To preserve the past you have to think about the future.

The **Elijah Iles House Foundation** is working toward preserving its future through the creation of the Elijah Iles House Foundation Fund at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. The endowment fund will be used to support general upkeep, renovations and other efforts to keep the house in good condition.

“We think this is a really good step to take for the long-term outlook of the organization,” Elijah Iles House Foundation Board President Sue Massie said. “In the long run, we would like to grow the endowment so we have a funding stream to pay for things, utilities and other costs. It’s expensive to operate a big old home and keep it open to the public.”

The Elijah Iles House Foundation was created in 1993 after the city of Springfield purchased the Elijah Iles House. The Foundation worked to restore the landmark building and held a grand opening celebration in 2005. The House is open to the public and can be rented for special events. It also has been utilized for historical educational tours with Springfield students.

“We like to have kids involved,” Massie said.

The house was built in the late 1830s by Elijah Iles, a successful businessman in the area. It is believed to be the only “raised cottage” with a full gallery or porch existing in the Springfield area. Iles didn't live in the house long, selling it in 1841. The house went through a succession of owners and locations before being bought by the City in 1993 and moved to its current location at 628 South Seventh Street.

The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and provides the opportunity for area residents to get a glimpse into how early Springfield residents lived. The natural hardwood furniture is from 1830-40s. The woodwork is walnut and the staircase is original to the house.
“I personally think having a past structure from early Springfield history reminds us of our roots and how we started. It sets the stage for that type of historical education,” Massie said.

The Foundation ranges from 300-400 members, and its activities are overseen by a 12-person advisory committee. “We are all volunteers,” Massie said. “We don’t have any paid staff.”

Along with the Iles House, the Foundation also restored the Strawbridge-Shepherd House on the campus of the University of Illinois Springfield. The house was built in the early 1840s and will be utilized by the Illinois State Historical Society for office space.