GivingMatters

Newsletter for Community Foundation of Greenville

Spring 2026

Roger and Louise Ables Charitable Fund to support basic needs, environment, and the arts

Thanks to the generosity of a local couple, more people in Greer will have their basic needs met and the arts and environment in Greenville County will be supported for all to enjoy.

Community Foundation of Greenville is happy to announce the establishment of the Roger and Louise Ables Charitable Fund.

Roger and Louise Ables pictured at a Community Foundation event.

Roger Ables, a U.S. Army veteran who earned a PhD from Clemson University and worked in trust banking, was known as a humble man who didn't take himself too seriously. His wife, Louise Cogan Ables, taught biology and anatomy for 35 years and found joy and knowledge in books.

One thing neither took lightly was their commitment to their community. They were members of First Presbyterian Church of Greer and Louise Ables volunteered regularly at Daily Bread Ministries. Their dedication included a desire to provide ongoing financial support to organizations working to improve the lives of those in Greer and the Upstate.

Prior to their deaths in 2024 and 2025, the Ables planned a gift from their estate to endow a charitable fund which would come to about $2.1 million. Community Foundation of Greenville, which administers the fund, estimates that its annual distribution will be approximately $80,000 in perpetuity.

Gina Blohm, Chief Development Officer, said the Ables had supported CFG's work by contributing to its Annual Campaign since moving to the Upstate from Texas in 2013.

"In 2016, they notified us of their plans to establish an endowment fund after their lifetimes," Blohm said. "We were pleased to learn it would support Greer Community Ministries, Daily Bread Ministries, Upstate Forever and Greenville County arts organizations."

In a letter of instruction, the Ables suggested that the arts portion of the fund's distribution be used to provide scholarships for local students to attend summer programs at the Fine Arts Center and South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. Metropolitan Arts Council was also listed as a beneficiary, along with the hope that the gift would help fund local art exhibits and noteworthy arts activities.

"It's truly an honor to share news of this gift and for our team to carry out their wishes to support these very worthy causes forever," Blohm said.

Martha Bennett, Executive Director of the Greer Soup Kitchen, said Daily Bread Ministries also operates STEP, a shelter dedicated to moving families out of homelessness. She said Louise Ables volunteered as a dish washer—a tough job at a place serving 150 people daily—always with a smile.

"It's people like the Ables and other donors who make it possible for us to continue our mission and impact our community," she said.

The Roger and Louise Ables Charitable Fund will support arts organizations like the Greer Soup Kitchen and S.C. Governor's School for the Performing Arts and Humanities.

Centre Stage continues to grow audiences and impact

Centre Stage has begun a promising 2026 with expanding audiences, physical space, and outreach opportunities.

Laura Nicholas, who became Executive Artistic Director in 2020, said the nonprofit is completing the first phase of renovation of a building it purchased on Laurens Road.

"The new facility has a rehearsal studio and classrooms as well as storage for our sets, props, and costumes," Nicholas said. "The space will hold workshops like light and sound tech, set and costume design, and be used as a community resource."

Nicholas said quality programming and consistent marketing over the last few years have increased awareness of the theater both locally and regionally.

"Last year we had over 40 sold-out shows and extended the run of multiple shows when demand was high. Season memberships are up over 30 percent from the previous year," she said. "Word of mouth continues to be the number one way people learn about Centre Stage, when people coming through our doors have an incredible experience and tell their friends."

Centre Stage is committed to offering quality programming and cultivating local artistry. Those who support the theater through donations or ticket purchases are also investing in local talent, Nicholas said.

"A good production starts with a good script, and we're intentional about our choices. We've had several regional premieres of well-known shows like 'Once,' 'Waitress,' 'Beautiful' and 'Dear Evan Hansen,'" she said. "Because we hire exceptional local talent, we're providing something unique in the Upstate at a different price point."

Centre Stage is now in its 20th year of partnering with the Metropolitan Arts Council to curate an art gallery in the theater's lobby. Visitors can enjoy the art during box office hours or when attending a show.

"MAC does a good job of choosing the art display so that it connects to the story being told," Nicholas said. "When you come to a show, you're celebrating visual art as well as theatrical arts."

Community Foundation of Greenville awarded Centre Stage an $8,500 Capacity Building Grant in 2025.

"The grant purchased our staff new laptops, which are used for everything from ticketing to online meetings. It makes a huge difference in making our day-to-day operations more effective," Nicholas said. "Some donors like to give to programming, but if you're willing to donate to infrastructure, your gift can have an exponential effect."

Last year, Centre Stage had over 40 sold-out shows.

Subscriptions go on sale in May for 2026-27 "A Season of Icons," which includes productions of Neil Simon's "Rumors," "Million Dollar Christmas Quartet," "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations," "Mean Girls," and Hitchcock-inspired murder mystery "The 39 Steps." To learn more, visit centrestage.org.

Spring Foundation Events

The annual Legacy Lunch honors our Legacy Society and major donors, and the annual Night at the Greenville Drive is a family-friendly event to show appreciation for our donors, fundholders, and professional advisors. Visit **cfgreenville.org** to see more photos from these events!

Why do you support CFG's Annual Campaign?

How to use your IRA to support the Community Foundation

Toni and Jim Childers with CFG Vice Chair Beverly Ward

CFG Donors, Toni and Jim Childers, reflect on the importance of giving to the Annual Campaign.

Why do you believe in the mission of Community Foundation of Greenville?
"We believe it is important to help sustain and grow local organizations that provide support for our fellow citizens and this beautiful Greenville community. This would include philanthropy, investment in community projects, and organizational coordination of community leadership. Community Foundation of Greenville touches all these bases."

Why do you support our work by making a gift through your IRA?
"Support can be provided from many sources, but we contribute through our IRA because these are nontaxable funds and it satisfies our required minimum annual distribution."

Thank you to Toni and Jim Childers for supporting the Annual Campaign! Scan the QR code to make your gift to the Annual Campaign today.

Make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

If you're 70½ or older, you can give directly from your IRA — tax-free — to the Community Foundation's Annual Campaign or one of our charitable funds. Your gift can count toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) and reduce your taxable income.

- In 2026, using QCDs, you can give up to $111,000 each year. If you file taxes jointly, your spouse can also give up to $111,000 from their IRA.
- Unfortunately, QCD gifts can't be contributed to donor-advised funds.

To explore the best ways to give, or to inquire about local causes that are meaningful to you, please contact the Community Foundation team at (864) 233-5925. Please consider consulting with a qualified tax professional for advice specific to your situation.

Staff Highlight: Pam Couvillion

Director of Donor Services

Pam has been a part of the CFG team since 2014, and has been our Director of Donor Services for over four years. We are grateful to her commitment to our work and to the Greenville community!

What is your favorite part about working with our donors and fundholders?
"Developing relationships with each donor and ensuring their charitable giving is simple, effective, and tailored to their goals. Getting to know them and knowing their interests helps me function as a bridge between their vision and local nonprofit needs. We work together to ensure their knowledge, passion and resources build a stronger community that cares."

What brings you the most joy in your work?
"Living in Greenville and being a part of building a community deeply invested in supporting children and families, arts, and the environment. This is my home and donor grants often have visible, and immediately positive impacts in our community creating a tangible sense of shared accomplishment."

What do you like to do outside of work?
"Outside of work, I really value balance. I enjoy gardening — it provides great satisfaction when I am successful at it. I also love heading to the mountains whenever I can—there is a peace there that helps me recharge. Most importantly, though, my priority is spending time visiting and traveling with my children and their families and my father."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This community we are privileged to serve has reached a remarkable milestone: the Greenville metro area has now surpassed 1,000,000 residents. In 2000, our metro population was about 380,000. By 2020, it had grown to around 560,000. Today, it exceeds 1,000,000—more than doubling since 2000. If that trajectory were the price chart of a publicly traded stock, it would represent an extraordinary long-term "annualized return" in the life of a community.

Of course, people are not shares and community growth is more meaningful than a market comparison. Even so, the analogy is useful – over time, steady compounding creates extraordinary change, and that is exactly what Greenville has experienced as new neighbors, businesses, talent, and opportunities have continued to gather here.

For philanthropy, this growth carries both promise and responsibility. A larger region brings greater energy, broader resources, and more ideas, but it also brings more visible needs in areas such as housing, education, conservation, transportation, health, and access to opportunity. Charitable commitment helps ensure that Greenville's growth is matched by generosity, stewardship, and thoughtful investment in the well-being of all who call this community home.

Roger and Louise Ables, the couple featured in our cover story, made a charitable commitment that will benefit our community for decades to come. I encourage you to take a moment to read their story. We give thanks for their remarkable gift. It is a privilege to help people's philanthropy serve a community that is growing not only in size, but also in possibility.

If you have made a planned gift for the Community Foundation, please contact Bob Morris at 864-233-5925.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
• OF GREENVILLE •
Bridging Philanthropy & Purpose

10 S. Academy Street
Suite 350
Greenville, SC 29601
p 864-233-5925
f 864-242-9292
www.cfgreenville.org

Nonprofit
Organizational
US Postage
Paid
Permit #1663
Greenville, SC

Return Service Requested

GINA BLOHM
Chief Development Officer
GBlohm@cfgreenville.org

DEBBIE COOPER
Director of Community Impact–Grants & Scholarships
DCooper@cfgreenville.org

PAM COUVILLION
Director of Donor Services
PCouvillion@cfgreenville.org

SHARON GIBBS
CFO/COO
SGibbs@cfgreenville.org

KAYE LINDLER
Office Manager
KLindler@cfgreenville.org

BOB MORRIS
President
RMorris@cfgreenville.org

EMILY PETTIGREW
Director of Marketing
EPettigrew@cfgreenville.org

DEBORAH PHILLIPS
Office Administrator
DPhillips@cfgreenville.org

RYAN THACKRAY
Director of Development
RThackray@cfgreenville.org

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2026 Minority-led Nonprofit Grants Announced

$700,000 Granted Since 2020

Community Foundation of Greenville is happy to announce the recipients of its 2026 Minority-led Nonprofit Grants! A total of $100,000 was awarded this year. Since 2020, the Community Foundation has granted $700,000 to minority-led nonprofits in Greenville County.

We strive to make our leadership and grantmaking reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We hope to break down barriers that nonprofit leaders of color face in securing philanthropic funding by providing grants for operating or program support for their organizations. Learn more at cfgreenville.org.

Congratulations to the following organizations!

BOLD Leadership Network
CommunityWorks
Lead Academy
Lead Collective
Phillis Wheatley Community Center
Pleasant Valley Connection
Unity Health on Main
Upstate Fatherhood Coalition
Washington School Monument Fund

BOLD Leadership Network

CommunityWorks

Pleasant Valley Connection

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Capacity Building Grants

Application opens June 1
Deadline is July 17

These grants support an organization's ability to establish and/or maintain a solid operating structure and develop and sustain good governance practices.

New Leaf Fund Grants

Application opens June 1
Deadline is August 1

These grants preserve parks, open spaces, and historical and cultural assets.

Visit our website for more information and to see our various grant opportunities.