

DECEMBER 2023

FOUNDATIONS TODAY

e-Newsletter



What's Going on at NAEF?

There's lots of exciting things going on at NAEF!

- ◆ Two upcoming events, [Alumni Development](#) and [Storytelling for Impact](#), are around the corner.
- ◆ Plan ahead with our events schedule, reaching into 2024 on our [events page](#).
- ◆ [Early bird registration](#) is underway for ImpactED '24, along with [sponsorship opportunities](#).
- ◆ We look forward to welcoming many of you in sunny Tampa this April!
- ◆ Thank you to everyone who [donated](#) on Giving Tuesday. Your contributions will be instrumental in advancing our mission and its impact.
- ◆ Discover fresh ways to be showcased as a member through our [member spotlight](#) and [member news](#) pages.
- ◆ Make sure to follow us on social media and check your inbox to stay updated on news, events, and more!

Upcoming Events

[Alumni Development](#)

December 14

4:00-5:00 PM | Webinar

[Storytelling for Impact](#)

January 16, 2024

12:00-1:00 PM | Webinar

[ImpactED '24](#)

April 10-12, 2024 |

Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay -
2900 Bayport Drive,
Tampa FL

[Sponsor ImpactED '24](#)

April 10-12, 2024 |

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Industry News & Articles

Finding Home: How a public school nonprofit ignited a community to combat student homelessness

By: [Jodi Lunt](#)



Jodi Lunt is the Executive Director for [Davis Education Foundation](#). Jodi has over 33 years of experience in education as a teacher, specialist, science director and currently is the Foundation Director. She graduated from Weber State University and then completed her Master of Education in Instructional Technology from Utah State University. She is passionate about children and removing barriers to their education.

Her current philanthropic work includes a \$5M campaign for the construction of nine teen centers in Davis School District. These centers provide showers, laundry facilities, a food pantry and wrap-around services located in the high schools. In her spare time, Jodi enjoys running, reading, the great outdoors, travel and spending time with her husband and three incredible children. She is most excited about the new adventure of being a grandparent!

Some community challenges are distant and hard to imagine. Others land right on your doorstep.

Literally.

Such was the case when Jodi Lunt, Director of Davis Education Foundation (Farmington, Utah), received a call from a school employee who found a student huddled and asleep against her classroom door at 6:30 a.m. one morning before school.

Unfortunately, it wasn't – and isn't -- an isolated occurrence.

Thankfully, an initiative spearheaded by the Foundation to build "Teen Centers" within schools is turning the tide and giving students in crisis a place to succeed.

A unique and collaborative relationship between the Foundation and the District allows Lunt to work alongside high-level District leadership and boots-on-the-ground employees alike, giving her insight into the nexus of problems and the ability, resources and access to address them efficiently.

But it wasn't always so clear-cut.

Lunt's wakeup call came four years ago. The Foundation had just concluded its annual Child Spree event. Volunteers assembled to shop for back-to-school basics for students in need who were recommended by onsite school administrators. Lunt was riding high on the sense of accomplishment; a record-high 375 students were served, funded completely by donations.

The feeling didn't last.

Lunt was stunned to learn soon after the event that there were 1,100 students classified as homeless in the District – and that many of them hadn't been served at Child Spree.

"I was in complete shock," she relates. "I couldn't understand how we could be missing so many students in need. I knew then that the Foundation would never be able to serve the most vulnerable among us if we didn't know who they were."

In an organizational restructure, Lunt was assigned oversight for the federal McKinney-Vento program that serves students classified as homeless because they lack a fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residence.

The number of homeless students in the District has never dipped below 1,100 during Lunt's tenure overseeing the program and has sometimes swelled to nearly 1,800. For a district of 72,000 students nestled in an industrious bedroom community north of Salt Lake City, those numbers come as a shock to most Davis County residents. "They can't believe there are so many homeless people in our community, let alone homeless children expected to show up to school each day and succeed," says Lunt.

Understanding the scope of the problem marked the beginning of a Foundation-led community initiative to address it.

Lunt and a stakeholder group of School Board members, Foundation Board members, school administrators and community partners got to work expanding upon the existing concept of specialized school-site resources for students in crisis.

Through community donations and a partnership with Clearfield City, the first “Teen Center” was constructed and opened at Clearfield High School in spring of 2021. The School Board agreed to support the ongoing staffing of a part-time coordinator while the building principal agreed to fund a part-time assistant. With showers, laundry facilities, study space and food – as well as connection to mental health resources, academic supports and post-secondary planning assistance -- the Teen Center model was born.

With one Teen Center under its belt, Lunt launched the Foundation toward a wider community campaign to bring awareness and resources to student homelessness. An important investment was hiring a professional videographer to help communicate the story.

It worked.

Students, civic groups, religious congregations, nonprofit organizations and individuals saw “[Give Hope](#)” and caught the vision of how they could contribute. Soon multiple construction projects were underway at schools across the District. The initiative piqued the interest of The Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation and the Huntsman Foundation who made a combined donation of \$1 million. Soon legislators were touring Clearfield’s Teen Center, resulting in a \$3 million statewide Teen Center Grant Program piloted in 2022 and an expanded \$15 million program in 2023. By the end of 2024, all 10 of the District’s high schools, plus one specialized school, will have Teen Centers funded entirely from donations and grants. The Foundation’s bottom line grew from \$5 million to an expected \$9 million in the space of four years, and groundbreaking for a 16-bed residential center will take place this month. In the 2022-2023 school year, nearly 24,000 individual services were provided to over 2,000 unique students in Teen Centers – and this is only a beginning.

What can explain this phenomenal growth? “The community had capacity to care for students; they just didn’t comprehend the need or know how to help,” explains Lunt. “They needed to be shown, and they needed to be asked. Also, our team works really hard and we’re really tired,” she laughs.

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Misconceptions of an Education Foundation

By: [Becky Greenlee](#)



Becky Greenlee has spent over two decades of her career in the nonprofit sector. She is in her third year as the Executive Director of the [Kaneland Foundation](#). Greenlee started her career writing state grants for a regional council and has served multiple roles that have contributed to her extensive relationship management skills in the nonprofit and for profit sectors. She has worked on both sides of a nonprofit; fundraising and fund administration.

A notable accomplishment in her career was founding and managing a professional growth network of 40+ members for a number of years. She has received many local awards for her work with census data, mentoring networks and leadership. When she's not working she is spending time with her wonderful husband and five children.

Why the term misconception over myth?

In short, misconceptions are views or opinions that are incorrect because of faulty thinking or understanding. This is exactly what is going on in this situation. ...and of course, I didn't want anyone to think this was going to be some kind of hero story about demigods or something like that. However! I would say a lot of nonprofits could be classified as hero's, but I digress.

Please, allow me to lay out some framework first: I am currently the Executive Director of an education foundation. This role was acquired after serving many different roles in the nonprofit field over the past 20 years.

I have worked for private foundations, more commonly called the private sector; foundations that already have the money to disperse (they don't have to raise it). I have worked in grant seeking organizations; foundations and nonprofits that must raise their own funding in order to achieve their missions. This includes fundraisers, appeals and grant writing for federal, state and private grant dollars. And oddly enough, I have also worked in the for-profit field selling grant software to the private sector. This role did actually 'fit' though. I couldn't have sold software to foundation staff if I had no idea how they would need to utilize it. This role also gave me an incredibly insightful birds-eye-view into the different ways foundations operate and distribute their funding.

So, with all of this experience in the nonprofit world, my current role should be somewhat, for lack of better words, a piece-of-cake. Still yet, my experience and knowledge did not fully prepare me to work for an education foundation. I credit most of my funding challenges to these three misconceptions held by grantors, donors and the general community.

Misconception #1: Education Foundations Receive Taxpayer Money

This is my biggest barrier as this is simply NOT true; at least not in Illinois. I cannot say for certain in other states. An educational foundation gets all of its funding from internal grants (if they can get any), fundraisers and donations. Only, we have to work harder to get that funding because of this #1 misconception.

Misconception #2: PTO's And Education Foundations Serve The Same Purpose

Although these two organizations both work toward the same goal of supporting their school district in some way, they do so on much different scales. Here are two of the larger, notable differences, that to me, are seemingly the easiest to define to a general audience:

PTO - PTO's focus on an individual school within a district. A PTO isn't required to be a 501c3 in order to raise funds. This funding typically covers expenses for specific school events, equipment, classroom supplies, etc. A PTO is not required to have a board or bylaws. And finally, you cannot designate where your money goes once a donation is made.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION - A foundation focuses on an entire school district. A foundation must be registered as a 501c3 nonprofit is required to have a board and bylaws. It funds programs and resources for students district wide. A restricted fund or scholarship can be established to be dispersed, only as the funder designates, within the foundation.

Misconception #3: School District Funding Can Be Utilized However They Deem Necessary

Now, I realize that this may not seem like it is related to an education foundation; let me explain why it is.

When funding is distributed to school districts, most of it is already designated on how it must be spent before the districts even receive it. So, in a very simplified way of describing this; districts receive federal and state funds, but are apprised how it must be spent. Do you think supporting their education foundation is within these appropriations? Absolutely not. So, unless a district has received a special grant or distribution beyond their typical aid, none of this funding goes to support the education nonprofit.

In addition, due to the advanced designation of school funding, certain specific and focused needs of each district will remain unmet. This is where districts turn to their foundations; to fill in these gaps.

Some of the typical gaps that are filled by education foundations are: social emotional learning materials, updated classroom furniture, classroom calming mechanisms, bi-lingual reading materials, updated technology programs, CPR training materials, and so much more.

I know funding an education foundation isn't 'sexy'!

Yep, you know what I'm saying here. These foundations can't show you pictures of the cute animals you've rescued. We can't tell you how many families we have provided with food. We have not worked towards curing cancer. We support the children that are learning the skill sets and knowledge it takes to run these foundations and the teachers that help get them there.

Because of these misconceptions and other small barriers (see above), I have found this to be my most challenging nonprofit role to date. By no means has it stopped me from trying to alter these misconceptions or apply for grants or ask the local community for support, but it has drastically changed my success in doing so. It has also encouraged me to write this article in another attempt to modify these views and help others see the truth behind how an education foundation operates.

I hope this article has made a difference in the way you view education nonprofits. From here, I ask that you help me dispel these misconceptions by sharing this article with your local foundations, businesses, colleagues...basically anyone that will actually read it!

If you have a chance to support an education foundation, or *any* foundation for that matter, do it. Be there her! A small donation of time or money can make a significant and often drastic impact on nonprofit organizations, which ultimately, help to strengthen the communities we live and work in.

The New School World of Boards and Their Responsibilities

By: [Randall Hallett](#)



Randall is the CEO/Founder of [Hallett Philanthropy](#) and has a passion for helping organizations seek funding to meet their mission---and he believes giving is good for one's emotional and physical well-being.

Prior to founding Hallett Philanthropy, Randall served as President for a large consulting firm. In the last decade, Randall has worked with health systems, universities, social service agencies, and more on 4 continents

Before consulting, Randall was the CDO and Senior Executive at the Nebraska Medical Center. Prior to working with the MedCenter, Randall spent 15 years in fundraising leadership positions, all as a CDO. Randall also has four (4) different educational degrees as a part of his educational experiences.

There's been little debate over the years as to the importance of volunteer leadership within the nonprofit space. However, over the last decade, best practices are beginning to shift toward a model that indicates a different series of priorities. Many of the most successful nonprofits are adjusting their board level commitments and engagement to meet the challenges of the day.

"Truisms"

To best understand why this is important, we have to start with key facts that are fairly well known in philanthropy

- The number of donors has dropped precipitously in the last 20 years, now below 47% of the households in the United States making any charitable gift to any nonprofit in any one year
- The success of campaigns and annual giving efforts are residing more and more with a smaller group of donors at the top the gift pyramid
- The shortest time frame for a new prospect to become a major gift donor is through a volunteer referral

If these three basic tenets are true, and they are, then we're left with the critical element of what our board members are doing to ensure financial success from a philanthropic perspective.

“Old School”

The old school model of board engagement has been tried and true for decades if not longer. Many of their responsibilities of the past look something like the following:

- Attend board and committee meetings
- Formulation and oversight of policies and procedures
- In consultation with the staff leadership, advise
 - On the budget
 - Review of the executive
- Annual approval of the Foundation’s 990
- Oversight of program planning and evaluation
- Review of organizational/programmatic reports
- Promotion of the organization

These responsibilities, in of themselves, are not bad. In fact, there are some legal and governance requirements that need to be part of any Board’s overall responsibility. However, these do not address the three aforementioned key facts about today’s philanthropy. If Foundations want to continue to raise additional dollars, from a shrinking pool of people, then the most direct way to acquire new donors is through volunteer leadership.

“New School”

What is being discussed and shown across the country regarding board responsibilities is a completely different set of obligations. Instead of being “reactionary” as the traditional list above indicates, Board members and key volunteers need to be more “pro”actionary in their activities. Some of these “new” school responsibilities include the following:

- Dream Big and Build Strategy
- Help to create/intensify relationships with key individuals in areas where the Foundation serves its charity purpose
 - Carry a “portfolio” of 4-6 individuals to be responsible for, in concert with fundraising staff, in developing deeper relationships
 - Personally (*in-person*) introduce to the fundraising staff 2-4 new individuals who have the capacity to make a major gift
- Make a personal gift to the annual fund of at least \$1,000 annually
- Make a major gift to a campaign or specific area of the organization (*member’s choice as to where*) for each term
- Once each term, be willing to host (*facility and pay for*) a private reception in support of a specific need/fundraising effort
- Personally attend at least 2 fundraising events as ambassadors with guests

If fundraising leaders accept that these kinds of board responsibilities would enable an increase in philanthropic opportunities, then the types of people that we seek on our Boards also should change. Just looking for “skill sets” around attorneys, accountants, financial planners, etc. won’t meet the philanthropic needs of tomorrow. Instead, it is

critical to turn to looking at social gathering locations with the community and who are the people that can connect us into those networks of people. New Board member acquisition can't be just that someone "is a good person, does something at a high level, and would love to serve on the board." It needs to become more aggressive in the process of selecting Board members by analyzing the community, assessing one's ability to connect, their willingness to make connections on behalf of the Foundation, and to be influential in helping relationships move closer to giving opportunities.

The "old school" responsibilities don't just disappear. They become secondary as there are key legal elements that need to be administered. But if all that is done are these fiduciary responsibilities that are traditional and not relationship building, there is no growth of philanthropic dollars for the future.

This kind of change can't happen overnight. It's not going to happen in a day. But if Foundations are to support school districts (*and public education*) at even higher levels, finding the right people to connect to is critical. And that means a different-looking Board with slightly different-looking responsibilities in getting greatly different, increased results.

School Leaders, Bring Joy to the Job

Reprinted from [ASCD](#)

The past few years have been challenging for teachers and leaders across the country. Many educators have lost their love and passion for the work, with thousands leaving each month—understandably so. Yet a large number of those who have been in the ranks for decades have chosen to stay, despite feeling overwhelmed, underappreciated, and in many cases, underpaid.

I'm one of those educators who made that choice to stay. After 36 years in the field, 24 of those years as a school leader, I still wake up each day with excitement and determination and go to bed every night with satisfaction. I rest well knowing I give my all to the kids, teachers, and parents I serve each day.

Here's my secret: I truly believe that I'm able to keep going after decades on the job as a school leader because I choose to focus on creating a culture of joy and learning in my school. If we want to encourage our teachers to stay in the profession and inspire others to join our ranks in these challenging times, we must foster and prioritize learning and joy for all students and staff in our buildings. Four strategies can help leaders do so.

1. Remember Your Why—and Praise and Support Your Teachers

The first step to creating a positive, joyful school culture is remembering why we chose to work with children and the adults who support them. Whenever you have a challenging day, reflect on the *positive* things that also transpired—and on why you chose to work with kids (who should always be at the center of everything you do). This is one reason being

visible in your school is very important. Being present around the school reminds you of your purpose, and daily interactions with students and teachers keep you grounded.

On tough days, I also think about the teachers and administrators who helped me when I was young. Part of creating a joyful culture is communicating to teachers and staff that they are doing an amazing job, offering specific examples of that amazingness. Any experienced leader will tell you that teachers *matter*, and that they need to feel supported and know they are seen, heard, and valued. Now more than ever, leaders need to give teachers praise and feedback on a regular basis. Teacher appreciation week at our school extends far beyond the first week of May. Right from the start of the school year, we provide "pick me ups" (coffee and snacks delivered to rooms) and employee of the month awards, and we offer teachers 5–10-minute breaks from the classroom when needed.

Providing such authentic support for teachers builds trust, which is the engine that drives positive relationships. To cultivate those relationships, we have to prioritize support over criticism. We can do that by creating an "I got you" instead of an "I caught you" culture—listening to teachers and staff, learning from them, and showing up for them, not just pointing out problems. A culture of trust and support empowers teachers, improves their performance, and increases job satisfaction.

2. Create a Learning Culture

Fostering trust and relationships helps develop *learning cultures*, not *teaching cultures*. In a learning culture, teachers are both nurtured and challenged, and they work and learn together. Teachers who feel supported and appreciated at school are more likely to be creative and curious—and to keep learning, which is the foundation for being a successful educator who stays in the profession.

School leaders should build learning opportunities for educators into the day. At our school, we create scavenger hunts that require teachers to visit other classrooms to learn new strategies and techniques (they can even win prizes like gift cards). We also make sure to protect time in our schedule for professional learning community meetings and other teacher learning opportunities.

3. Encourage Cultural Competence

It's important to foster cultural competence. To truly care about students, teachers need to be curious about who students are and their lives outside of school. A culturally responsive educator is interested in learning about and respecting the culture of the children they teach, and the culture of their families. As we move into a new school year, leaders must continue to focus on improving our outreach to families and the community, as many schools did creatively during the pandemic. For instance, a principal might attend community athletic or cultural events or set up a food pantry or clothes/uniform closet in the school.

4. Support and Celebrate Yourself

This will be another challenging year, for sure. If school leaders are to create joyful school cultures and support teachers and students, they must be supported as well. Leadership can be a tough journey. Principals and assistant principals need to connect with mentors and other leaders, through networks like those offered by ASCD or in personal learning networks they build on social media. Leaders' growth impacts the success of staff and students, and when more principals stay in their positions, we'll see better teacher retention.

So if you're a new school leader—or a veteran—remember to seek support for *yourself* as you try to build a joyful school culture. And keep remembering why you became an educator, affirming and building relationships with your teachers, and encouraging learning and cultural competence for everyone in school. It also helps to find a work/life balance, reflect on your journey, have fun, focus on the emotional well-being of your students and staff, celebrate others, and celebrate yourself. The joy begins with you.

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Finding Your School's Mission and Vision

Reprinted from [Edutopia](#)

Most first-year or veteran principals who are newly assigned to their school eventually must affirm the school's existing mission and vision statements or engage stakeholders in a process of revising them. Sometimes, those statements incorporate and reflect district-wide beliefs, values, ideals, and goals.

When I was a new principal, I struggled with mission and vision statements. I didn't understand the difference or how to utilize them. Regardless of what I might have learned about them in my preparatory classes, I was overwhelmed by day-to-day challenges. So as a result, any of the existing statements developed by the previous administration and posted throughout the school meant little to me.

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That changed, however, when the parent of one of our school's students with a disability, Billy (not his real name), stumped me one day with this question: "Why does this school exist?" Her son had intense needs. I had spoken with her numerous times but now wondered what had prompted the question. As we talked about why our school existed and what we hoped to achieve—for her son and everyone else—our discussion suddenly helped both of us form a much more meaningful concept of mission and vision.

Our school's mission (why we existed) was to teach.

Our vision, reflecting shared beliefs, values, and specific, purposeful goals, was the summation of desired outcomes we wanted, along with strategic plans to achieve them.

Billy's mother eloquently stated, "I just want three things from this school. First, I want my son to learn the basic skills that he will need to get a job someday." (As I listened, I was thinking to myself that I certainly wanted the same for my daughters.) "Two, I want him to develop good, appropriate social skills so that when he grows up and buys the house next to yours, you won't want to move." (I was really listening now.) "And third, I want him to learn to appreciate the finer things in life so that he doesn't grow up to be a couch potato." (Wow, she had clarified a vision for her son that any parent should want for their child.)

Missions and visions

The more I thought about it—then and since—the universal mission of every school is to teach. Academics, social skills, creative thinking, healthy living, good choices, and much more. We can embellish the concept of teaching with fancy words that signify academic achievement, physical growth, personal development, wisdom, virtues, transformations, etc., but it all boils down to this: The reason that schools exist is for teaching. Everyone is free to choose their own descriptive words of purpose, but I preferred succinct, easy-to-remember, and personalized wording. And Billy's mom had helped me shape our mission and vision.

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As I discussed the mission with my staff, we rallied around the ideal that our primary focus was to teach—academics, behaviors, social skills, and aspirations in ways that were most timely, appropriate, individualized, and effective for every child. I helped my staff reflect on their practice and question themselves—if what they were doing didn't teach, why were they doing it?

My advice for principals—regardless of the wording of your mission statement—is to understand these two basic concepts:

- Your mission is why you exist.
- Your vision is how you accomplish goals.

Many vision and mission statements are closely related and often used interchangeably. When both are well conceived and meaningful, they can drive your school community's focus. However, many are often not as effective as they could be.

At my school, once we agreed that our purpose was to teach (mission), we turned our attention to fulfilling the beliefs, values, and goals embedded in what Billy's mom had asked for her son (vision). The three visionary targets remained the same, regardless of where each child started.

Academics became more individualized with rigor while teaching the concept of grit. The development of a schoolwide code of conduct (focused on quality work, respect, safety, and kindness) resulted in more effective, personalized ways of teaching social skills and positive behaviors. And so that no student would become a couch potato, we infused the arts and extracurricular activities into every aspect of school that we could think of, teaching and coaching their meaning and value.

I'm forever indebted to Billy's mom. She helped me and my staff conceptualize, personalize, and solidify our thinking, define our "why" (mission), and *teach* to meet the needs of every student. Parents rallied together with me and my teachers around those three stated expectations (vision) from our school—so concise and clear that we have never forgotten them, and never will.

I hope every principal encounters someone like Billy's mom. When you do, listen, collaborate closely, and learn. Together, you'll develop the most meaningful awareness of why you do what you do.

Call For Articles

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Here's what we need for your article's consideration:

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- It must be 750 words or less.
- Include full name, headshot, short bio, and link if applicable (LinkedIn or website).
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