In 2014 The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF) launched its “Investing in Our Communities - West Side of Charleston” place-based initiative, which aims to strategically concentrate funds and other assets in the area surrounding Mary C. Snow Elementary School. To directly engage community residents, TGKVF commissioned the Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action, Inc. (KISRA) to conduct a community needs assessment (CNA). The assessment was conducted between July and December 2015 and included a review of secondary data, a door-to-door survey of 241 residents and focus group discussions. TGKVF seeks to invest in health, housing and civic engagement programs in this particular footprint, so these areas were the assessment’s focus.

The CNA was an effective strategy. Those within and outside of the community more fully understand the area’s needs, why they exist, and the importance of addressing them. Residents had the opportunity to share how the needs impact the quality of life for the larger community. Local engagement increased because residents were included in discussions about needs, assets, and the community’s response. The community’s strengths and weaknesses were identified, so community-based organizations may alter or enhance their service delivery. Perhaps most importantly, data now exists to inform decisions and actions that will better address community needs and more effectively guide resource allocation.

Continued on the next page
The assessment’s key findings include: most residents are not experiencing a healthcare cost burden; most residents have had medical checkups in the past 12 months; one third of residents pay more than half of their net household income in housing costs; more than half of residents who are currently renting are not interested in renting a home/apartment in better physical condition on the West Side of Charleston; more than half of residents 18 to 24 years old are not high school graduates and one third of residents have some college education and no college degree; more than one third of residents are living in poverty and more than half of children are living in poverty; labor force participation rates of residents are significantly lower than county and state rates; children need more after-school programs with tutoring, educational and creative components; residents want local abandoned lots/homes converted to green spaces; parents felt that peer-to-peer parent support would benefit their children’s education; crime prevention, abandoned homes and police patrol are the top improvements desired by residents; almost half of residents experience hypertension; healthcare coverage and age are strongly correlated; more than three quarters of residents are registered to vote and those who are not registered do not need help to do so; four in ten residents believe that their votes matter; more than eight in ten residents feel connected to Charleston.

Based on the assessment’s findings, KISRA’s recommendations for investment include: increased access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables; healthcare enrollment assistance targeting young adults; housing rehabilitation; job-creation initiatives including support for entrepreneurs; green spaces including housing demolition to clear lots; after-school program enhancements with tutoring and educational components; parent-to-parent mentoring programs; healthy relationship and responsible parenting education and support groups; GED/TASC partnerships to increase access for non-high school graduates; regent degree program awareness for residents who started but did not complete college; career and technical training partnerships.

Interested parties may use the CNA’s data to inform strategic planning, priority setting, program outcomes, and program improvements. The results provide TGKVF with baseline data that will guide the Foundation’s future investments on Charleston’s West Side. Copies of the CNA report can be obtained from TGKVF’s office or website (www.tgkvf.org).

Michelle Mickle Foster, Ph.D. is the President and CEO of The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation.
Reprinted from The Charleston Gazette-Mail
As I assume the presidency of West Virginia’s largest community foundation, I am mindful of the legacy of those who served before me, on whose shoulders I now stand. I salute my predecessor, Becky Ceperley, for her leadership and vision, especially in transforming our grant-making process to one that addresses root causes and builds community wealth. My chief aim is to preserve the vitality of this renowned organization while encouraging its progression to the next level. To achieve this growth, TGKVF will increase our physical and virtual presence in the communities we serve as well as utilize our donors’ precious resources to strategically invest in organizations that readily demonstrate their impact. These strategies will allow TGKVF to support and lead our communities for perpetuity.

As you may know, the Foundation was established in 1962. Its robust history is well known and revered by many families with deep philanthropic roots in the Greater Kanawha Valley region and beyond. We are indeed grateful to these families whose foresight and generosity built the groundwork of the Foundation, and we hope to continue meeting their charitable intentions for many years to come. However, as the needs of our communities loom before us, it is imperative that we become more visible to new generations of potential donors. Through this visibility, we will be seen as partners in solutions and allies who more deliberately showcase the work and impact of our grantees. The Foundation invests in a diverse array of unique programs that transform individual lives and strengthen communities; it behooves us to let the world know about our region’s assets and the impactful work of our nonprofits.

It is of great importance that the Foundation measure its impact and demonstrate how our donors earn a return on their investments. This validation can be achieved through return on investment (ROI) analyses, which will include working with grantees to ensure that their programs are efficiently planned and implemented in ways that build community wealth as well as collect and evaluate the data necessary to achieve evidence-based results. ROI analyses compare the economic and social values of program benefits with their associated costs; they also help organizations articulate their bottom line to stakeholders; demonstrate how current and potential funders’ support can generate economic impacts; and equip public policymakers to evaluate their strategies and prioritize alternative programs. TGKVF will aggregate data and stories from funded programs to demonstrate the impact of the Foundation’s investments as well as build the capacity of our grantees to measure their outcomes.

The strategic initiatives outlined above will result in the increased sustainability of the Foundation, the non-profit organizations we serve, and indeed the region as a whole. This sustainability is not just about establishing funding stability, maintaining a consistent financial base, or generating diversified revenue, although these aspects are critical. Sustainability also includes cultivating external partnerships while building internal capacity to effectively manage and proactively grow our resources. Evaluation, adaptation, communications, strategic planning and political support – all are key domains in the sustainability framework. Nonprofit organizations must proactively manage their sustainability or risk perishing. As an anchor institution, TGKVF will help our nonprofits achieve long-term sustainability by more deliberately promoting their work and increasing their capacity to create and measure impact. This work will not only support TGKVF’s success, but also the success of our communities.

I look forward to a long and productive career at TGKVF. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as President and CEO.
“Maxine was our very first client,” recalls Jennifer Waggener, Executive Director of Faith in Action of the Greater Kanawha Valley, Inc. “At age 90, she is a former Rosie the Riveter who lives alone and is fiercely independent. Two years ago, she voluntarily relinquished her driver’s license, recognizing that it was no longer safe for her to be behind the wheel. Since then, she has been paying a taxi company $40 per roundtrip to her quarterly doctor’s appointment, to the grocery store and to run other errands.”

This is where Faith in Action’s work can aid and assist the elderly population of Kanawha County to age in place with grace and dignity. “As you might imagine, this can be devastating to a fixed income budget. We have been able to meet her transportation needs at no cost to her.”

Maxine’s story is only one of the nine grants that The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation’s Board of Trustees approved at its March 16, 2016 meeting. There are 71 collaborative partners involved in these nine projects and their collaborative efforts are seen as key to achieving TGKVF’s strategic goals. These nine grants total $315,700.00.

**Education Alliance $38,200.00 (Education)**
The Born Learning Academy program connects schools with families of young children during the critical period of early learning (birth to Pre-K) prior to school enrollment. Families will participate in academy trainings where they learn how to create teachable moments for their children. Through this grant, the Foundation will partner with Toyota Manufacturing to expand the program to six additional schools. TGKVF funding will support three grants to applicant schools within the Foundation’s footprint; priority will be given to Title I schools serving marginalized populations.

**WVU Extension $78,000.00 (Education)**
The STEM Ambassador Program provides STEM learning opportunities for K-12 youth. The STEM Ambassadors implement summertime STEM workshops during 4-H camps, community events, and public programming for more than 4,000 participants. In its second year, this project will expand the Ambassadors’ impact by incorporating year-round STEM programming through the help of AmeriCorps VISTAs dedicated to strengthening the STEM infrastructure in all six counties that TGKVF serves. Funding will support STEM equipment, supplies, scholarships, and Ambassador stipends.

What our schools say…
“*We have really been able to bond together and become a support system. It is truly something special.*”

- Matthew Dolan, Boone County STEM Ambassador

“The kids loved the science and as the week went on they became more creative.”

- Matthew Dolan, Boone County STEM Ambassador
Community Access Inc. $15,000.00 (Health)
Warrior Wellness is a cross-system project designed to assist military service members (both active duty and veterans) to enhance their own practices for wellness. Through a partnership with Red Barn Stables, WV National Guard, and Kanawha County Parks and Recreation, this project combines equine assisted learning activities with guided hiking/trail activities. Funding will support healthy lifestyles and community-based support for military service members.

Kanawha County Board of Education $74,000 (Health)
The Community Schools Health Care Coordinator (CSHC) will serve as a liaison between West Side schools, Kanawha County Schools Dental Clinic, Family Care Health Clinic, the Handle with Care program and other resources as needed. This funding will allow the CSHC, a nurse located at Mary C. Snow Elementary, to serve the West Side’s youth on a full time basis. The grant will also assist the dental clinic with providing oral care to uninsured children.

Putnam County Parks and Recreation Commission $20,000.00 (Health)
Putnam County Parks and Recreation, Rivers to Ridges, and other collaborating partners are working together to improve and development recreation sites in three communities in northern Putnam County. Funding will support infrastructure improvement at all three sites as well as development of a master plan for a community garden area at Valley Park in Hurricane.

Kanawha Valley Friends of Old Time Music and Dance $13,000.00 (Arts/Culture)
FOOTMAD is collaborating with the Charleston CVB and FestivALL to launch an initiative with local artists to provide high quality, culturally authentic entertainment experiences for tourism enhancement and increased business entertainment options. A business plan, marketing strategy, and materials will be created through this pilot project. Funding will support a portion of the project manager’s salary.

We look forward to serving those who have served us.”

Our desire is for each student to be successful in all aspects of their life.”

- Janet Allio, RN, Mary C Snow West Side Elementary School Nurse

The grant award will allow us to begin making a positive impact across a broad spectrum.

Continued on the next page
Faith in Action of the Greater Kanawha Valley Inc. $37,500 (Field of Interest)

Faith in Action’s “Helping Hand Project” is a strategic initiative designed to assist the elder population of Kanawha County to age in place with grace and dignity. This grant will support the recruitment, education, and training of the general public and collaborative partners to provide services to the over 65 population.

“’You fill needs that no other agency can manage. Thank you for ‘walking the talk’.”

- Karen Glazier, Cabin Creek Health Systems

FestivALL, Charleston, West Virginia, Inc. $25,000 (Arts/Culture)

FestivALL (June 16-27, 2016) will feature approximately 150 music, visual art, dance, theatre, humanities and family entertainment events with over 400 performances by local, national, and international artists. Events, performances and exhibitors are produced, co-produced and presented by FestivALL in cooperation with partner organizations and individuals. This funding will support 10 specific events.

“’Arts opportunities like those the Foundation supports bring our community together in collaborative and artistic experiences!’

West Virginia Symphony Orchestra $15,000 (Arts/Culture)

On the first Sunday in June, the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra (WVSO) will serve an anticipated 10,000 people in Kanawha County and beyond with a day of performances by the WVSO as well as other community music and dance organizations. “Symphony Sunday” is offered free to the community on the University of Charleston campus. Funding will support orchestra personnel, staff and event expenses.

“’Kudos to Maestro Cooper & all who created the community event!’
Dr. Jason Castle is a native of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He graduated High School in New Fairfield, Connecticut and obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Physics) at Emory University in Atlanta. He is a graduate of the Emory University School of Medicine. During medical school, Dr. Castle developed an interest in the Electronic Health Record. His background in computer consulting and database design served him well, focusing on clinical medical informatics solutions during his pursuit of a Masters of Public Health in Health Policy and Management at the Rollins School of Public Health.

Dr. Castle’s interest in evidence based medicine and medical research led him to be the first Orthopedic Research Resident at Wake Forest University. He received an NIH Physician Scientist award for his research efforts. He completed his residency in Orthopaedic Surgery at Wake Forest University. His passion for computer guided Hip and Knee Replacement led him to Alexandria, Virginia where he completed a Total Joint Reconstruction fellowship at the Anderson Orthopaedic Clinic. Dr. Castle is a member of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery and is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. Dr. Castle served as 2014 Medical Staff President at St Francis Hospital.

Dr. Castle joined Bone and Joint Surgeons in August of 2007. His wife Elizabeth is a native of Charleston, West Virginia. They have three children. His hobbies include tennis, guitar, home theater, driving on the race track and watching North Carolina Tar Heel basketball.
How do you want to be remembered? If you want to start a fund to support the Vision, Mission and Goals featured in these pages, contact the Foundation at 304.346.3620.