

SMALL TOWN FOOTPRINTS

As many know, the first annual GIVE TO GROW Day was a big success. Hundreds of people turned out and in 24 hours gave more than \$107,000 to local charitable causes. Behind the scene was a generous donor who came forth with a \$20,000 matching offer, followed by another for \$5,000. In all, a total of \$132,000 has been distributed to the 21 funds managed by GSCF. The money in these funds belongs to the organization, not to GSCF.

The nearly 400 people and these two matching donors together served a common purpose: supporting the local community. Many of you came in and made your donation and some gave online and even others mailed in checks. Some of these donations were also anonymous. Does it matter? Is there a “best” way to give? Does an anonymous gift mean more? Or does an acknowledged donor set an example for others to follow?

During the day some families came in with their children to teach giving. The smiles that went along with those gifts from piggy banks are sure to lead to a lifelong passion for giving, helping and serving others. It’s what we’re here for.

Randy Alcorn is an author and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries and has written on the topic, “Should Giving Always Be Kept Secret?” In this piece, he concludes that, “We shouldn’t brag about our Bible study, prayer, evangelism, parenting, or giving, but neither should we cover it up. It’s easier for people to follow footprints (what we do) than commands (what we say). If we aren’t willing to openly and humbly discuss our giving, how can we expect to raise up givers? The church has plenty of examples of consumers—we need to see examples of givers. Hebrews 10:24 tells us to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” We can only be spurred on by what we can see.

This small community has proven to ourselves and those around who are watching, that we are special. That is the word I heard more than any other when the success of GIVE TO GROW was discussed. Songwriter and singer, Kenny Chesney grew up in a small town and some say his success is due to his small town upbringing. He “is now rich and famous, but he still behaves like a guy from a small town. He knows what is important to him. He always remembers his family, his friends, and the people who helped him along the way,” wrote William Davis Thomas in his book, *Kenny Chesney*.

I believe there are many who can relate to this. We are who we are in part due to our small town upbringing. The Greater Sabetha Community Foundation board of directors plan to make GIVE TO GROW an annual event. Will more matching donors come forward to help make the next one even more successful? We hope so. It is clear that “footprints” have been laid down to follow for the future. Who will step up to fill them? Only time will tell.

It has been a great reward to work with this year’s anonymous donors and witness the fruition of those gifts result in a great big success for a special small town.