They are a fixture in the Springfield area. They can be found leading the charge for social justice and the cheers for the Sacred Heart Griffin football team. They have brought education and social justice to generations of local residents.

The Dominican Sisters have a long and storied history and are hoping to secure the necessities of the daily life of retired Sisters with the establishment of the **Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL Retirement Fund** through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

“It will pay for the Sisters who are 70 and older who live at the Sacred Heart convent,” said Katherine Elsner, chief financial officer for the Dominican Sisters. “It pays toward all their living expenses, food, transportation, air conditioning, all the basic living needs for retired Sisters.”

The Sisters established a motherhouse in Springfield in 1893 after originally traveling from Kentucky to Jacksonville in 1873. The Sisters’ efforts are shaped by seven core values: collaboration, contemplative worldview, inclusivity, interdependence, justice, life-long learning and integrity. These core values shine through in many of their efforts, including their anti-racism campaign from which Springfield has adopted many of its principles for combating racism across the city.

The Sisters are also heavily involved in education in the Springfield area, most notably its affiliation with Sacred Heart Griffin High School. It is hopeful that many former students will contribute to the Retirement Fund.

The Fund’s creation is part of a larger development plan. There are currently 107 Sisters who live in the Mother House in Springfield. There are 222 total Dominican Sisters across the country, but the Fund will strictly be used for those retiring from the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois and living at the Mother House.

Elsner noted how smooth the process was for establishing a Fund with the Community Foundation. She recently attended a Foundation event, and the reception she received helped reinforce the positive thoughts of working with the Foundation on this endeavor.

“I was really pleased with how many people came up and introduced themselves and told me how they were involved with the Community Foundation. It was a very welcoming group,” Elsner said.