



Giving Back

with the Battle River Community Foundation

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A thoughtful gift from a dedicated educator

Margie McCrea was ahead of her time.

Born December 15, 1916 in Okotoks and raised in the Vegreville area, Miss McCrea attended Normal School in Camrose to receive training to be a teacher, and then led a one-room school house near Vermilion. But she made a turn onto a path less travelled, especially by women of her generation, when she took summer school courses, earned a degree in Science and, after the Second World War, made her way to England to teach at a private girls' school. She also taught at a school in Victoria before returning to Alberta. After short stints teaching in Okotoks and Rimbey, Miss McCrea settled in at Camrose Composite High School in Camrose, where she taught Chemistry and Physics for more than 20 years.

In her "spare" time, Miss McCrea also led the school's Glee Club and acted as musical director for a number of shows. She also served as the Choir Director for Camrose United Church and was an active member of the Business and Professional Women's Club.

According to her nephew, Bill Sears, Margie McCrea was always an independent person, who was generous in her support of her community and her family. Several years ago, Margie McCrea set up a \$10,000 fund through the Battle River Community Foundation, focused on supporting the environment. The first

grant made from the fund assisted students at Camrose Composite High School in purchasing solar panels for their school, as part of an environmental sustainability project. Miss McCrea, the retired Science teacher, was delighted.

Margie's niece, Ruthellen Appleby of Tofield, says that even

though she became quite physically frail, the Science teacher never lost her sharp mind and quick wit. Last Christmas, Ruthellen recalls, Margie expressed her opinion of carbon capture quite eloquently and, if you asked her, she could chant the periodic table in its entirety.

Miss McCrea passed away in May of this year, at the age of 94. In her will she left an additional \$10,000 to the Foundation. The dollars will be added to her existing fund and will continue to support environmental projects of various kinds, ensuring that her commitment to science lives on.



Miss McCrea in 1970

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Two copies of the newsletter?

If you received *Giving Back* in the mail, you will have received two copies. It is hoped that you will share the second copy with someone who may be interested in the work we do. If you feel that the Foundation is worthy of support, perhaps they will too.

We appreciate your assistance in helping to raise awareness of the Foundation throughout east central Alberta.

Meet two young couples who make giving a priority

John and Carmen Person

John and Carmen Person enjoy the idea of being called a “young” couple, although they confess to being slightly on the outer edge of eligibility for that term.

Married 14 years, John and Carmen are involved in a wide range of activities and interests. John is a second-generation partner in Burgar Funeral Home, while Carmen has established her own counselling service and also supervises student academic services at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta.

The couple also ensures they make time for their extended family and for their church.

Both have, at different times, been on local boards and committees. For example, Carmen has been on the board of The Bethany Group. John is currently part of a committee that is trying to establish a hospice within the City of Camrose.

Carmen and John believe strongly in supporting the community in which they live and contributing to the local quality of life.

“We can’t always stretch our time enough to contribute to the community as much as we would like,” Carmen says. “Supporting the community financially is another way of contributing.”

Giving back to their community is a life-long habit, particularly for John. “I remember when I used to get \$1.00 a week from my parents for an allowance. I was taught that a minimum of 10 percent of everything you get should be shared, so every week I’d put a dime in the collection plate at church. That was the beginning for me. I’ve carried that on throughout my life.”

Because of that childhood learning, John says he has never understood the theory that you have to be wealthy to be charitable. “If you wait until you’re wealthy to get in the habit of giving,” he says, “you’ll just never get into the habit.”

The Battle River Community Foundation helps John and Carmen protect the quality of life of the community in which they live and work, without forcing them to choose which local projects to support.

“The Foundation is unique because it’s independent,” Carmen explains. “It reaches so many areas of the community, and it can set its own criteria to provide financial support to local



Carmen and John Person

organizations that don’t meet the guidelines for government dollars. Plus, the Foundation is in touch with the community in ways that we are not able to be – it understands the needs now and it will know the needs in the future.”

The couple says they think highly of the people involved in the Foundation and believe there is a high calibre of skill among the Board and staff. John and Carmen also agree that, for them, the Foundation is an organization that enhances relationships and builds community spirit – and that’s something they’re happy to be part of.



Mayer Dinner a Huge Success

Sincere thanks are extended to Norm and Betty Mayer for allowing us to celebrate their lifetimes of good works in the area at our Community Builder’s Dinner in Camrose on October 21, 2011.

Thanks are also extended to the over four hundred community-minded guests who shared the evening with us, our generous donors and those who participated in the live auction. Together, you added over \$90,000 to the Community Endowment at this event!

Jon and Shannon Stolee

Jon and Shannon Stolee could be forgiven for being absorbed in their own lives – the young couple has two sons and their days are focused on keeping up to the demands of their growing boys.

Jon is a local lawyer and Shannon is currently home with their children, the youngest of whom is turning one in late December. But, despite having children to raise, the Camrose couple still finds the resources to make supporting their community a priority, too.

While they may not have much in the way of time and they certainly wouldn’t call themselves wealthy, they are definitely committed to making the world a better place.

“All giving is meant to shape the world,” says Jon. “Whether you have a specific cause that you support or a general concern for the well-being of people, you give in order to help make the world as you wish it to be.”

“We’ve set up a fund through the Battle River Community Foundation that is future oriented and child oriented. We want the world to be good enough for all people’s children.”

It’s a lofty goal, but one with which the Foundation is happy to assist. The Stolees established their fund in late 2007 and add to it regularly.

The couple deliberately established their fund and gave their first installment payment shortly before the end of the calendar year, in order to



Jon and Shannon Stolee with Zachary and Michael

maximize their tax benefits. (You can learn more about that on Page 4 of this newsletter.)

When the Stolees’ fund reaches a certain point, the proceeds will be directed annually to organizations in the local area which work to alleviate poverty.

Jon and Shannon say they like the idea that the fund will exist in perpetuity and they also like that they will have the opportunity for input into what causes to support, without always being tied to one charity. “Things change, times change, needs change,” says Jon. “We’re not excited about the idea of always supporting the same charity – this fund allows flexibility to change as society changes.”

“I’ve worked in the not-for-profit sector,” Shannon adds, “and I know how bare bones it can be. The work of the Foundation helps many of these organizations and we’re pleased to be part of that. It’s very meaningful to us.”

Both Shannon and Jon say they grew up in families in which supporting the community was a priority. Giving back has never seemed like an “extra” but rather something they build into their long term plans. Shannon compares it to making RRSP contributions – if you start early and give regularly, small sums grow to something substantial.



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'Tis the season for thinking tax benefits

December is typically known as the season for giving. But it's also the season to think about getting tax benefits. The Battle River Community Foundation can help.

As the end of the year approaches, now is the perfect time to set up a fund through the Foundation and, as an Alberta taxpayer, generate a tax savings of 50% of your gifted amount. Donations can be made in the form of:

- Cash;
- Securities (you are not required to pay the capital gains if the securities are being donated)

With a gift to the Foundation you can have input into how your donation is used or, if you'd prefer, you can set up a fund within the Community Fund that will be directed to meet the communities' greatest needs on an annual basis. If your donation is \$10,000 or more, you can even put your name on it.

The Christmas season is also a perfect time to set up funds or make donations in honour of special people – in memory of family members, in celebration of special occasions or as a Christmas gift for those who have “everything”.

Start a fund or make a donation before December 31. There's no better way to give *and* receive.

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