John Mueth Jr. was a builder. He oversaw construction projects from Ohio to Utah before eventually settling in Sangamon County where he founded Sangamo Construction. His buildings have lasted decades. His legacy has lasted longer.

As a child, Pam Reyhan remembers accompanying her father on trips where he would send her into certain charitable organizations with a donation. The philanthropic efforts have become a staple of her family through the John Mueth Jr. Fund. The family, which operates Springfield-based Sangamo Construction founded by Mueth Jr. in 1925, has overseen the Fund since its establishment upon Mueth’s death in 1965. “It brings us all together,” Pam said. “We want to plan for it to continue for another 50 years.”

As the Fund nears a half-century of existence, it is entering a new stage, transferring its assets from a private foundation, the John Mueth Jr. Charitable Trust, to the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. “We have been trustees for nearly 50 years, and I would like to see the trust continue for the second and third generations,” said Al Reyhan. “Our family is very happy to be involved with the trust, and we are eager to continue the trust into the future with the Community Foundation.” Matt Reyhan, vice president of Sangamo Construction, echoes his father’s sentiments.

“To be invested with an organization that has deep roots in the local community is something that we’re looking forward to,” said Matt. The transfer to the Community Foundation is a sign of the times as community foundations like the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln focus all of their efforts on local philanthropy. It’s a change that the family believes John Mueth would have understood. “If Grandpa were alive today, the Community Foundation would have been the vehicle to set up his charitable fund,” Sangamo Construction President Chip Reyhan said. “We want to preserve the core and use the fruit of the core to benefit charities. In the structure we were in (a private foundation), five percent of the investments had to be donated whether investments returned that or not. We weren’t going to be still going for another 48 years at that current rate.”

The Fund has long established a core group of charitable causes, laid out by the wishes of John Mueth, Jr. The group includes St. John’s Breadline, St. Martin de Porres, St. Patrick’s School and Camp Coco, a camp for children with cancer sponsored by the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

“He just wanted to establish a fund to give to those in need,” Pam said. The four Reyhans, Pam, Matt, Chip and Al, will oversee and determine the grants the donor-advised fund provides. While the Fund will continue to support the staple charities outlined by Mueth, the Reyhans are anxious to see what other opportunities might be available to benefit from the fund. “Now that we have the resources of the Community Foundation we might look to see if we can widen the net,” Matt said.