

CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

Recently I had the pleasure of sitting with Diana Polston and learning about Angels Among Us over coffee. Of course I was familiar with Angels beforehand, but I didn't know the extent of the organization's love, compassion, energy, creativity, and effectiveness. It is one that members of the Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund can be proud to support.

Angels consists of hundreds of volunteers who have put in thousands of hours fundraising and meeting the needs of local cancer patients. It is definitely a grassroots effort, and 100% of its income goes directly to patients in need!

It all began in the early '90s when Diana's father passed away from cancer. She was overwhelmed with the need to help others facing the same situation she had just experienced. So she went to the Yellow Pages to look up the American Cancer Society and see how she could be of help.

She started by organizing the Relay for Life in Pittsburgh. I remember the magnitude of that event, a 24-hour fundraiser at the stadium that honored and remembered cancer victims and survivors. It was a major local event that raised substantial money.

But Diana, local physicians, and volunteers wanted to find
 ... **[continues on back]**

Coming Up

- **May:** Onsite visit to grantee (details TBA)
- **July:** New Edition of Circle Conversations
- **August:** Annual membership donation due
- **August - September:** Women's Health Fund grant applications open
- **October:** Annual grant review + new edition of Circle Conversations



2021 Grant Celebration

The Community Foundation hosted its annual Grant Celebration at the Fun Depot in November. Women's Health Fund members and grantees attended to celebrate the Fund's nearly \$44,000 in grants to 11 organizations last year. Volunteers from Angels Among Us (at left), a 2021 grantee, catered the event.

Angels Among Us (cont.)

a way for Crawford County to benefit fully from their fundraising. That thought launched Angels Among Us 22 years ago. Today, the organization raises around \$50,000 and helps around 300 individuals every single year.

Angels raises its funds through simple hard work. A few weeks ago, Angels decorated and catered the company Christmas party for Miller's—no small task! Yet, a week later they were back at it again, catering a wedding with 500 guests.

Angels' fundraising is a business of its own (without overhead), but there's another side to the organization: the business of helping cancer patients. Patients' needs are many and varied, and that means Angels' work to meet those needs is varied, too. Some people need help buying gas or groceries. Others are undergoing treatment in the middle of summer and need a window air conditioner for their room. Still others can't afford Christmas gifts for their families. Many patients need wigs and cannot afford them. In all these cases, Angels comes to the rescue and provides for many who would have gone without.

The selfless spirit of Angels Among Us reminds me so much of Rita's spirit. It is a generous, caring, and comforting ministry straight from the hearts of all involved. I would guess that the contagious love and concern for others is a strong factor in the long-running success of the organization. I know many deep friendships have been formed between patients, caregivers, and volunteers. And thanks to my new familiarity with Angels, I know I want to become more involved, too!

Debbie Brady

Why I Joined

I joined the RJB Women's Health Fund at the request of my dear friend Rita. As a cancer survivor, I understood her thoughts and ambition to help women who are experiencing health-related concerns and struggling to overcome obstacles to get the care they deserve. Upon joining this wonderful group of ladies, it was clear that we are strongest together and can make a real change by working together.

Pam Henderson

What We Do

- Together we are pooling our money
- Together we are deciding where we give our money
- Together we are learning about our community and philanthropy and
- Together we are helping women and girls in Southeast Kansas!

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our new Nightingale Endowment Fund to provide future technology enhancements at the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing Simulation Hospital at Pittsburg State University.

Join the Women's Health Fund

[Click Here to Join](#)

or scan with
your smartphone:



The Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund is a fund of the
Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas

100 S. Broadway St., Ste. 100 • P.O. Box 1448
Pittsburg, KS 66762 • (620) 231-8897

SoutheastKansas.org