Mission

Investing in ideas and leadership that contribute to and advance the cultural, intellectual and social interests of the communities we support.
Kirkpatrick Philanthropy

Founders John and Eleanor Kirkpatrick believed that a strong cultural and service community would benefit central Oklahoma well into the future. The Kirkpatrick family and trustees of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund continue to honor and build upon their vision through significant initiatives, an endowment program and a grants program that funds projects and general operations for qualified nonprofits in central Oklahoma and the Colorado Springs area.

The Kirkpatrick Family Fund values leadership, thoughtful strategy, risk taking and a passion for mission. We believe these values make a difference in the cultural landscape, health and well-being of the community. This is clearly reflected in Oklahoma City through the Fund’s work in Teen Pregnancy Prevention and the reinvention of City Arts Center as the Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center. These two Oklahoma initiatives will have a significant and positive long-term impact.

In Colorado, the Kirkpatrick Family Fund – through the Historic Green Mountain Falls Foundation – is committed to positive community development for the town of Green Mountain Falls, Colorado. Located at the base of Pikes Peak, the town provides an incomparable setting for the Green Box Arts Festival, a multi-day event that combines the natural environment with contemporary arts and culture.

The Kirkpatrick Family Fund responds to current community priorities through the grants program, which supports endowment, project and general operations support.
Dear friends, colleagues and philanthropic partners,

2013 was a very positive and productive year for the Kirkpatrick Family Fund. In this year’s annual report, you will find out about many of our efforts to improve the lives and communities of our fellow citizens. While most of our support is focused in central Oklahoma, we also contribute philanthropically in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Marfa, Texas. Also in this report, you will see profiles of individuals who are inspirational to us, who we have learned from and who we hold in high regard.

Of the many grants we have given this year, I would like to comment on two, as I believe they are grants we are making today that will have long-term positive impacts for the future.

Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center (formerly City Arts Center) went through some dramatic changes in 2013 that will successfully position the organization as it begins a capital campaign this year for the eventual move to a new campus at 11th and Broadway in Oklahoma City (with all fingers and toes crossed, in 2017). Oklahoma Contemporary has called the fairgrounds home since 1989, and its board has long felt this location is its greatest shortcoming.

Of the changes that have taken place this year, the board has increased in size to include members from different parts of the community – not only adding specific talents, but also increasing all committees to include community partners who can help us fulfill the mission of encouraging artistic expression in all its forms through education and exhibitions of artwork. Over the years, tens of thousands of students of all ages, of every imaginable background and talent level, have come to City Arts/Oklahoma Contemporary to take part in classes and view exhibitions, documentaries, performances, etc. All of this has given many in Oklahoma City a lifetime appreciation of the arts and enthusiasm for creative practice.

On a recent trip to San Antonio to attend the Conference of Southwest Foundations, I visited the food bank for a tour. Those workers are doing a wonderful job responding to the community’s needs there. During the tour, there was an explanation of how the food bank responds to families with children they cannot feed and how it provides food to families during the school year, on the weekends and during the summertime. Once I got back to my hotel room, I did some basic research and found that
people having children that they cannot feed has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. I’m not talking about not being able to send these kids to college, **but simply having children they cannot afford to feed.** This is the most basic responsibility of parenthood.

The effort of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund to reduce teen pregnancy in Oklahoma County has never been more important. About 2,700 children are born into poverty every day in the United States. A large percentage of these are babies born to children ... and many of them here in our hometown. Our efforts to reduce teen pregnancy are through education, and the results of our effort have been positive. The number of births in Oklahoma County to girls ages 10-19 has decreased by almost 20 percent in the past three years. Our team of health educators has delivered research-based curriculum to more than 3,000 high school students in central Oklahoma. If you feel strongly about this issue and want to help, certainly our partners at Variety Care, Teen emPower!, Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy would be happy to share their positive work with you.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn’t draw your attention to ArtDesk, a new magazine that supports our efforts. This is a twice-yearly publication of the Kirkpatrick Foundation that focuses on contemporary arts, performance and thought in Oklahoma, Texas and Colorado. Just visit artdeskmagazine.com to take a look or subscribe.

Thank you for helping us to make such a difference. The trust and responsibility that has been placed with me, the staff and trustees of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund is taken very seriously.

We look forward to an exciting 2014.

– Christian Keesee
PROFILE

BARBARA THOMPSON
“It gives them a greater perspective on their own culture, and opens their eyes to a greater view of the world and how we live our lives.”

— Rachel Curtis
“But all in all, reading is a solitary activity. When you read, you pause to reflect. You make associations with your own life.”

W.RITER BLAKE BAILEY, AN OKLAHOMA CITY NATIVE, has emerged as one of the best and brightest contemporary minds to hail from the metro area. Although he has since lived in numerous cities across the country, this self-described “chronicler of middle-class chroniclers” relates his middle-class upbringing in Nichols Hills to that depicted by authors Richard Yates and John Cheever, the subjects of two widely-acclaimed biographies that have earned Mr. Bailey international renown.

Heralded as “the definitive biography of John Cheever” by critics and praised by Cheever’s own family, who granted Mr. Bailey access to more than 4,300 single-spaced pages of Cheever’s personal journal, “Cheever: A Life” won the 2009 National Book Critics Circle Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

In a period when video games, YouTube and social media are redefining entertainment, Mr. Bailey powerfully exalts the enduring merit of literature. Consumers of the literary arts, he explains, experience benefits not offered by mass entertainment platforms.

“Nothing makes me happier than to talk with someone who engages me about books and writers that I love,” Mr. Bailey says. “But all in all, reading is a solitary activity. When you read, you pause to reflect. You make associations with your own life.”

Movies, television, and other screen-centered activities, on the other hand, have a contrary effect on human emotion.

“The function of mass entertainment is to distract you from thinking about what’s going on inside,” Mr. Bailey says. “It’s important to know how to be alone, to cultivate an undistracted space. If you cannot be alone, you are guaranteeing yourself profound unhappiness.”

To illustrate, Mr. Bailey points to the subjects of Cheever’s short stories, residents of a cultural phenomenon fueled by the post-WWII boom economy: suburbia. Cheever soberly interpreted the results of a demographic free from the constraints of low wages and long work weeks.

“People thought the suburbs would test the limits of human potential,” Mr. Bailey says. “That didn’t happen. People drank too much. They grew quietly desperate, and bored.”

For Mr. Bailey, engagement with the arts is a potent antidote to this malaise. Colorado’s Green Box Arts Festival offers a compelling opportunity to connect with that creative energy. The event, supported by the Kirkpatrick Family Fund, gathers the best of today’s artists for readings, performances and fellowship.

Mr. Bailey, who has twice been a guest, credits the natural surroundings of Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, with the receptive, almost blissful, atmosphere that permeates the festival.

“It is an absolutely beautiful part of the world,” he says.

— Rachel Curtis
“The more you can connect life experience to what you’re teaching, the more they understand. Art is a conduit.”

SENIORS AT HARDING FINE ARTS ACADEMY put up impressive numbers in 2013: more graduates were accepted into college than in any previous year, with 93 percent going on to higher education, and three were awarded Oklahoma City University’s prestigious Clara Luper Scholarship.

Harding is neither elite nor affluent. As a charter school, it enrolls any applicant, with priority given to students from Oklahoma City public schools. Currently, 58 percent of its students meet federal poverty guidelines. State funding is provided per pupil, with additional capital or infrastructure costs borne by the academy.

Principal Sherry Rowan credits the high school’s stellar performance to its integration of arts with its core curriculum, an approach embraced by the Kirkpatrick Family Fund. As a fellow of the A+ school model pioneered in North Carolina, which posits that learning is most effective when it reflects the behavior of the human mind, Mrs. Rowan trained Harding’s first teachers in the method before being named principal in 2006.

Mrs. Rowan, who has a Ph.D. in Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum and has worked in public, parochial and private schools, explains the philosophy she oversees at Harding.

“The more connections there are between different areas of the brain, the smarter a person is,” she says. “The brain is integrated, and classes should be, too.”

In practice, this means origami might be used to teach angles in math class, and instructors rely on math to teach music. Incorporating art provides students access to various learning pathways, and perhaps most importantly, activates their emotions.

“Emotions are blended into our experiences,” Mrs. Rowan explains. “The more you can connect life experience to what you’re teaching, the more they understand. Art is a conduit.”

Mrs. Rowan helps Harding’s students engage by providing arts electives that range from piano to Web design to ballet, and by personally vetting and hiring incredible teachers.

“Arts integration is a great idea, but hard to do,” she says. “I hire very creative people.”

Glowing feedback from parents, higher exam scores and rising matriculation rates confirm the impact of arts education that Mrs. Rowan sees in her classrooms. Yet the greatest benefit may be the lifelong appreciation her students develop.

“The arts become a given in their personal story,” Mrs. Rowan says. “They keep that forever, and they pass it on.”

The Kirkpatrick Family Fund has provided the academy with intermittent support, most recently in establishing an endowment to benefit Harding’s arts education mission and to honor the passionate support of John and Joy Reed Belt.

— Rachel Curtis
GRANTS 2013
In fiscal year 2013, the Kirkpatrick Family Fund made 149 grants to cultural, civic and social service organizations totaling $4,512,850. The following illustrates how the funds were distributed to support the Kirkpatrick family’s diverse interests in central Oklahoma and the Colorado Springs area.

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The Kirkpatrick Family Fund provides support for specific projects, general operations and endowment. A complete list of the organizations receiving grants, plus eligibility and grant guidelines, can be found on our website, kirkpatrickfamilyfund.org.
Following the successful completion of a $9 million capital campaign, the Oklahoma City Zoo broke ground in 2013 on the Joan Kirkpatrick Animal Hospital. The Kirkpatrick Foundation and the Kirkpatrick Family Fund joined forces in 2012 to provide the lead gift for the campaign.

This provided the philanthropies with an opportunity to honor Joan Kirkpatrick for her leadership in the area of veterinary care for domestic, wild and exotic animals in Oklahoma. The new animal hospital ensures the health and well-being of the animals in the charge of the Oklahoma City Zoo and Oklahoma Zoological Society, one of the nation’s leading authorities in zoological animal care. The animal hospital will open in late summer 2014.
In 2007, Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma, with the support of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund and Third Degree Advertising, launched a marketing initiative aimed at reducing teen births in Oklahoma County.

This campaign — active between August 2007 and August 2011 — was extremely successful, directing more than 4,102 new contraceptive clients aged 15-19 to Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma clinics. (An additional 3,978 returning clients were served during that same period.) To put this in perspective, a sexually active teen using no form of birth control has a 90 percent chance of becoming pregnant in one year. With proper use of a prescription contraceptive, that risk drops to less than 1 percent. In those four years, it’s the difference between 7,272 possible teen pregnancies or 81.

In 2012, these same initiative partners embarked on the development of a second campaign with a new theme, based on community research and input from focus groups of older teens living in the targeted ZIP code areas in Oklahoma City. The criteria for selecting a spokesperson for the campaign were established by this group of teens. The representative chosen was Tiffany Haddish, a popular stand-up comic and actress. Tiffany’s personal connection with Planned Parenthood made her an enthusiastic advocate for the new campaign.

The materials developed with Tiffany are edgy, funny and direct. The television and radio ads feature the tagline, “Know what you can’t afford at your age? A baby.” This tagline, along with photos of Tiffany, is carried over into the print and electronic materials.

Most teen births in Oklahoma are to older teens. Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma offers affordable contraceptive methods and counseling, so a campaign targeting older, sexually active teens just made good sense — and it is working in our communities.

In 2013, the campaign partners were honored with the national Affiliate Excellence Award in Marketing and Advertising from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

— Anita Fream,
Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma
Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center celebrated two important milestones in 2013. After 24 years of operating as City Arts Center, the organization took the first of many steps in its transformation into a regional force in contemporary art. The name change — Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center — was accompanied with an expansion in arts education programs and an exhibits schedule that illustrates the depth and breadth of artists who are creating the “art of our time.”

These programs will continue to expand and grow in anticipation of the relocation to a new building in the Midtown area at Northwest 11th Street and Broadway Drive.
The transformation of Oklahoma Contemporary and the addition of Marfa Contemporary, a satellite gallery of Oklahoma Contemporary located in rural West Texas, have been received with great enthusiasm by the public. The cooperative programming between Oklahoma City and Marfa creates greater opportunities for artists, as well as education programs that foster a greater appreciation for the process and the art.
Capacity crowds enjoyed the numerous activities that were part of the 2013 Green Box Arts Festival. *Cloud City* by Argentinian artist Tomás Saraceno was experienced by more than 3,000 visitors who traveled to Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, to view the art installation over the period of three weeks. The work was on loan from the Christian K. Keesee Charitable Trust, and the Bee Vradenburg Foundation provided support for the first Green Box arts administration internship to coordinate the volunteer support required for the installation.
Performances featured Keigwin + Company, the New York-based contemporary dance company; Ormao Dance Company of Colorado Springs; a solo concert by Oklahoma fiddler Kyle Dillingham; and a special guest appearance by the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony.

The Pikes Peak Library District worked with Green Box Arts Festival to produce a live broadcast and webinar with acclaimed author Blake Bailey. The Haunted Windchimes, drawing their sound from traditional folk and American roots music, launched the 11-day festival at a downtown block party. Established partnerships with the Church in the Wildwood in Green Mountain Falls, as well as new partnerships with the Business of Art Center in Manitou Springs, offered classes and volunteer opportunities for youth and adults throughout the festival’s 11 days in the incomparable beauty of Green Mountain Falls.
STANDING (from left)
Ann Johnstone
George Drew
Louisa McCune-Elmore, Adviser
George Records
Liz Eickman, Director
Christian Keesee, President
Nancy Anthony, Secretary/Treasurer

SEATED (from left)
Jane Harlow
James Pickel
Polly Nichols
Douglas Cummings

NOT PICTURED
Anne Hodges Morgan, Vice President
This is a question that is not always easy to measure, but in 2013, I am proud to say the Kirkpatrick Family Fund made great progress in supporting programs that we believe will have a significant impact on community development, contemporary art and the prevention of teen pregnancy. Additionally, we continued to respond thoughtfully to the community through our grant programs. This work requires continuous self-education, collaboration with knowledgeable individuals and institutions, and the ability to look ahead long term in order to achieve the desired change we seek.

I think it is appropriate to take this space to acknowledge the many organizations representing numerous individuals who have made it possible to advance the interest and mission of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund:

Oklahoma City Ballet, Green Box Arts Project, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center, Church in the Wildwood, Town of Green Mountain Falls, Pikes Peak Library District, Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma, Variety Care, Teen emPower!, Keigwin + Company, and the Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

In closing, I want to thank Chris Keesee, president, and the trustees of the Kirkpatrick Family Fund for their vision and trust of staff to carry out this work, and the staff who bring their unique talents and thoughtful perspective to these tasks every day.
Since its inception in 1989, the Kirkpatrick Family Fund has contributed a total of $62,053,219 to qualified nonprofits.