

ABOUT US

History

Incourage Community Foundation began in 1994 as Community Foundation of South Wood County – an endowment created “*for the community, by the community.*”

Richard S. and Mary Virginia Brazeau had a dream to provide a lasting gift for the good of the south Wood County area. This legacy could only be realized through the creation of a permanent endowment. Richard did not live to see his dream realized; however, his wife Virginia, working with the Richard S. Brazeau Family Foundation was instrumental in establishing the Community Foundation through a \$1 million matching grant challenge in 1994.

Further financial support was given by Virginia and the Richard S. Brazeau Family Foundation to pay for Community Foundation operating and administrative costs in its first seven years.

Today

Incourage is a leader in rural community development, serving the south Wood County area with programs in workforce development, community information, civility, adaptive leadership, learning, and grant-making.

We changed our name to Incourage Community Foundation in January 2012. The name change reflects our growth and role in the south Wood County area. You encourage us; we encourage you; let’s act in courage together.

The evolution of Incourage into “rural community development” began in 2001 in response to a decline of local agricultural markets and globalization of paper manufacturing. But before understanding this role, it is helpful to have a little background ...

The traditional role of community foundations is to serve as autonomous nonprofit, philanthropic organizations that manage permanent endowment funds. There are more than 700 community foundations in the United States.

Investors are local and non-local donors who care about a specific geographic area, and leadership is a volunteer board of directors made up of local citizens. We currently have more than 400 charitable funds created by contributors and community-based organizations.

Community foundations use a portion of income from fund investments to make grants. We help support: **a)** donors who wish to contribute to charitable causes and **b)** nonprofits and community groups seeking money to help them achieve their mission.

These endowments enable donors and Incourage to become catalysts for significant community change through visionary, diverse, and inclusive philanthropy.

One of the earliest examples of our role as community convener was in 2002; Incourage held public forums



to bring together elected officials, residents and organizations to help convert an empty Walmart building into a modern home for three senior-based organizations and a community access TV studio. This grass roots effort turned a blighted portion of

Continued ►

downtown into an “aesthetic jewel” called **Centralia Center!** In 2007, even more investors built a \$2 million community theatre, thus enhancing the downtown’s cultural life.

The Whole Picture

Unlike a nonprofit that may focus exclusively on one issue, we work across many issues to connect, support, and align resources – looking at the ‘whole’ which is greater than the sum of its many parts.

Flexibility

We help with bringing people together, fund-building efforts, and key collaborations – working with partners to marshal all the activity needed in order to create positive change.



Inclusive and Nonpartisan

We help bring diverse and sometimes divergent members of the community together in a nonpartisan manner.

Resource Leveraging

We handle many duties in order to match charitable resources with community opportunities – from commissioning research on local issues, establish funding streams, finding resource partners, identifying organizations to do the work needed, to serving as a fiscal agent for start-ups.

Permanence

Incourage is here to stay. We are built on the financial capital of permanent endowed funds for the south Wood County area, and our commitment to this community.

Our Values

We love our community and believe in its people. The future of our community is at stake; doing nothing is not an option. *We value...*

- **Courage** – we take informed risks; fear is not a barrier.
- **Hope** – we choose to be optimistic and inspire opportunities.
- **Leadership** – we lead, serve and encourage others.
- **Trust** – we honor each other and act with integrity.
- **Working together** – we accomplish more together than apart.
- **Learning** – we seek knowledge and promote lifelong learning.
- **Giving** – we celebrate sharing and generosity.

Incourage Community Foundation is connecting people and resources

for improving the community. Working with us ensures that your investment will create greater impact and lasting positive change.

To learn more, watch *Not Your Ordinary Foundation* at www.youtube.com/incouragecf.

For additional information:

Incourage Community Foundation

478 E Grand Ave
Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494
715.423.3863
hello@incouragecf.org

www.incouragecf.org

serving the south Wood County area

incourage
community foundation

