Communication isn’t what it used to be. What once was a career field ruled by newspapers, the written word and a few local television stations has now grown to include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Internet-based blogs, digital photography and an ever expanding number of career paths cleared by new technologies.

Time has changed how we get the word out, and The Association of Women in Communications – Springfield Chapter is working to adapt to the changes. As part of its evolution, the Association has established **The Association of Women in Communications, Springfield Chapter, Communications Scholarship Fund** through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

The scholarship is awarded to students from Central Illinois or attending school in Central Illinois who are pursuing a communications degree. The recipients may also be in a wide range of new communication endeavors versus the more limited area of focus that was established when the scholarship was first started 20 years ago.

“The scholarship really evolved this year,” said Christy Broccardo, past president and academic liaison for the Association. “That the scholarship grows to reflect the new era of communications is important. We have changed it to reach a wider range of communication skills.”

Placing the Fund with the Community Foundation was a strategic move to continue to enhance the Association’s ability to reach those seriously pursuing the field.

“We want to increase the visibility of the scholarship. We knew it would help us get the word out to more students,” Broccardo said.

“It made us a lot more progressive to have that tool,” Broccardo said.
The Association has been very active in trying to expand its membership along with recognizing a new wave of communication. The local chapter, which has 65 active members, has started student chapters at the University of Illinois Springfield and Benedictine University-Springfield. The students can attend the Association's monthly meetings, conferences and educational events.

“We are trying to make sure students really know how important it is to continue to pursue education,” Broccardo said. “We are trying to mentor the students. It's our mission to always be learning, staying up on new trends and holding high standards of professionalism.”

However, new changes don’t mean that the past has been forgotten. The scholarship program began when the Association held a regional conference featuring Gloria Steinem. Money raised from that event went toward the scholarship program. The Association has continued to raise money for the program through a variety of events over the past two decades. Transferring the money to the Community Foundation will enable the group’s history to be more easily documented.

“We want to make sure that the history of the scholarship is preserved,” Broccardo said. “By investing with the Community Foundation we know it will happen.”