Fluffy towels, a new blender, some candlesticks, a couple of picture frames - Sarah Wolin Mackey didn’t crave any of those things for her wedding.

What she and her husband, Brant, wanted was a way to help local not-for-profit agencies, and their wedding presented an opportunity. Brant and Sarah encouraged wedding guests to skip the traditional gifts and instead donate to the Mackey-Wolin Fund established through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

“We didn’t need more stuff,” said Sarah, who married Brant Mackey on June 19, 2010. “We were looking for an opportunity to help our community. A way not only to help right now, but also help for years to come.”

Both Sarah and Brant have been active in a variety of not-for-profit organizations and are part of Community Foundation’s Young Philanthropists. Sarah is currently Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County. Brant is publisher of the Springfield Business Journal. The fund will not have a specific focus, but will be flexible to meet community needs and the couple’s interest areas.

“There are very worthy not-for-profits in the community that need our support,” Sarah said. “We’ve enjoyed being involved with all types of not-for-profits, and we’re excited about having this way to support them.”

The couple researched a variety of possible international and national funding opportunities prior to the wedding, but believed in keeping the effort local. The fund’s creation was met with positive reaction from wedding guests.

“I’m sure it’s a little non-traditional, but we’re excited by and thankful for the outpouring of support from friends and family,” Sarah said. The opportunity to create a similar fund is available for any milestone event. Sarah is hoping that others in the area take the opportunity to establish a lasting legacy that can reap benefits for the community long after the dust has settled on pictures commemorating the event.

“It’s a great opportunity. I encourage other couples or anyone celebrating a life event, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, anything to donate to a charity,” Sarah said. “As we look forward to our future and see that we have a way we can help organizations, being in that position as we start our lives together is exciting.”