Citizens as Culture Makers

From New Harmony to Heartland Film
The Art of Creative Writing

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Univ of Southern Indiana

I have been privileged to have been present at the creation of Indiana cultural breakthroughs – the New Harmony Writer's Workshop and Heartland Film. Heartland is far more popular of the two but it wouldn't exist without New Harmony. Both are dedicated to the craft of writing good stories. I'm delighted to be able to tell their own stories in a book that will be published in 2016.

The idea for a writing workshop that would eventually become the New Harmony Project originated out of a nagging frustration: I was dissatisfied with the entertainment options for the troubled youths I served at the Indiana Children's Home. Negative real-life stories abounded there: children who had grown up believing that being abused was normal, and teenagers who had given up on school and the hope of a successful or meaningful future.

I wanted to do something about the predicament and my background in theater and my love for movies made me especially sensitive to how entertainment was affecting these young people. I knew that the medium of film was one way to encourage troubled teens to yearn for life and to live in hope instead of in constant despair so I reached out to my two best college friends and former roommates, David McFadzean and Matt Williams. The three of us had done all-things-theatre together in college and one of the greatest joys we shared was the university's summer theatre program in New Harmony, which was my first exposure to the quaint town.

David and Matt would eventually go on to create the 1990s hit television series *Home Improvement.* At the time I called them up with my concern, David was teaching theatre at Judson College and Matt was working as a writer in New York, equally as fed up as I was with the quality of entertainment being produced nationwide.

We gathered a group of a dozen in April, 1986 to discuss whether we could work to influence the culture through the arts. It became our committee's goal to support true artists in their endeavors, and to be true artists ourselves. After several full days, we established two main ideas: one was to start a playwright's workshop to develop new scripts for film and theatre, and the second was to host a film festival. Several of our committee members had been involved in writers' workshops before and were huge advocates of that idea, especially Gary Bayer, an actor friend of David's, who had been to both the Sundance Institute and the Eugene O'Neill Conference. A playwright's workshop seemed to be a good way to honor those playwrights who were dedicated to creating meaningful and edifying stories, and to inspire other playwrights to seek truth and artistic creativity in their future works.

At the mention of the Sundance Institute, someone else suggested we start a film festival, similar to the Sundance Film Festival that would have the same vision of our workshop, but would honor filmmakers instead of playwrights. While both ideas sounded really grand in our minds, we concluded that a playwright's workshop sounded more feasible and affordable at the time than a film festival. So, we put the festival on our list of future endeavors and began planning the writers' workshop.

Our first major task was deciding where we would host it. Walt Wangerin of the University of Evnansville suggested the quaint town of New Harmony, Indiana, where David, Matt, and I had spent our college summers doing theatre. As soon as he mentioned New Harmony, a number of us chimed in with a resounding "Yes!" New Harmony was a place where creativity could blossom and thrive, and its remote location would create the perfect setting for writers to work and rest. New Harmony was the kind of place that caused your blood pressure to drop when you stepped out of your car.

Those familiar with New Harmony knew that we would first have to come by the town's matriarch before we planned anything. Jane Owen's approval would be the key to starting a New Harmony workshop. Born Jane Blaffer, she grew up a Houston oil heiress from her father's and grandfather's oil companies, which would later become Exxon Mobil and Texaco. A spunky

young dancer and an avid traveler, Jane had vowed to never marry and instead become a nun at a young age. However, she changed her mind when she met Kenneth Owen, a geologist twelve years her senior and a descendent of Robert Owen. Soon after their honeymoon, Kenneth brought his young bride to visit his hometown of New Harmony, and Jane immediately fell in love with it.

Though Jane was not a writer or a director of any kind, she told stories simply by living her life. She was what I like to call an enabler. Enablers are those people who, though they may not directly tell stories or make art or write poems, they allow others to do so, like producers and publishers. They help dreamers like me to get our ideas out of our heads and onto paper. Jane became an enabler for me in the summer of 1986 when she turned a dream of mine into a reality. Her greatest treasure was her town, and she had dedicated her life to preserving and caring for it.

Situated in the low foothills of southern Indiana along the Wabash River**,** New Harmony was known nationwide for its attempts to become a self-sustaining utopian community after the Great Awakening. In 1824, Scottish industrialist and social reformer Robert Owen purchased the settlement from the Harmonists, declaring that New Harmony would be a utopian social experiment. Scholars, educators, and scientists moved into New Harmony with the intention of discovering how to create a peaceful and innovative society. Owen's utopia was short-lived (as are all utopias), surviving not even two years, but his legacy lives on because of Jane. When she first arrived in New Harmony, the town had lost much of its historic charm, with a shanty town in its backyard and lifeless Colonial-style homes lining the unkempt streets. Hoping to revive the utopian charm, the couple moved to New Harmony and Jane set out to restore and preserve the town. She viewed her passion to rescue the town as "a religious vocation," as a Fix 9 journalist put it.

Jane is truly responsible for breathing life back into New Harmony and making it thrive, creating a magnificent story out of the little Indiana town. She rebuilt the dying buildings of utopias past; she developed the Roofless Church alongside famed American architect Philip Johnson; she oversaw the designing of the Cathedral Labyrinth, a replica of the labyrinth at the Chartres Cathedral; and she brought the arts to New Harmony and Evansville. Always in her floppy hat and a long, earth-toned dress, Jane became the icon for New Harmony charm. She cared deeply for her town, and she'd do nearly anything to preserve its tranquility and character, even scold motorcyclists who sped carelessly through her streets. Although Jane was never a writer or an actress or a director, I still think of her as a great storyteller, for she gave meaning to the beauty around her and she orchestrated the story of her town.

Because of this, it was important to have Jane's backing as we pursued having the workshop in New Harmony. After hearing my pitch, Jane closed her eyes, then said, "I hold several things very near to my heart. The three most important are New Harmony, culture, and kids." She slowly opened her eyes, looked at me, and smiled, "And I think your idea functions on all of those levels." Just like that, Jane became our first major underwriter for the workshop, and my first great enabler.

We decided to call our workshop, appropriately, The New Harmony Project. Our primary goal was to exist for the sake of the writer, and only the writer. Most of the guests would be from the coasts and busy metropolitan areas that never slept in which relentlessly competitive circles pushed for efficient production. These writers often wouldn't even get a break from competition when they went to writers' workshops. "At other conferences, writers knew there was pressure to succeed, so they would play it safe and they wouldn't take risks on their writing," said Gary Bayer. At The New Harmony Project, we wanted our guests to *breathe* and to know that their creativity was more important than their productivity. More importantly, we wanted our guests to feel loved and to know that they were more valuable than their work.

One of our founding board members, Carolyn Rossi Copeland, attributes this writers' freedom to the community that New Harmony brought. "The fear of failure wasn't there. There were no critics anywhere around. No one was going to come criticize your work, so the community wasn't open to having critics. The idea was to keep it a protected environment so that people weren't working for a review," said Carolyn.

> *"I don't think we had fear of failure there because we were encouraged to try new things," said Matt Williams. "There wasn't a commercial pressure to deliver. You were free to experiment and, if you failed, it was done in the privacy of New Harmony. So, you were failing among family members and friends, which wasn't really failing."*

Another benefit was the secluded Midwestern town where we were surrounded by likeminded artists and storytellers which seemed to let everyone's guard down. Many writers brought their families and children with them, some turning this into a family vacation of sorts. Having children and spouses around brought so much energy to the Project, and many writers realized they could have a holistic approach to their lives, integrating their work with their families. The Project often felt like summer camp for adults. The lack of competition

put the writers on the same playing field, so everyone helped out everyone else.

"What we do so much as writers is a solitary endeavor," said Mike Rich, screenwriter of *The Rookie* and *Secretariat*, who came to the Project one year. "I was used to a situation where, if I had a creative block in my home office, I would have to get myself to break out of it. But there, I had a community of collaborators. I always tell folks when they tell me I have a glamorous job that it's only glamorous about point five percent of the time! Most of the time is me at a computer and a cursor blinking, wondering what I've got. To be in such a wonderful and giving environment with folks who have that same challenge is a pretty great endeavor."

> *As the introduction to TNHP's 25th anniversary video said, The New Harmony Project is "Where greed and vanity take a backseat to art and integrity, where writers use their hearts, not just their heads, and where every idea is inspired by the single-minded belief that great writing really can change the world."*

Just like the utopian dream of New Harmony, the New Harmony Project writers have sought to reform culture, empower humanity, and create life amidst chaos through their writing. In some ways, The New Harmony Project is the third utopian experiment of New Harmony; by year fifteen, we had survived longer than the other two utopias combined. I once told Jane that we found the key to utopia: you can sustain it for only about two weeks a year! The New Harmony Project has continued for three decades and over 225 plays, musicals, and screenplays. The structure of the two week project has remained virtually the same since its inception.

I would have settled down with The New Harmony Project if it weren't for a woman named Ava Memmen, my second great enabler. Ava was the daughter of Kenneth Olson, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, was a trustee of the Stratford Foundation in Boston. She had read our proposals from the April 1986 brainstorming meeting but she didn't think The New Harmony Project was doing enough.

"The Stratford Foundation has been looking for a way to honor filmmakers who do good work, and when I read your proposal about a film festival, I thought that might be the way. What would it take to do this?" One of our early proposals had a bullet point stating: "Begin planning for major film festival in Indianapolis." Ava gave a 90-day grant to The New Harmony Project enabling us to research the possibility of starting a film festival.

Ava introduced me to her friend Dan Johnson, who was the executive producer of the children's video series *McGee and Me* at the time, because he had shared similar concerns about the state of film. Dan had recently attended a producers' conference at the Sundance Institute and met a number of young filmmakers who were eager to exchange dialogue about film. So my first major step in the journey was visiting the Sundance Film Festival in December 1990.

During one lunch break, Dan asked five or six filmmakers what they had been working on. One guy responded, "I've made a film about salmon fishing in the Pacific Ocean. As a result of the film, every country that borders the Pacific has changed the laws of salmon fishing. But I've never been able to show it on a screen to my mother."

"This guy was a good filmmaker," Dan told me, "but no one had ever seen his film! I told Ava about this conversation and expressed my interest in creating a place for independent film to get more screen time. If people are changing and improving the world, why is there not a place for them to screen their films?"

Though film as an art form has existed since the 1890s, the celebration of film through festivals has been a fairly recent phenomenon. The first film festival ever founded, the Venice Film Festival, began in 1932, but the festival fad did not really arise until the 1970s. Today, there are over 2,500 active film festivals in the world, forty-two percent of which are hosted in the United States.

Despite its imperfections**,** Sundance Film Festival actually became a model for Heartland in our early days because of its dedication to the filmmaker. Robert Redford has always shown great interest in supporting independent artists and he saw the festival as a way to separate himself from the studio world. In addition to the festival, Redford started a film workshop center to support independent writers and artists called the Sundance Institute at Redford's vacation spot, the Sundance Mountain Resort. The resort, festival, and writers workshop were all named after Redford's first major hit role as the Sundance Kid in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

Interestingly, as we were studying Redford's festival for replication, the Sundance Institute is essentially the glamourized equivalent to The New Harmony Project. Like New Harmony, it was established as a place for screenwriters, playwrights, film composers, and directors to gather and develop their works away from their home offices. The Institute became an immediate success, which consequently put the Utah/US Film Festival on the radar of the greater film industry.

The Sundance Film Festival has perhaps become the best-known and most prestigious film festival in the United States, and many say it is the reason that independent film is as widespread as it is today. A Sundance seal on a film is a high badge of honor for any filmmaker in the U.S. and around the world. The festival is held annually for ten days in January. It receives approximately 11,000 feature and short films each year. A committee of programmers views each submission and looks for films that "champion original and independent stories." Although a good plot is important in any film, artistic creativity and originality is the key to creating a Sundance hit.

During our week in Sundance, Dan and I discovered that the festival had become a sort of marketplace for the greater film industry – not because Redford had abandoned his cause, but because independent filmmaking had become a booming business by 1991. Where there's a need in the free market, there's also money to be made, and that's exactly what happened with independent filmmaking. Grassroots studios that had been conceived in people's basements had now grown into little monopolies, and independent filmmakers who made their first films with scrappy home video equipment had earned fame and fortune because of places like Sundance. Much to the chagrin of Redford and Van Wagenen, independent filmmaking had become a fad. Redford could only do so much to keep away from the studios.

"For a long time Redford resisted having anyone from Hollywood on the board, with the exception of Mike Medavoy, until it became almost a necessity to involve certain people to keep the fundraising going," said Van Wagenen.

Today, independent film is an extremely successful market, which has led to Sundance's entrance into mainstream knowledge and popularity.

"That sense of purity that drove our mission early on has been eroded in favor of the marketplace," Van Wagenen told me. "I don't want to lament the fact that Sundance is a marketplace, but it wasn't something we intended originally. At the same time, though," he continued, "the marketplace aspect is part of our success story. We were doing something different, giving creative space to independent filmmakers. We filled a huge gap in a growing market, so naturally, the marketplace followed."

At Ava's suggestion, we founded our festival endeavor with a mission statement: "Heartland Film Festival recognizes and honors filmmakers whose work promotes positive change in people's lives through the transformative power of film." From an outsider's perspective, the Heartland Film Festival may look identical to any other film festival in the United States. It's an annual ten-day festival of film screenings, awards, special dinners, and film workshops.

Filmmakers and celebrities fly in to view their films, give speeches, and accept awards; film buffs and hipsters watch indie film after indie film and soak up every opportunity to catch a word with the A-listers; donors pull out their tuxedos and sequined dresses for glitzy evening parties. However, anyone who has ever attended the Heartland Film Festival could explain that it is still far different from any other festival in the U.S., perhaps even the world.

What sets Heartland apart from most festivals is its adherence to the mission of honoring artistry for the sake of uplifting. Because of the connection of origin between The New Harmony Project and the Heartland Film Festival, it should be no surprise that the fundamental goal of the Heartland Film Festival is similarly dedicated to writers who created beautiful and meaningful stories.

I believe it was because Indiana's reputation as an unassuming, wholesome, countercultural state aligned with the mission of our festival idea. In terms of being easily accessible to Hollywood or New York City, Indiana made no sense, but in terms of attracting people who already valued hospitality and truth and morals, Indiana fit like a glove. Indiana didn't culturally fit the mold for a successful film festival – but neither did our interest in positive and truthful story, which is why it seemed to be the perfect location.

There is one filmmaker from Indiana who has a deeper connection to his Hoosier roots than any other filmmaker I have ever encountered, one who was also very monumental in the Heartland Film story. His name is Angelo Pizzo, the screenwriter of the timeless sports films *Hoosiers* and *Rudy*. Both of Angelo's films are set in small Indiana towns and they perfectly capture the essence of Indiana people, their values, and their love of sports. Angelo cares deeply about the state of Indiana and about the meaning of community, and he looks at Indiana as a major influence of his film craft. Angelo has also been a dedicated partner and board member for Heartland Film and The New Harmony Project for many years, and many Hoosiers owe him for their deeper sense of identity as a Hoosier.

"My initial impetus in making *Hoosiers* was to try to capture time and place," he told me. "Quite frankly, the story itself is rather cliché. It's a classic David and Goliath story that isn't unique to Indiana. So, what I tried to set out doing was capture the relationship, the meaning of basketball to the place itself. And ultimately,

I came to realize that place is as important a character as any protagonist. I felt so strongly that Indiana was a character in this movie – the way people talked, their accents, and the way they looked."

I think the term "Hoosier" has gained more meaning since 1986. *Hoosiers* embodied what a Hoosier is. The writing and filming were so authentic, understated, and accurate. It perfectly captured the flavor and personality and unlikely beauty of the state. As Bob Cook of *Forbes* magazine once wrote of *Hoosiers*, "The opening credits make a drab rural Indiana landscape at its drabbest (in the fall, after harvest) look and feel like the most beautiful place on Earth."

In 1993, Heartland invited Angelo, his wife Greta Lind, who played Mary in *Rudy*, David Anspaugh, and the real Rudy Ruettiger to come to the festival, where we awarded them a Crystal Heart Award for *Rudy*. *Rudy* was released in theatres that same weekend, which made our time with its filmmakers even more meaningful. It only took a day for Angelo to realize that he really wanted to be a bigger part of the Heartland Film Festival. Angelo became a board member for Heartland almost immediately and has continued to remain on the board for over 20 years.

Angelo's life and work is a testament to the power that place can have on an individual. It is clear how much he values his home state and region, and he readily admits that Indiana has been a great influence on his craft as a writer. Angelo has done such tremendous work in keeping the Indiana spirit alive and known in our country, and I'm proud to call him a fellow Hoosier and good friend. His dedication to Heartland Film and The New Harmony Project has been a motivation for me to continue both organizations.

"Heartland has had a wonderful impact on the film industry. It has been a constant reminder of the need for good storytelling that makes people remember that there's a big world outside of New York and LA. There's a tendency to not think as much about the rest of the country, but Heartland has made people remember the rest of the country. This book is an important gift to help us remember that."

– Dick Cook, *former Chairman of Walt Disney Studios*

"Heartland celebrates films that are wonderful stories of the human condition, the human experience, and the ability to overcome. These stories more lyrical and poetic and ultimately the kind of films I strive to make. I look forward to 'Title' being read by folks in Hollywood and giving Heartland a greater visibility in the Hollywood scene."

– Corbin Bernsen, *actor in L.A. Law, Psych, filmmaker of Rust*

"The studios are becoming much more aware of Heartland Film Festival and The New Harmony Project. They have definitely penetrated the culture there. I have been able to watch that journey unfold and honored to be a part of the telling of this important story."

– Angelo Pizzo, *screenwriter of Hoosiers and Rudy*

"What Heartland perceived very early on is something that is now much better understood, that the way you get more life affirming product from Hollywood is by beginning to honor it. Heartland has shown that the center of the country is worth respecting and acknowledging." I give Heartland a lot of credit because it recognized that part of what motivates creative people to work is not money... but recognition. The journey is important and 'Title' tells it well!"

– Michael Medved, *Sneak Previews host, The Michael Medved Show*

"What I've been impressed with is the wide range of topics and issues that have been covered by these passionate and creative filmmakers from all over the world who come to Indianapolis for the Heartland Film Festival and The New Harmony Project. They have expanded the worldview of those who have attended and made them more human, made them more connected to the plight of others. The Lilly Endowment is proud to be a part of this important journey and the story 'Title' tells."

– Clay Robbins, *Chairman, Lilly Endowment*

"Heartland's Truly Moving Picture Award is one of the best and greatest honors Schindler's List, Amistad, and Saving Private Ryan received. I accepted these awards as a challenge to continue to do work that can meet Heartland's standard of excellence. Heartland has set the bar very high. And in keeping it high and filmmakers will continue to strive—I promise you—to sail over it and enjoy landing in the 'Heartland' of America. Now we can all enjoy reading about how this vision was realized."

– Steven Spielberg, *Producer/Director, Schneider's List, Amistad, and Saving Private Ryan*

Indianapolis Foundation at 100

Brian Payne

My organizaiton was founded during Indiana's bicentennial year. Much happened in 1916, notably the creation of our state flag and our state park system. But was a community foundation part of the strategy? We don't know the precise answer to that question but we do know that many of Indianapolis' most distinguished citizens established the Indianapolis Foundation to make our city a better place to live, work, and play.

If we could travel back in time, to Indianapolis in 1916, what would we find? Indianapolis was quite a different place back then. For one thing, it was a lot smaller. But it was growing fast. From 1860 to 1910, the city's population grew from eighteen thousand...to more than a quarter million people. More people meant more challenges. The city needed more and better housing, more widespread public education, and more responsive health services. There were new transportation challenges, too. People needed jobs, and safe, happy neighborhoods to raise their families.

Across America, growing cities were dealing with the same issues. Fortunately, plenty of people were eager to help. One of them—in Cleveland, Ohio—had a plan. Frederick Goff was president of the Cleveland Trust Company. He knew that community needs are not only real, but that they change over time. Goff had seen large estates left to causes that, through the twists and turns of history, had become obsolete, even harmful, to the owner's original intentions. He called it "the evil of the dead hand."

These "dead hand trusts" had distribution restrictions. One could be used only for watering troughs and hitching posts for horses in downtown Cleveland. Another provided care exclusively for children orphaned by the deaths of railroad workers. These were real problems in their day—but when times changed, these trusts became useless.

In response, Frederick Goff created a financial instrument called a community trust, and established the Cleveland Foundation in 1914. It was the first of its kind in America. In Goff's own words, "It is a fund created by the union of many gifts…not narrowly restricted; contributed by the people of Cleveland and managed by them for the benefit of the City of Cleveland…so that the charitable problems of each generation can better be solved by the best minds of the future."

Goff's vision was especially interesting to his friend Evans Woollen, Sr., president of the Fletcher Savings and Trust Company in Indianapolis. Woollen rallied a group of passionate Indianapolis leaders to join forces, to create a better community—not only for their neighbors, but for generations of Indianapolis citizens yet to come. And so, on January 5, 1916, the Fletcher Savings and Trust Company of Indianapolis, the Indiana Trust Company of Indianapolis, and the Union Trust Company of Indianapolis created The Indianapolis Foundation to accept and administer gifts and disburse the income:

> "for the relief of the needy poor and the improvement of living conditions in Indianapolis, for the care of the sick and aged, and for educational and philanthropic research."

It was a bold and a noble plan. But as lots of us in this room know, even the boldest plans fail without funding and support. The foundation's founders spent years working with potential donors to fund their vision. Then, Christmas arrived. Literally. On Christmas Day, 1920, the newly formed community foundation got its first major gift.

The donor? Alphonso Pettis, the 91-year-old former owner of an Indianapolis dry goods store called the New York Store. He'd never really lived here, but Indianapolis had made his fortune. So Pettis gave three hundred thousand dollars to The Indianapolis Foundation. That's the same as three and a half million dollars today.The second gift arrived on May 15th, 1922. James E. Roberts, co-owner of a Connersville furniture company, made a bequest of eight hundred thousand dollars.

In August of the same year, the foundation received a nine hundred thousand dollar bequest from Delavan Smith, publisher of *The Indianapolis News*. That's three gifts totaling more than two million dollars in less than two years. And those funds were entrusted to people whose names still ring through the halls of Indianapolis philanthropy today: Josiah K. Lilly... Gustave Efroymson...former U.S. Vice President Charles Fairbanks.

But it was Eugene Foster, The Indianapolis Foundation's first director, who articulated its enduring vision. Said Foster, "The Indianapolis Foundation endeavors to help in making Indianapolis not the biggest city, but rather, the best city in the land. The best city for men and

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women to live in; the best city for men of brains and enterprise; the best city for wage earners; the best city for homes of peace and secure content; the best city for children in which to be educated; the best city for physical and moral health; the best city for intellect and culture. The foundation believes that Indianapolis has the human power, if applied, to make this city the ideal city of America."

> **"If you want to consume culture or community, it's best to live in places like Los Angeles. There is much to entertain you there. But if you want to produce culture or community, Indianapolis is the best place in the world. All your efforts to improve society will be met with cooperation and enthusiasm."**
>
> **--Brian Payne, CEO, Central Indiana Community Foundation**

That's a noble goal. "The ideal city in America": We'd love to be that. So, it's been ninety-nine years. How're we doing? Let's take a look.

Health and Wellness

I mentioned that James E. Roberts was the foundation's second major donor. He made his eight hundred thousand dollar bequest with the needs of the city's "crippled children" especially in mind. Foundation Director Eugene Foster had a singular idea for how Roberts' bequest could be used: "Would it be advisable for us to make possible an additional nurse with the Public Health Nursing Association, naming her the James E. Roberts nurse, to devote her time entirely to crippled children? Inasmuch as the Riley Memorial Hospital will be available in some months, I think it would be helpful to us to have such a representative in the field."

In 1924, the foundation approved its very first grant, to the Public Health Nursing Association. The grant provided a nurse and the equipment needed to serve children with disabilities in their homes. In addition to funding the James E. Roberts Nurse, Mr. Roberts's bequest established the James E. Roberts School for Crippled Children in 1936.

Throughout its early history, the foundation funded all kinds of health initiatives. It helped improve healthcare facilities, supported nurse training programs, and funded tuberculosis and polio treatment at our public hospital. That public hospital would go through just a few changes of name and identity through the years: City Hospital, Marion County General Hospital, and the name most of us know, Wishard Memorial Hospital.

Today, thanks to broad community philanthropy—including many Indianapolis Foundation donors—Wishard has become the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital, supported by one of the largest gifts ever made to a public hospital in the U.S. The Eskenazis' forty million dollar gift created a state-of-the-art hospital that is an amazing facility. It also illustrates how our community's approach to health has changed over time. Take Eskenazi's Sky Farm: an outdoor healing environment for patients, staff, and the entire community. The Sky Farm produces more than two thousand pounds of produce a year for use in some of the healthiest food ever served in a hospital.

And as I can tell you firsthand, the Damien Center has been a fortunate beneficiary of The Indianapolis Foundation. The foundation has not only helped us provide services and programs for people with HIV/AIDS, but also to expand and move into our current building.

And The Indianapolis Foundation has supported so many great ideas. Take, for example, Damien Center's expansion to care for more people with HIV/AIDS, Genessaret's Mobile Van Unit which delivers medical care and dental services to homeless adult residents and the Reverend Charles Williams Prostate Cancer Screening Unit. These programs serve people who aren't likely to visit a clinic—who can't be reached unless we reach out.

Providing every citizen with access to excellent health care has always been at the heart of The Indianapolis Foundation's mission. Thanks to the foresight of some remarkable philanthropists, our community has not only the vision, but also the resources to address our health challenges—now and in the future.

Basic Needs

The difference between a mere group of people and a community is right there in the word: "Comm-*unity*." Unity starts with empathy—with putting yourself in the shoes of others. It's not easy. But it's necessary if we really believe in the idea of community.

One of our grantees, Joy's House, has just been named the top adult day services center in the country. Making sure that the young and old have access to daily basic needs including food, clothing, shelter, and services has been a primary focus of The Indianapolis Foundation since the beginning. That's why the foundation was one of the earliest supporters, in 1924, of the "Community Fund." Better known today as United Way of Central Indiana, it's one of The Indianapolis Foundation's largest annual grant recipients and an important funding colleague.

For ninety-nine years, the Indianapolis Foundation has provided a safety net for our most vulnerable citizens. A place to sleep for homeless adults and children. Electricity and heat for homes that need it. Meals for the hungry. Access to critical services for older adults and people with disabilities.

The Indianapolis Foundation has also helped to build and strengthen our local community centers—the central hubs in our neighborhoods that serve those in need. The foundation's first major grant to Flanner House in 1939 helped develop a housing community of 175 new homes on the northwest side, raising the standard of living for African-American families in Indianapolis. This, following a Flanner House study of four-hundred-and-fifty-four households showed the majority far below minimum standards of any kind—unsafe, insanitary, subhuman."

Our community centers, including Edna Martin Christian Center, have helped thousands of Marion County citizens over the years, providing employment programs, transportation, utility assistance, financial counseling, senior day programs, capital building improvements, and after-school and summer programs.

In addition to its support of neighborhood community centers, The Indianapolis Foundation was an early supporter of many basic needs organizations—especially those that filled critical gaps in the community. For example, in 1984, The Indianapolis Foundation made a three hundred-forty thousand dollar grant to Gleaners, the state's largest food bank. At the time, it was the foundation's largest grant ever, helping Gleaners purchase a new, larger warehouse to serve even more at-risk adults and children. Then, in 1997, The Indianapolis Foundation helped Second Helpings, a new food rescue and hunger relief agency, start a culinary job-training program.

Another of the foundation's standards was to be the first supporter of new organizations. For example, it started the city's first employment bureau to help provide adult vocational training. And in 1941 it provided start-up funding to the Indianapolis Legal Aid Society to provide legal assistance to people with limited means.

It also funded the Noble School, founded in 1953 by parents of children with developmental disabilities. Around the same time, it helped start the Indianapolis Hearing Society—one of the first preschools in Indianapolis for hearing-impaired children. It worked with the Children's Bureau to establish much-needed homes for orphans and group homes for foster care youth. And it helped start the Indianapolis Senior Center, so older adults would have access to social, recreational, and health programming.

Such essential organizations needed a safety net of their own. In the 1950s, another Indianapolis Foundation donor helped to create one. William E. English was the son of William *H.* English, a titan of local commerce and politics during the 1800s, and the man responsible for the English Opera House on Monument Circle. The younger William learned from his father that charities needed nurturing to survive. So he made a provision for the construction of a special building in downtown Indianapolis. Said the younger English, "Such charities as are deemed worthy shall be permitted without restriction as to race, creed, or color to have their office headquarters in said building and that said property shall become, and forever remain, the headquarters of Indianapolis organized charities."

The English Foundation Building opened in 1953, becoming the home of The Indianapolis Foundation and many other organizations providing critical community services: Early Learning Indiana, Gennesaret Free Clinics, Legal Aid Society, the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, Families First—the list goes on. All under one roof, and all committed to meeting the basic needs of the people in our city. That's unity, that's community.

Productive Citizens

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to discover her full potential and in 1936, the foundation helped Indianapolis Public Schools establish its own charitable foundation. Indeed, The Indianapolis Foundation has been helping high school students in Central Indiana realize their dreams since 1925, when director Eugene Foster helped establish the first of the Pettis Scholarships.

Also in 1925, the foundation began funding scholarships

aimed at students who needed funding assistance to begin their college educations and we have provided scholarships every single year since. Today, more than three hundred students receive scholarships every year from more than a hundred scholarship funds. First-generation college students have always been a primary focus.

We have also been dedicated to getting our students started early. The foundation has been a long-time supporter of our community's youngest learners, helping to fund the early childhood education efforts of Day Nursery (now Early Learning Indiana) and St. Mary's Child Center. When Lilly Endowment and the Indianapolis Foundation joined forces to start the Summer Youth Program Fund, they had a great "crowdsourcing" idea two decades before crowdsourcing was a thing. By combining the charitable assets of now ten local foundations and funders, the Summer Youth Program Fund supports almost two hundred programs that reach fifty thousand kids with summer enrichment, leadership, and skill-building opportunities.

Another example of the foundation's educational commitment is the Library Fund—made possible by a very generous anonymous gift. In its twenty-five years, the fund has awarded millions of dollars to help increase literacy and information access for Marion County residents. And it should make us all proud to know that there's nothing else like this in the country. Our city has the largest endowment fund in the United States dedicated to libraries and public access to literacy resources.

The Indianapolis Foundation has always been about education, not only for kids, but also for the entire community. Helping adults gain the skills to lift themselves out of poverty—it's a need that's always existed, but the rules have changed over time. So the Indianapolis Foundation and CICF brought a national model—Centers for Working Families—to our city. Centers for Working Families work with our community centers and educational institutions to provide education, job training, financial literacy, and career planning. It's just another example of how The Indianapolis Foundation adapts to the changing needs of our community—responding in ways that would have been unimaginable in the early 20th century.

Countless children, young people, and adults in Central Indiana are living proof of the power of philanthropy to change lives over the course of multiple generations. Thanks to the generosity of Indianapolis Foundation donors, millions of dollars have created early childhood education programs, productive summer activities, free educational resources, financial aid through scholarship funds, education reform efforts, workforce development and career training—all to empower Indianapolis's citizens to live productive, fulfilling lives.

It's no accident that "Foundation" is part of The Indianapolis Foundation's name. It gives our most disadvantaged citizens a firm place to stand—a platform from which they can pursue their dreams with sure-footed confidence.

Arts and Culture

The Indianapolis Foundation's legacy of supporting arts and culture began in 1933 with a grant to the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. It was the first outreach grant the symphony ever received, and it enabled the orchestra to perform out in the community. By the 1960s, the foundation's arts and cultural funding really began to pick up steam. The Indianapolis Foundation helped to start the Indianapolis Zoo, Young Audiences (now known as Arts for Learning), WFYI public television and radio, the Arts Council of Indianapolis, and a young dance company called Dance Kaleidoscope.

Actually, Dance Kaleidoscope, the performing company, grew out of the group of dancers that performed educational shows in the schools. Exposing youth to the arts and providing high-quality arts education experiences have always been the focus of the foundation's arts funding. These activities ranged from bringing dancers, musicians, and artists into Indianapolis schools to funding teacher training and lesson planning on the stages of the Indiana Repertory Theatre.

Supporting the arts and culture in Indianapolis has been a passion for so many of our city's residents but one particular fund that has supported nearly all of the organizations I've mentioned, and more: F.R. Hensel Fund for Fine Arts, Music, and Education. The fund was established by the estate of Franz Robert Hensel in 1992, and was The Indianapolis Foundation's first Field of Interest Fund. Since its founding, the Hensel Fund has made one-point-three million dollars in arts-related grants. And it's another example of a thoughtful estate plan from a generous Indianapolis resident with a vision—to provide beautiful and exciting experiences for the residents of the city he loved.

The Indianapolis Foundation's quality-of-life commitment goes beyond the arts. The environment, green spaces, recreation, quality places, and parks have been priorities, as well. In the 1980s, the foundation was an early funder and champion of the Central Canal and White River State Park. But the foundation's commitment to making this city a beautiful place

is perhaps best reflected in the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, which became an official arm of The Indianapolis Foundation in the year 2000.

The Parks Foundation is a separate non-profit organization for our city's parks department and it has benefited our parks to the tune of thirty million dollars. The foundation's vision has made it possible for the City of Indianapolis to maintain and expand our park system and provide green space and outdoor programming for everyone. Which supports that vision Eugene Foster articulated so many years ago: We want to be the best place to work and live—and a city that values intellect and culture.

The Future

Our founders probably didn't see all this activity coming 99 years ago. But as we look to the future, we want to continue to reinvent the way philanthropy is done to better serve our community's ever-changing needs. First, let me set the stage for our current reality. Central Indiana has been changing rapidly since the 1980s. The Pan Am Games brought a new focus to Downtown. Mayor Hudnut got Circle Centre Mall going. We are always discussing regional solutions to transportation and economic development as more people who worked and played in Indianapolis were living in the suburbs.

Community giving was changing, too. Community foundations were being created across the country that, instead of waiting for bequests, gave charitably minded people a chance to make a huge difference while they were still alive. The Indianapolis Foundation and Legacy Fund (based in Hamilton County) saw an opportunity: to serve a broader constituency—to do more than passively make grants—and do more great work across Central Indiana.

No one saw the situation more clearly than Dan Efroymson. Dan was an Indianapolis Foundation board member—as were his father Robert and his grandfather Gustave before him—and he led two key changes to philanthropy in our community. The first was to modernize the options for giving by encouraging living donors to participate in local philanthropy with The Indianapolis Foundation. He knew that sharing knowledge and opportunities for giving could truly unite like-minded, generous people.

The second was to combine forces—to create regional solutions to regional problems—to allow gifts to be received and grants made wherever they were most needed. It took three years of negotiations, leadership, and hard work from everyone involved. George Sweet, Milt Thompson, and Ken Gladish were all instrumental in this move. But the big catalysts were Dan and Lori Efroymson who promised to do allL of their philanthropy through us if we modernized the foundation in those two ways.

It was truly visionary. And you can't imagine how big. At the time, the Efroymsons had the largest donor-advised fund in the country. And so, in 1997, The Indianapolis Foundation and Legacy Fund of Hamilton County joined forces to create the Central Indiana Community Foundation and that has made all the difference in the world. Today, CICF works with over a thousand donor families and hundreds of nonprofits. Before CICF was created, The Indianapolis Foundation granted about five million dollars a year. Now our donor-advised families, scholarships, and other funds combine to give away more than forty million dollars a year.

This vision led us to a more future-oriented way of keeping the foundation's early promise. Today, we are laser focused on three community leadership initiatives. The first is Inspiring Places, to connect our neighborhoods and create beauty through art, nature, and compelling public spaces for residents and visitors. For example, The Indianapolis Cultural Trail—a legacy of Gene and Marilyn Glick—is truly one-of-a-kind. It's brought acclaim to our city and increased property values by over a billion dollars. Even more important, it's connecting us in ways we never imagined possible.

Our second initiative is College Readiness and Success, to help our youth, and their families, reach higher. You've heard a lot tonight about CICF's commitment to education. It truly is the key to a better life for thousands of Hoosier families, especially for first generation college students.

Our third initiative is Family Success, to build a cycle of financial self-sufficiency and support. Our flagship program, Centers for Working Families, a true community partnership with LISC and now the United Way, helps hardworking, low-income families get the tools they need to "Earn it, Keep it, and Grow it." It's been one of the most successful programs in the country, a model for breaking the generational cycle of poverty.

And it's all been made possible by the transformative, forward-thinking vision and generosity of people like Fred Goff, Evans Woollen, Eugene Foster, J.K. Lilly, Alphonso Pettis, Dan and Lori Efroymson, Gene and Marilyn Glick, and thousands and thousands of donors over ninety-nine years. Are we the ideal city in America? I don't know. But in the words of one of our favorite sons, the author Kurt Vonnegut..."If this isn't nice, I don't know what is."

CHALLENGER

GUSTAVE EFROYMSON
ENTREPRENEUR

FEARLESS BUSINESSMAN.

FIGHTER OF BIGOTRY.

FOREFATHER OF PHILANTHROPY
IN CENTRAL INDIANA.

BE IN

THE COMMUNITY WE'VE BECOME
STARTED TAKING SHAPE A CENTURY AGO.
THE COMMUNITY WE'LL BE IN 100 YEARS
STARTS WITH YOU.

Share your vision for the future of
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CENTRAL INDIANA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The INDIANAPOLIS FOUNDATION
LEGACY FUND
Inspiring philanthropy

CASE STUDY
The Efroymson family fund: Commitment to community

By Kevin Laskowski

Pictured: Efroymson Family Fund Advisors (Left to Right): Elissa Hamid Efroymson, Vice Chair; Lori Efroymson-Aguilera, Chair; and Jeremy Efroymson, Vice Chair

Jacob and Minnie Efroymson moved from Evansville, Indiana to the relatively young state capital of Indianapolis in 1872. The couple opened a small dry goods store on South Meridian Street, unaware they were beginning a family commitment to the city that would last for generations.

Indeed, three generations of Efroymsons, Gustave (1919-1946), Robert (1946-1988), and Dan (1988-1999), would serve in succession on the board of the community foundation—The Indianapolis Foundation—they helped to create in 1916.

Today, the Efroymson family honors its traditional commitment to the city of Indianapolis as it welcomes and helps forge a new philanthropic landscape.

"This is not a flashy, high-profile, self-promoting family," says Pam Velo, Associate Vice President for Donor Services at the Central Indiana Community Foundation and self-described "chief cook and bottle-washer" to the Efroymson Fund, a donor-advised fund of the foundation. "It's a very modest, down-to-earth family that truly believes it has an obligation and a responsibility…to give back to the community."

The history of the Efroymson family and its various funds reveals a group of personalities both dynamic and rooted in family tradition.

"The previous generations were the kind of people who stood up for what they believed and [thought] that they could change things by working hard at it," says Velo. "The current generation is the same way."

Jacob and Minnie's son Gustave, the eldest of their five children, would go on to form his own store at the age of 18 with his brother-in-law, calling it Efroymson and Wolf. When the Indianapolis Foundation was created in 1916, the businessman became its vice-president and a trustee.

Gustave worked quietly on behalf of the disadvantaged. He helped organize Jewish, African-American and Catholic civic leaders in efforts to rid Indianapolis of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. He signed affidavits for Jews fleeing Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, helping them find sanctuary in the United States. Despite the high profile nature of some of his efforts and his position in the community, Gustave much preferred the community's advancement to his own.

Gustave's son Robert once recalled being in line at a Loews movie theater. When the theater manager noticed Gustave and his family, he offered to let them go to the front of the line. Gustave, after all, had been instrumental in bringing the franchise to Indianapolis. Gustave thanked him but refused. Robert never forgot the lesson. When Gustave died in 1946, Robert took his place on the Indianapolis Foundation's board.

While Robert maintained the Efroymson tradition on the board, his brother Clarence was more comfortable behind the scenes. The two made an interesting, dynamic pair—Robert the public face at the Indianapolis Foundation, the United Fund, and the Community Hospital, and Clarence the quiet professor of economics working on behalf of the United Negro College Fund, the Indiana Mental Health Association, and The Nature Conservancy. Together, Robert and Clarence would create The Moriah Fund in 1985, each contributing around $40 million to the cause of improving the quality of life for Jews and non-Jews the world over.

The brothers both passed away in 1988, and Dan Efroymson took his father Robert's place on the board of the Indianapolis Foundation.

As Indiana took note of the growing popularity of donor-advised funds in the late 1990s, Dan and his wife Lori helped craft a partnership between

the Indianapolis Foundation, which served Marion County, and the Legacy Fund, which served Hamilton County. The result was a new regional community foundation: the Central Indiana Community Foundation. Already known for their commitment to Indiana through the Indianapolis Foundation and to the Jewish community and social justice through foundations like the Moriah Fund, the Efroymsons established a new vehicle, the Efroymson Fund, donating $90 million, in the hopes that other donors and families would take on the joys and challenges of philanthropy.

"They wanted other families to know that they could do the same thing even without the money that the Efroymsons have," says Velo.

To date, the Fund has awarded 277 grants, totaling more than $30 million, to nearly 200 nonprofits.

Even as the giving landscape changes to accommodate new vehicles, new partnerships, and new methods; even as the Efroymsons welcome a new generation to the Fund—Dan and Lori's children, Jeremy and Elissa; the Efroymson commitment to stewardship remains. Lori Efroymson-Aguilera serves as a board member of the new community foundation.

For the Efroymsons, it's simple really.

> "A person has to be a little useful, don't you think?" Robert Efroymson once said. "And get a little satisfaction out of feeling you've done something useful."

For more about the Efroymson Fund, visit the web site of the Central Indiana Community Foundation

Photo: Larry Ladig

Jeremy Efroymson and the Efroymson Family Fund (established in 1998) are the center of Indianapolis' art and philanthropy initiatives. The Harrison Center, the IMA, Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art (iMOCA), Herron School of Art and Design, and so many other organizations and individuals have benefited from the Efroymson family's financial support and arts leadership. An artist himself as well as an art collector, Jeremy was a founding member and executive director of the iMOCA for 3 years. Concerned about the lack of support given to individual artists as well as the complexity of most grant applications, the Efroymson's fund is meant to be an accessible way for artists to receive funding.

Jeremy's philanthropic style involves risk-taking. He told us emphatically, "I will always support someone with a good idea. If they have a good idea, I'll be the first to support them. We aren't afraid for something to fail; other foundations want a sure bet, but if we ever want innovation in the nonprofit sector we have to fund people who are doing something different."

Not only is Jeremy interested in artists doing something different, but also something "positive"—what he calls social practice art. This entails creating work that brings people together in communities through listening, adapting, and providing resources for individuals in the community to connect with one another.

We asked Jeremy why he wants to be in Indianapolis: "The one thing about Indianapolis is that anyone can make a difference, and also it's partially because of the low cost of commercial space, office space and studio space but anybody open up a gallery or have access to show their work. The community is also still small enough that if you want to start something and you are relatively good at it you are going find success and access to an audience…We still have that Midwestern friendliness to us and helpfulness, and there's a lot of camaraderie among people and a willingness to help, and more openness than there would be in other communities."

By Brie Stoltzfus, Director of Public Outreach, Sagamore Institute.

Joanna Taft

For Joanna Taft, citizenship is a mandate. When I asked her what good citizenship means to her, she responded with a clarity and passion of someone who thinks about this kind of question often: "I have a responsibility to contribute as a community member to grow another generation of leadership in my community." In other words, a citizen works towards cultivating localized resources for developing well-rounded and world-class people. Her community leadership, most notably as a founding board member of Herron High School and the Founding Executive Director of the Harrison Center, reveals a desire for a healthy community that fosters healthy citizens.

Joanna's account of her childhood sounds a lot like the experience of visiting the Taft household on New Jersey Street today. Her childhood house, filled with art collected over the years by family, was a popular place for hosting neighbors and newcomers alike. Though she grew up visiting museums, she never stepped foot in a gallery or rubbed shoulders with an art community until her time in Indianapolis. In 1991, Joanna, her husband Bill and then-newborn daughter Rebekah moved into a 19th-century home in Herron-Morton Place, a neighborhood in which only a third of its homes were actually occupied.

Bringing beauty to blighted places is a passion for both Bill and Joanna. She attributes the reason for her strong sense of purpose to both her family history of hospitality and her Presbyterian theology's emphasis on a "cultural mandate." This mandate is a call to "continue the work of creation." Humans, she believes, are intrinsically interested in and renewed by the world around them, through pursuits like gardening, having families, physical and psychological healing, creating art and beauty, as well as neighborhood revitalization.

One way Joanna's efforts have helped to revitalize her neighborhood is the creation of the Harrison Center, and its City Gallery. Providing a space for artists to create and sell their work, the Harrison Center brought people from all over Indianapolis to the near-north community that had been long considered uninhabitable. At First-Friday events, Joanna recalls visitors to the center asking her questions like "What is this area like? Is it scary?" At the time, Herron-Morton and Fall Creek Place were slowly regaining a sense of community, and the Harrison Center generated interest and traffic in a neglected area.

The Harrison Center approaches community development in a number of ways; one major way it does so is by celebrating its city. The City Gallery is a gallery at the Harrison Center set apart for art about all things Indiana. At the City Gallery, a "community concierge" is employed to help people connect to services, sites, and housing options that celebrate urban Indianapolis. The walls of the gallery are covered in scenes of downtown Indianapolis and the quiet corners of its surrounding neighborhoods. Artists at the Harrison Center like Jed Dorsey, Kristin Divers, Justin Vining, Carolyn Springer, and Kyle Ragsdale have created works featuring Indiana. Not only is it a space for place-based art and for neighbors to interact, but it's also an incubator for ideas about how artists can contribute to local economic growth and to beautifying the streets in Herron-Morton and Fall Creek Place.

The rest of the Harrison Center facility provides studio space for artists from Indiana and around the world to create and display their work. The studios are open every First Friday, providing a community-oriented and arts-oriented option for kicking off the weekend. At these events, the Harrison Center is where friends, acquaintances or strangers meet and run into each other. The Harrison Center has also popularized "porching," the verb referring to the act of intentionally sitting on one's front porch with good food and friends. Not only does meeting together routinely contribute to relationship growth, but it also creates a friendly neighborhood feel in which neighbors wave to passers-by and invite others onto the porch. These are seemingly simple solutions to big problems, but Joanna Taft and Harrison Center are confident that creativity is the key to a flourishing city full of healthy neighborhoods.

Want an excuse to visit the Harrison Center? On November 1st, Indianapolis artist Kyle Ragsdale's show entitled "Waiting and Watching" opened. To get a sampling of what the artists at the Harrison Center are working on, come on the first Friday of every month from 6pm-10pm to browse studios and meet artists.

By Brie Stoltzfus, Director of Public Outreach, Sagamore Institute.

Hunter Smith Band Story.

It's not every day when the front man of a popular country/rock band is also a Super Bowl World Champion. But for Hunter Smith, it's just one of the many twists and turns that led him to the stage.

After excelling in football at the University of Notre Dame, Smith was drafted to the Indianapolis Colts. He spent 12 years playing in the NFL.

Smith felt the musical pull very early in his life. His broad musical influences include: Keith Urban, U2, Zac Brown Band, Kenny Rogers, Coldplay, Willie Nelson, Sawyer Brown, and Alabama. Probably not something you'd expect from a kid raised in a non-instrumental, a cappella church. He taught himself how to play the guitar and began writing his own music at a very young age.

In 2012, his dream became reality. The Hunter Smith Band released their first album, "Green." The band consists of four Indianapolis-based musicians hand-picked by Smith. Band members Justin Langebartels, Alex Reiff, Ethan Ehrstine and Kyle Whiteley all bring their own unique sound to the band.

Don't expect to put the Hunter Smith Band into one genre, or music "bucket". Part country, part rock, part pop, part alternative, ALL exceedingly entertaining and original. Expect energy, musicianship, and rootsy storytelling by lead singer, Smith.

Their sophomore album, "Story," was released in 2015 and has been embraced by independent radio and a rapidly growing loyal fan base. Look Ahead. It's the theme of this album, and a theme for Smith's life. "There's something country there, but there is nobody cooler in the pop sense than Keith Urban," he said. "That's kind of where we fall, in that genre.

There's one foot in country. We're something and country."

That "something and country" is working very well, stylistically speaking.

Check them out at HunterSmithBand.com

UNITED STATE OF INDIANA.

Sagamore Institute is excited to announce a new partnership with United State of Indiana, an Indianapolis-based apparel and accessories designer dedicated to creating high-quality products for Hoosiers. In spring 2016, United State of Indiana will feature new products co-designed by Sagamore Institute, celebrating Hoosier creativity and Indiana citizenship. Read on to learn more about USI's story.

Over the years, United State of Indiana has become a hallmark of millennial culture in Indiana. Almost every major event, holiday, and occasion has a t-shirt, mug, art design, or beer koozie designed by USI to accompany it. You can hardly walk around the city without seeing some sort of USI design along the way.

When USI's founder, Graham Brown, designed his first t-shirt, he hoped to "create a simple image that seemed to embody everything I had ever wanted to say about Indiana. It was bold, ambiguous, mildly-controversial and didn't leave any impression other than Indiana. Just Indiana."

His design took off. Soon, the name United State of Indiana was born. According to Graham, " I don't think there will ever be a better mission statement for this whole project than those four words."

From band t-shirts made on a bedroom floor to local cultural icon, Graham Brown and USI have made an impact on the Millennial generation of Indiana. USI's mission is to:

1. Create high-quality products for people who love Indiana.

2. Support Indiana's artists and entrepreneurs by promoting their products and finding ways for them to help create ours.

3. Support a culture in Indiana that promotes local living, collaborative commerce and the celebration of commonalities, not differences.

Graham to shared with us some thoughts about what it means to be an Indiana citizen:

What does being a good citizen mean to you?

I think the role of being a good citizen--especially as it relates to being an entrepreneur--is two-fold. First, it's about fulfilling a responsibility to advance your surroundings and make the place better in ways that people haven't before. This could be everything from delivering meals to neighbors to overseeing the construction of a new city hall. It's the task of being innovative in a way that directly impacts and benefits the people and places around you. Secondly, being a good citizen requires attention to making sure that everyone in the community is able to access those innovative changes. If the positive results of our citizenship are only utilized and realized by a certain social segment or subset of the neighborhood/city/state, it's not true citizenship. The work must be universally accessible and not be excluded from anyone due to social, economic, or demographic differences from the citizens at work.

If you are interested in learning more about USI and perusing their products you can find them at:

www.unitedstateofindiana.com