Jane and Phil Locascio are both quick to say how blessed they’ve been in life.

So when Jane held her 60th birthday party, they asked those attending to not bring any gifts. If they wanted, they could donate to their recently established Locascio Family Fund. Almost immediately after her birthday, Hurricane Harvey swept across Texas. The Locascios sprang into action.

“I love Rockport, which was ground zero for Harvey, so we sent money to the Disaster Group Recovery Fund, which is part of the Coastal Bend Community Foundation,” Jane said. “I felt really good about that because I love that area and have a real affinity for it. We have friends down there, and my brother’s in Houston – so we felt a personal connection to the area.”

And so, days after setting up the donor-advised fund, the Locascios found a cause of immediate need. Initially, they thought about setting up a scholarship fund. Instead, after learning from Community Foundation President John Stremsterfer about donor-advised funds, that seemed more in line with what they wanted to do. The freedom to reach out to multiple charities – even as far away as Texas – paid off right away.

“We thought maybe a scholarship – but after talking to John, he said you don’t have to lock yourself into one avenue,” Phil said. “I think that’s better – the ability to pick and choose.”

Phil grew up in Chicago and earned a degree in psychology before moving to Springfield to work as a policy writer for the State of Illinois. Now retired after 37 years with the state, he’s painting, writing
novels, and still sings in the choir at St. Agnes. Before jumping into the real estate business, Jane was an auditor for 25 years. She’s also involved in the St. Agnes Young at Heart group, the King’s Daughters Organization, and the Capital Area Realtors. They have both committed much time to the Springfield Art Association.

As well-rounded as their backgrounds are, so is their mission of helping organizations. While they had the thought of starting a scholarship, their faith is also important to them, as are the unforeseen needs resulting from natural disasters like Hurricane Harvey.

The Locascios have one daughter, Lucy, and as important as it was to be able to give in perpetuity, so was leaving a legacy behind for their daughter.

“To me, it’s part of raising her correctly so she’ll be involved in giving,” Phil said.

“I think it’s making her more mindful,” Jane added.

A little more than a decade ago, both Phil and Jane had health scares including Jane battling breast cancer. Both are in good health now and enjoy traveling, whether it’s to Europe to visit former foreign exchange students, vacation along the Danube River, or visiting places they haven’t seen right here in the United States – especially state capitals since Jane has visiting all 50 on her bucket list!

“I think turning 60 gives you a different outlook,” Jane said. “If you’re our age and on Facebook, you’re always reading about someone getting their hip replaced or a knee replaced.”

And whether it’s hurricane disaster relief, the Central Illinois Foodbank, or some other worthy cause, they’re looking forward to exploring what’s out there to lend a helping hand as well.

“We’re anxious to see what choices are out there,” Phil said.

For more information on establishing a donor-advised fund, contact the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431 or visit CFLL.org