

2021 Brings Changes to the Community Foundation

Written by Editor

Tuesday, 15 December 2020 14:01



On January 1, Scott Wierman joins the Community Foundation as our president and CEO. As an introduction, we're sharing his responses to a recent Q & A session we conducted in late November, as he was packing up his house in Winston-Salem to move to the Lowcountry.

Q: What do you enjoy most about working for a community foundation?

A: I enjoy the breadth of the work. Strong community foundations can be engaged in numerous areas of civic life, with an eye toward improving the quality of life for its residents. Connecting charitable people with causes that matter makes the work invigorating and rewarding.

Q: What is the greatest value a community foundation brings to the community?

A: Bringing together a coalition of groups to address local challenges and opportunities is the "sweet spot" for community foundations. Seldom is the foundation the expert on any specific issue, but its perspective and networks can help advance conversations and move them toward positive action.

Q: Share the most meaningful story you have from your community foundation work.

A: In 1990 a homeless man called to ask about the process of establishing a scholarship fund. Obviously, I had some questions about the appropriateness of accepting money from a person who didn't have safe housing. He showed up to our offices with all his belongings and a check for \$45,000. I shared my discomfort with accepting such a large gift when he had other personal needs. He explained that the money was from his mother's estate, that she had been a career teacher, and that he needed to do something positive with "her" money. We established the scholarship that day; since then dozens of students have benefited from his generosity. I was curious as to how he had found out about the foundation and our scholarship program. He laughed and shared that many years earlier he had applied for a foundation scholarship and had been declined, which he said was the right decision, so he knew that the foundation would make the best decisions for his mom's fund. We remained in touch for many years until his passing. He carried my business card in his wallet and I carry his lesson of generosity with me to this day.

Q: What is the accomplishment you're most proud of?

A: Other than my family, I am most proud of my work in growing relationships with hundreds of people who chose to work with The Winston-Salem Foundation. Growing relationships with nonprofits, civic leaders, and donors in order to collaborate on community issues allowed our community to become a better place to live.

Q: When you're not working, what do you do to relax and have fun?

A: I enjoy cycling and look forward to the flat bike paths across the island!

Q: Dogs or cats?

A: We have one dog, a 10-year-old rescue named Sadie.

Q: Sunrises or sunsets?

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A: I am an early riser so I'll go with sunrises; I like the potential each new day brings.

Above: Scott Wierman, incoming President and CEO of Community Foundation of the Lowcountry