Esther and Wilfred Lam have always been philanthropic. They’ve given of their time and money. They firmly believe in philanthropy and six years ago, they decided working with the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln would be the best way to continue their efforts.

“We all benefit. We all have potential needs and if you have the opportunity to help others, you should,” Wilfred Lam said. “The Foundation is a good way to do that.”

In 2005, the Springfield couple established the **Wilfred and Esther Lam Family Fund**, a donor-advised fund, with the Community Foundation. It’s proven to be a mutually beneficial situation. “We have always been giving and before we would give by other methods. With the Foundation, we have funds totally ready,” Esther Lam said. “It makes it a lot easier to give. It works out well.”

The Lams are varied in their charitable giving, although they have focused a large effort throughout the decades on supporting the Chinese Church and Central Illinois Foodbank. Esther Lam served on the Foodbank board for 10 years. She also has been active on the Lincoln Land Community College Foundation, volunteers at the homeless overflow shelter and served on several other organizations throughout the years. Charitable work, not just giving money, is something the Lams believe in greatly.

“The Lord is so good to us,” Esther Lam said. “We have so much abundance. You have to ask, how much do you need? …. Writing a check is easy. It’s getting in there and helping out, working.”

The Lams’ philanthropic beliefs were passed down from their own parents. Esther Lam’s parents were originally from China before political uprising forced them to become refugees in Hong Kong. Despite the upheaval, the parents did not shy away from helping others.
“My own parents, we have inherited the legacy from them,” Esther Lam said. “Even when they didn’t have much, they shared. I’ve never seen them refuse anyone who needed something.”

The Lams instilled a similar belief in their three children, Cynthia, Andrew and Phillip, who are all active in charitable giving. “I am so proud of my children,” Esther Lam said. “Volunteering and giving is not a novelty to them. It’s just a way of life. It’s just what you do. It’s not a burden, it’s a privilege.”

The Lams also believe in the strength of individuals supporting charitable causes and the manner in which organizations like the Community Foundation spur that effort. “You have to see what the rest of the world is doing compared to the American system. America allows each individual person to give to what they think is valuable instead of the government,” Wilfred Lam said. “It makes organizations stronger when they have to be in a situation where people want to support it.”