal Jamie Ruehling. These volunteers offered their talents in the fall for a makeover of the school's library. See p. 6 for before and after photos.

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SCCF's *Lighting Up Lives* card is a great gift and a meaningful way to show appreciation for someone in your life. For every \$10 donation you make to SCCF you will receive a beautiful holiday card to send to your honoree that informs them that you have made a donation in their name. By making this gift to SCCF you not only celebrate the people who light up your world, you also help SCCF light up lives across the Plateau through its support of the many nonprofit organizations that serve the communities of the mountain.

To make a donation to *Lighting Up Lives* and receive your holiday card(s), go to the SCCF's website at www.southcumberlandcommunityfund.org to place your order. Or, you can email the SCCF office at jcooper@southcumberlandcommunityfund.org. Thank you for your support!



Our Home. Our Mountain. Our Future.