Jeff and Sheri Stauffer have turned early childhood examples into a lifetime of giving. The Sangamon County couple watched their parents undertake numerous philanthropic efforts.

Those lessons took hold in both of them and inspired them to continue to give back as adults. The giving recently took on an increased focus with the establishment of the Stauffer Family Fund at the Community Foundation.

"Both of our upbringings helped mold us to who we are today and are why we give back through the Foundation and otherwise," Jeff Stauffer said. "There are so many in need and you don't have to have money to be charitable. At a young age, we were charitable with our time and now with our time and treasures."
Jeff’s parents, Barb and Gary, were heavily involved in the Methodist Church in Girard while Gary also served on the Girard volunteer fire department. Sheri’s parents, Monica and Jim Borgognoni, were active in volunteer work in the Pawnee area, including an annual BikeThon Fundraiser that benefitted St. Jude’s Hospital. Monica worked as a nurse at St. John’s Hospital and after her death, the Stauffers started the Monica Borgognoni Scholarship Fund at St. John’s School of Nursing.

"It was such a rewarding experience to be able to tell her story to inspire young men and women who want to follow in the same career path," Jeff said.

Helping provide educational opportunities is important to the couple. Sheri has spent her career as a teacher. Jeff, partner/president of Mid-America Advertising, has been heavily involved with the Sangamon CEO program that teaches high school seniors life lessons and entrepreneurial skills.

Those experiences, plus the impact the nursing scholarship provides, led the couple to want to continue to focus on improving educational opportunities for young people in the area.

"After those wonderful experiences and learning about the Community Foundation, it was an easy decision to start the fund," Jeff said.

"The primary focus will be on supporting local programs that have a positive impact on children and young adults in Sangamon County." The fund has already provided gifts to the Sangamon CEO and St. Patrick School in Springfield.

"We prefer to help at the local level," Jeff said.