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Impact COMO 2020

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→ Photos by Anthony Jinson



Celebrating the passion and generosity of the individuals, organizations, and companies that work to make Columbia a better place for all.

Most Impactful Executive Director

Larry McDaniel, Coyote Hill



In 1991, Larry McDaniel and his wife founded Coyote Hill Children's Home. In those 29 years of operation, Coyote Hill has cared for over 600 children, worked with veterans through the organization's equine program, started Coyote Hill's Foster Care Services, established an office in Columbia, and is working to establish an office in Jefferson City, to name a few milestones.

Larry's not slowing down, either. His upcoming goals for Coyote Hill are focused on expansion — expansion into the Jefferson City area, expansion of foster care services to other parts of rural Missouri counties, and expansion of the organization's equine program for veterans. With so much success and potential for the future, Larry credits where the organization is today to the enormous generosity of the Columbia community, and of course, to the dedicated and loyal staff of Coyote Hill.

"It takes the best people to do what we have accomplished, and the people that serve at Coyote Hill give 100%," Larry says. "They bring their A-Game every day."

Being a nonprofit with a heavy focus on children, it's no surprise that children and making positive changes in the lives of generations to come is what keeps Larry motivated to continue giving back to the community. "I am a firm believer that everything one can invest into the life of a child today will be re-invested by the child into the lives of their own marriage, their own children, their own community," he says.

As the years go on, Larry would like to see Coyote Hill Foster Care Services expand statewide, and he's eager to watch how Coyote Hill will grow on past his legacy and to see what new leaders have in store for the organization. In the coming years, keep an eye on the bookshelves — you just might see Larry McDaniel as an author.

Honorable Mentions

Kelsey Hammond, Columbia Art League

Kelsey Hammond has been the executive director for the Columbia Art League, or CAL, since July 2019. As the executive director, Kelsey has the opportunity to be a part of several different focuses throughout the nonprofit. "You've got your hand in everything. You're trying to make funding appear out of nowhere, you've got to remain incredibly flexible, and you happily share your enthusiasm for your mission and what your organization does," Kelsey says.

Gay Litteken, Mary Lee Johnston Community Learning Center

As the executive director for the Mary Lee Johnston Community Learning Center, Gay Litteken wears a lot of hats. While she has the title of executive director, she also acts as her own executive assistant, human resources manager, and maintenance department. One minute she can be in a meeting with potential donors, and the next she could be plunging a toilet. Regardless of what she's doing, Gay finds her role rewarding.

"I get to play the role of mom to many and grandma to many others," Gay says. "It is all about loving what you do and loving who you serve every

single day."

Gay credits her team for being where she is today. But to Gay, they're more than a team — they're a family, they're and her biggest cheerleaders.

Most Impactful Board Member

Barbra Horrell, Blind Boone Foundation, Sharp End African American Heritage Trail, COMO 200



What do Blind Boone Foundation, the Sharp End African American Heritage Trail, and COMO 200 all have in common? Barbra Horrell serves on the board for all of these organizations. She acts as the co-chair for Sharp End Heritage Committee, the treasurer for the Blind Boone Foundation, and a coordinator for Columbia Public Schools. She's been a part of the Sharp End Heritage Community and the Blind Boone Foundation for 10 years as she works to help Columbia promote diversity and inclusivity throughout the city and state.

Through Barbra's time in the organizations she serves, she's most proud of "the friendships and the information sharing about our new programs," she says. Barbra's pride in the Black community of Columbia guides how she serves — a value that remains evident in her goals and achievements for the organizations she's a part of. Being a part of these organizations even make up her favorite community activities.

Barbra is a Columbia native — a fact that many people might not know about her. She, and the organizations she's a part of, are also dedicated to working towards making Columbia life inclusive of the Black community.

Honorable Mentions

Clyde Ruffin, John William Boone Foundation

As the president of the John William Boone Foundation, Clyde Ruffin works with a small group of volunteers to develop and implement special events that help the community learn about the legacy of John William “Blind” Boone and enjoy and admire the home he and his wife lived in until 1931. Despite being in an administrative role, Clyde works hands-on as well. In the home, Clyde helped to restore furniture and oversaw most of the interior design.

Austin Stidham, The Rainbow House of Mid-Missouri

Austin Stidham has been a part of The Rainbow House of Mid-Missouri for two and a half years between volunteering and serving on the board of directors. For Austin, it’s the children that motivate him to give back. “Some of these kids have gone through horrific abuse and neglect,” Austin says. “To see them continue to keep their head high and play with the other children is quite remarkable and inspiring. The resilience of these children is unmatched.”

Most Impactful Philanthropic Company

Boone Electric Community Trust



Sarah Cummings and Dorothy Grant

The Boone Electric Community Trust was established in 1997, and since then, the trust has provided over \$3.5 million in funding to nonprofits and public entities. The trust funds eligible 501(c)3 organizations and public entities, such as schools, as long as there is a physical location within Boone Electric Cooperative’s service territory. It has helped to fund vans to transport clients to medical appointments, a community playground in a small Boone County village, diapers for low-income families, nine \$2,000 scholarships to area high school seniors, and four \$2,000 scholarships for eligible at-large students.

Today, nine trustees manage the Boone Electric Community Trust and are appointed by the cooperative’s board of directors. Every other month, the board meets to review and research funding applications and to determine how funds should be allocated. These trustees spend hours contacting the applicants and work with their reviewers to make sure that they fully understand the request. As a group, they discuss each

applicant and make funding decisions as a whole. Currently, the nine trustees are Dorothy Grant (chair), Khesha Duncan (vice chair), Cathryn Taggart (secretary), Sarah Cummings (treasurer), Sharon McClure, Maxine Glenn, Craig Stevenson, Kim Stichnote, and John Truesdell.

By the end of 2020, the trust would like to reach out to new nonprofit organizations or nonprofits that have never applied to the trust before, and encourage the organizations to apply as it looks to increase its number of new applicants by 30%.

“Columbia has such a wide variety of nonprofits that serve the community, and residents are lucky to have such a supportive community,” communications specialist Rhonda Stone Proctor explains. “We continue to look for new applicants and encourage new organizations to reach out to the trust for connections, advice, and support.”

The Boone County Electric Community Trust credits Boone Electric Cooperative for where it is today. Through its support and donations, the trust has been able to continue to flourish and provide assistance to the community.

Honorable Mentions

Veterans United Home Loans, Social Impact Team

The Veterans United Home Loans Social Impact Team works closely with The Flourish Initiative, which coordinates wrap-around services with Douglass High School students including mentoring, professional development, internships, and more. The Veterans United Social Impact Team works to coordinate efforts in response to community needs and collaborates with The Flourish Initiative and its volunteer engagement. The social impact team also collaborates with other community nonprofits as well as its Veterans United philanthropic partners and the

Veterans United Foundation team.

Most Impactful Staff Member

Lucy Bromer, Safe Families for Children



“There is no greater accomplishment than seeing lives changed or inspired to create change,” Lucy Bromer, program coordinator for Safe Families for Children says. Two years ago, Lucy began her journey with Safe Families for Children as a volunteer. Just eight months ago, she joined the staff in her role as Safe Families for Children coordinator.

In her position, Lucy works alongside both volunteers and families in crisis. She helps volunteers find their place within the organization and assists them as they get connected with services. She also acts as a liaison and support for the volunteer host families within the organization as they welcome kids into their homes and offer them a safe space while their parents work towards stability.

“My family was a host family, so I am very passionate about helping volunteers use their gifts and making sure they feel cared for and supported while volunteering,” Lucy says.

She also gets to work alongside the parents that call in and need help — a responsibility she is honored to have, as she gets to encourage and empower them as they work towards stability for their families. Lucy’s Christian values guide her life and how she serves. They guide her to love others and work hard for the families she serves.

Safe Families for Children's main goal for the future, Lucy explains, is to help as many families as possible in Columbia and Mid-Missouri. She explains: "To do that, we also must continue to equip and train volunteers and connect with local agencies, so more people know we are here and ready to serve."

The volunteers for Safe Families for Children and the generous support of Boone County Children's Services Fund and other donors are vital to the success of the nonprofit. Lucy says: "We are so grateful that so many in our community see the value of Safe Families for Children."

Honorable Mentions

Thom Lutz, Job Point

For two years, Thom Lutz has been working as an education instructor at Job Point, teaching HiSET equivalency standards to students who were unable to graduate high school. "I get the best seat in the house," Thom says. "As a fan [and] cheerleader, I get to watch young adults overcome a major roadblock in their lives as they pass each subject area on their way to attaining their HiSET."

Thom feels blessed to be given even a small amount of time to develop relationships with each student, explaining that, "once this happens, teaching them and meeting them halfway becomes effortless."

Lori Stoll, City of Refuge

Through her role as refugee care coordinator for City of Refuge, Lori Stoll works one-on-one with refugees, advocating, educating, and following up with their needs. She works diligently to educate and implement needed resources to help refugees become stable. She assists and advocates in many areas of life, including healthcare, employment, and education, to name a few.

Lori credits her position at City of Refuge to the refugees themselves: "They have overcome the most difficult trials and are still thankful and optimistic about the future," she says, "I am in awe of their fortitude,

their faith, and their friendship."

Most Impactful Volunteer

Heather Lobough, City of Refuge



Heather Lobough’s journey began after she moved to Columbia four years ago and saw a social media post from Sherryl Laws, asking for blankets, gloves, coats, etc. Shortly after she dropped off her extra blankets and coats, she was introduced to City of Refuge, where she started volunteering with African refugees, specifically Eritrean refugees.

“I started building a relationship, being their friend, which hardly seems like a job or work,” Heather explains. Her role developed into being more of a coach as she helped refugees adjust to life in America. From being a listening ear for them to helping them complete a job application, Heather is there for these refugees for any support they might need.

She teaches them English, drives them to appointments, and even teaches them how to work a thermostat. But to her, the most cherished duty is taking the opportunity to sit with them, drink their coffee (often in ceremonial style), try their favorite dishes, and build a community.

The staff at City of Refuge, particularly Sherryl Laws and Linda Stempel, are all people that motivate Heather to serve selflessly. And City of Refuge’s supply materials, resources, supplies, and necessities allow her to serve effortlessly.

“We all have gifts to give,” Heather says. “Acts of service are my gift to give.” Lending a hand provides Heather with the opportunity to alleviate stress for those in need. And serving the Eritrean community, specifically, motivates her even more to give back. “Their love for life is genuine and sincere. Them striving for a better life keeps me moving forward,” she says. “They exemplify what true faith, real community, and real friendship looks like.”

Honorable Mentions

Laura Nausser, Heart of Missouri CASA

As a court-appointed special advocate for Heart of Missouri CASA, Laura advocates for children in the foster care system. During her tenure as a CASA, Laura has had the opportunity to develop relationships with

members of the 13th circuit court and others in the foster care system. She's worked at the Boone County juvenile office and detention center, and she's also been the fifth ward city council representative — all experiences that helped her become a better CASA and share concerns and solutions for problems the organization's foster children and their families encounter.

Greg Wack, TRYPS

Greg Wack has been volunteering with Theater Reaching Young People and Schools, or TRYPS, since Christmas of 2009. Throughout his time volunteering for TRYPS, Greg has built scenery for 55 productions. He volunteers hundreds of hours every year working through ideas, drawing up plans, and creating full-scale magic. From 8-foot-tall rolling elephants for "Aladdin" to an LED-lit carriage for "Cinderella," Greg has built it all. His workmanship and care have created theatre magic for thousands and thousands of children.

Greg has helped the organization with two relocations, and he's volunteered as project manager as the new space was being remodeled,

and he sees the need for more funding streams, especially during the COVID crisis. Founder and Executive Director Jill Womack says: "He doesn't just give time, talent, and treasure. He gives his heart."

Most Impactful Fundraiser/Event

Rock Bridge Lions Club Charity Picnic



The Rock Bridge Lions Club started in 1982 with a main focus of supporting the needs of Columbia. After news broke that the organizers of the Rock Bridge Picnic had decided to stop having the annual event, The Rock Bridge Lions Club reached out to the organizers and asked for a meeting to learn more about the reasons and concerns regarding the cancellation of the event — it had been part of Columbia's history since 1969. In the following months, the Rock Bridge Lions Club and its members discussed how to overcome the obstacles and make the picnic a great event once again.

After reaching out to Logboat Brewing Co. for help to find the best location for the picnic, the group then met and decided that Welcome Home would be the charity to partner with and raise awareness for. With a great cause of supporting veterans, an amazing venue and beer (courtesy of Logboat), and CoMo Smoke and Fire as the delicious food sponsor, the revival of the picnic has been a success. And this year, the Annual Rock Bridge Lions Club Charity Picnic celebrated its third annual event.

President of the Rock Bridge Lions Club Sandy McCann says, "It has been a great partnership with Welcome Home, making this fun event one of Columbia's greatest events."

Michelle Vogt, Welcome Home's fundraising and events manager, adds: "It continues to amaze me how great our community is and how we all rally around a cause. These folks have partnered with us to make a difference, and they truly have."

Michelle credits the community and the constant support for being able to serve the veterans in the community.

Honorable Mentions

CoMo Famous, Ragtag Film Society

In 2019, Ragtag Film Society started CoMo Famous, a new fundraiser to celebrate the entire community. And it was a success. During the CoMo Famous fundraiser, six prominent Columbians selected a favorite film to screen for one night at Ragtag Cinema. These contestants then competed for the largest amount of money raised from ticket sales and donations for their screening. All of the funds raised for CoMo Famous ensured that Ragtag Film Society can continue to screen the best of

independent film at Ragtag Cinema every day and help transform Columbia during the four days of the True/False Film Festival. The contestants raised over \$30,000 for the Ragtag Film Society, and it's not stopping there.

Company Feud, Job Point

Riffing off Family Feud, Job Point's Company Feud fundraising event pits companies against each other in a competition hosted by radio personality Tom Bradley. The event consists of yelling, food, drinks, and, of course, so much fun that people keep coming back to watch every year. This year, the company is working hard to reschedule Company Feud to a time that will have the same level of engagement to net the same amount of donations as years prior.

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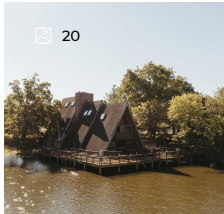
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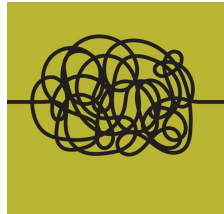
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