

Barker Family Fund

Mike Barker didn't envision his family starting a charitable fund. It wasn't a goal. He didn't think it would be possible.

Then he became involved with the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln (formerly the Sangamon County Community Foundation) and after learning about the options available, the vision changed. That change has culminated in the establishment of the **Barker Family Fund**, a donor-advised fund, through the Community Foundation.

"I don't think (my wife) Sandy or I or the kids would have thought our family would have been able to establish a fund like this to give to causes or charities," Barker said. "I think it's really fun that something you're doing is going to benefit areas of need that are important to you for a really long time."

The Fund's grant process will be overseen by Sandy and Mike and their three children Abby, Jed and Seth and the children's spouses along with the six grandchildren. Mike and Sandy first mentioned the possibility of creating a Fund at an annual family outing in 2006. After research and discussion on the issue, the children cemented their interest in helping create the Fund earlier this year. The Fund continues Mike's and Sandy's effort to teach community involvement to their children.

"They've certainly observed that the family has been involved in supporting community needs for a lot of years. I guess we want to firm that up and create a long term thing for our kids and grandchildren," Mike Barker said. "It will hopefully go beyond us and beyond our children."

The family doesn't plan to limit itself to one area of need. The Barker children grew up in Sherman and part of the allure to working with the Community Foundation is the ability to direct grants past Springfield and into the surrounding area.

"We don't have a specific focus, but my wife has volunteered at the local food pantry once a week for the past 20 years. She has a lot of familiarity with filling that kind of need. I'm sure we'll do something in that area," Barker said.

The flexibility donor-advised funds offer is part of the attraction. Each year the grants can change to meet the greatest need in the area.

"This is going to go in whatever direction we want," Barker said.

The family expects to begin providing grants in 2008.

"It's good to start out even if it's one or two grants a year," Barker said. "That's the fun part - to make the grants."



The Barker Family - Standing L to R: Seth Barker, Mark Besch, Sandy, Mike & Jed Barker; Seated L to R: Heather Barker, Abby Besch, Alison Barker; Children L to R: Lucy, Jake, & Josie Besch & Sadie Barker.