

## 2009 Winners of the Knight Community Information Challenge

**Recipient:** Minnesota Community Foundation

**Project:** IdeaMN

**Award:** \$500,000

**Summary:** Implicit in every news story about Minnesota's problems is the need for someone to address them. This project strives to get the public engaged in that role. The grant will create IdeaMN.org, which will host state-wide competitions for the best ideas to solve community problems. Winning ideas will become a reality, thanks to grants from the community foundation and its partners. Priority issues will be identified through community listening sessions. Minnesota Public Radio will encourage dialogue and participation.

**Applicant:** Minnesota Community Foundation is the statewide community foundation helping to create vibrant communities where all people can find hope and opportunity. As a nonprofit organization created by and for local residents, the foundation helps individuals, organizations and communities fulfill their charitable giving goals and create positive change through philanthropy. The foundation provides charitable planning, grantmaking and investment services. Minnesota Community Foundation was established in 1949 and has become the fastest growing community foundation in the state – more than doubling its assets under management in less than five years.

**Recipient:** The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

**Project:** Valley Independent Sentinel

**Award:** \$500,000

**Summary:** Over the last decade, the five ethnically diverse towns of the Lower Naugatuck Valley have lost their newspaper and their local radio station. Residents are starved for local news and a community forum. Meanwhile, nearby, the community foundation has joined with the nonprofit Online Journalism Project to create the New Haven Independent, a vigorous digital news source. This grant will help extend the New Haven model to the valley by creating the online Valley Independent Sentinel, a hyperlocal site staffed by professional journalists and citizen contributors.

**Applicant:** The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven was established in 1928 and is the largest philanthropic institution in its region of 20 towns and over 600,000 people in South Central Connecticut. With approximately 700 separate charitable funds, the foundation makes approximately \$14 million in grants annually to support a wide array of charitable activity. In the Lower Naugatuck Valley region of Connecticut, where the support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation will be used to launch a new online community news site, the organization operates through its affiliate, the Valley Community Foundation.

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**Recipient:** The San Diego Foundation  
**Project:** Regional Information Initiative  
**Award:** \$500,000

**Summary:** The online news site [voiceofsandiego.org](http://voiceofsandiego.org), the Media Arts Center San Diego and the local public library system will create a digital news network that includes professional and citizen journalism, community-based digital storytelling and a “San Diego-Pedia” of the people, places and things that distinguish the region. The digital storytelling feature, a key aspect, will produce reports from underserved communities through fixed or mobile story-stations. San Diego’s 18 Indian reservations will be included. The San Diego Foundation believes a new collective civic voice will emerge through the effort.

**Applicant:** The San Diego Foundation is a broad-purpose community foundation, managing more than 1,500 charitable funds and granting more than \$600 million to local nonprofits since its inception in 1975. The Foundation is committed to improving the quality of life in the greater San Diego region through responsible philanthropy and informed, inclusive civic engagement. It maintains an in-depth understanding of the region's challenges and the organizations addressing them; and serves as the region's principle resource for information about charitable giving and community needs.

**Recipient:** San Antonio Area Foundation  
**Project:** NOWCASTS  
**Award:** \$488,500

**Summary:** Although ranked in the top 50 media markets in the country, San Antonio lacks in-depth news coverage about diverse communities and issues. Working in partnership with more than 25 public and private organizations, this project will develop 11 communication focus centers throughout the city. Staffed by a technology and a communications officer, each center will use a portable, light weight system to produce studio-quality video for live remote Web broadcasts. The NOWCASTS will focus on a variety of topics important to the local community.

**Applicant:** Since its inception in 1964, the San Antonio Area Foundation has partnered with more than 500 individuals, families, businesses and community group donors to address the philanthropic needs of South Central Texas. Established through a trust created in memory of San Antonio business leader and philanthropist Nat Goldsmith, the foundation is dedicated to its 45-year mission – “... helping donors achieve their charitable goals for the greater benefit of the community.” From scholarships to educational programs, environmental issues to support for wounded military heroes, animal welfare to senior social and health care programs, the San Antonio Area Foundation serves to understand and support innovative solutions for the community’s growing challenges.

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**Recipient:** The Boston Foundation  
**Project:** Commonwealth Magazine  
**Award:** \$400,000

**Summary:** This grant will help transform Commonwealth magazine from a paper-based quarterly journal to an interactive, digital resource. Produced by a Boston think tank, Commonwealth will launch an investigative reporting unit with an additional reporter and researcher to focus primarily on the public sector. The magazine will seek to hold government agencies accountable for their work. It will also develop a “What Works” desk to report on programs and policies that are successful in spots around the nation.

**Applicant:** The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston's community foundation, is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the nation. In Fiscal Year 2008, the foundation and its donors made close to \$79 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and received gifts of \$113 million, bringing its assets to \$838 million. The foundation is made up of some 900 separate charitable funds established by donors either for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes. The Boston Foundation also serves as a major civic leader, provider of information, convener and sponsor of special initiatives designed to address the community's and region's most pressing challenges.

**Recipient:** Central Carolina Community Foundation  
**Project:** Raising Digital Literacy Among Seniors  
**Award:** \$383,332

**Summary:** Led by the community foundation, a coalition of universities and media will reach out to seniors to create an online hub. The seniors will both use the site and create content for it. University students will train seniors in using the technology, and ultimately prepare the seniors to become “trainers” themselves. The State Media Company will host the site and promote it, while South Carolina’s Education TV will help to document the initiative. The effort, which aims to enhance senior’s participation in civic dialogue, will start with three diverse senior community centers and expand as the program evolves.

**Applicant:** Central Carolina Community Foundation’s mission is to promote, facilitate and increase philanthropy to create a sustainable impact on the community through responsible giving. The foundation serves 11 counties in the Midlands by distributing grants and scholarships and linking the resources of donors, nonprofits and community leaders to areas of need.

## 2009 Winners of the Knight Community Information Challenge

**Recipient:** Foundation for the Carolinas

**Project:** Virtual Community Library

**Award:** \$277,686

**Summary:** Everyday, in a variety of settings, authentic, thoughtful information is presented but goes unnoticed to the community at large – through sermons, lectures, civic club speeches, non-profit informational meetings, etc. This grant will help create a Virtual Community Library to aggregate and archive the data. The library will be a place for deep exploration to increase shared understanding of critical issues.

**Applicant:** Foundation For The Carolinas is a nonprofit community foundation serving donors and a broad range of charitable purposes in North and South Carolina. Since 1958, the foundation has inspired philanthropy and invested in community. By forging creative connections between generous people and worthy causes, the foundation helps individuals fulfill their dreams for a better community. As a civic leader, the foundation addresses key challenges and designs initiatives that undertake critical problems and issues.

**Recipient:** Berks County Community Foundation

**Project:** Community Information Hub

**Award:** \$255,000

**Summary:** With local media outlets diminishing, this grant will help the Berks Community Television station, a 25-year-old, respected public broadcaster, establish an online community information hub for Berks County. The site, which will be capable of streaming video and hosting blogs and forums, will be staffed by an editor and an investigative journalist, as well as regional citizen journalists. Its reports are expected to be picked up by other regional media outlets.

**Applicant:** Berks County Community Foundation is a nonprofit corporation that serves as a civic leader for the Reading, Pennsylvania region by developing, managing and distributing funds to meet existing and emerging community needs. The foundation's mission is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County, Pennsylvania.

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**Recipient:** Chicago Community Trust  
**Project:** Hyper-local information  
**Award:** \$250,000

**Summary:** Chicago residents have access to a wide-range of services, but they often aren't aware that they exist or are challenged to access them. This project would bring all these activities online in an easily accessible format tailored to neighborhood needs. The site, focused on two to four communities in Chicago's Southside, would compile data, news reports and user-generated content to provide information such as where they can buy fresh produce, find a food pantry or enroll in a food stamp program.

**Applicant:** For 93 years, The Chicago Community Trust, the region's community foundation, has connected the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. In 2008, the trust, together with its donors, granted more than \$100 million to not-for-profit organizations. From strengthening community schools to assisting local art programs, from building health centers to helping lives affected by violence, the trust continues to enhance the region.

**Recipient:** Public School Notebook, a partner of the William Penn Foundation  
**Project:** Public School Notebook  
**Award:** \$200,000

**Summary:** The Public School Notebook is a quarterly newspaper that raises the level of discussion about Philadelphia schools. To truly engage residents and expand beyond print, the Notebook will use this grant to take the magazine digital and add breaking news and user-generated content from a larger audience.

**Applicant:** The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children's futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. In partnership with others, the foundation works to advance a vital, just and caring community.

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**Recipient:** Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

**Project:** The Green Table Virtual Meeting Place

**Award:** \$188,000

**Summary:** The more than 170 groups concerned with western New York's environment are splintered and isolated, with no effective way of knowing what each is doing. In order to improve community dialogue and – ultimately – help revive the region centered around post-industrial Buffalo, the community foundation will create a new website for information exchange. Known as The Green Table, the site will feature discussion groups, resource directories, event calendars and job or volunteer opportunities. In addition, The Green Table will invite citizen participation through a pledge wall for a greener community and tools such as carbon footprint calculators.

**Applicant:** The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo was established in 1919 to enhance and encourage long-term philanthropy in the Western New York community. The foundation's mission is: Connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York.

**Recipient:** Community Foundation of South Alabama

**Project:** Connect Southwest Alabama

**Award:** \$169,005

**Summary:** This grant will create an online, community network to store knowledge and connect people, information and ideas for an eight-county region in Southwest Alabama. To create Connect Southwest Alabama, government and civic leaders will help collect studies and research that impact the lives of everyone in the area. The website will feature those plus reports, organization profile and news that can be searched. Residents will be able to create and share information. Email groups and volunteer matching will encourage discussion and action to bring about positive change. The site will help eliminate the disconnect between residents, nonprofits and government agencies.

**Applicant:** The Community Foundation of South Alabama plays a key role in meeting the needs of Southwest Alabama through leadership and grants. In 2008, more than \$3 million was awarded by the foundation to nonprofit organizations to support programs that make life better in the community. The foundation builds lasting endowments to ensure grants are available to support the community forever.

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**Recipient:** Coral Gables Community Foundation  
**Project:** Bridging the Digital “Gray Divide”  
**Award:** \$155,967

**Summary:** In partnership with the University of Miami School of Communication, the community foundation will help create, launch and maintain a digital news site for seniors. University students will pair with seniors to train them to report, write and blog. Also, an independent board will ensure operational independence and journalistic standards. The project will empower seniors as journalists and engage them in civic affairs.

**Applicant:** The Coral Gables Community Foundation, established in 1991, fosters initiatives that encourage cultural, educational, health, historic preservation and charitable projects to enhance the quality of life in Coral Gables. In addition to managing scholarships and donor-advised funds, the foundation’s diverse projects include CoralGables@HOME, the first nonprofit membership organization in Florida designed to support aging in place through superior at-home living. The foundation served as the incubator to convert the historic Old Police and Fire Station into the site of a nonprofit history museum, art gallery and lecture hall. Through the Parknership and Greening of the Gables initiatives, the foundation preserves green spaces, creates parks and restores the city’s tree canopy.

**Recipient:** Grand Rapids Community Foundation  
**Project:** Neighborhood News Bureaus  
**Award:** \$128,535

**Summary:** With this grant, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation plans to improve community reporting by establishing neighborhood news bureaus in four areas of the city. Residents will be trained as citizen journalists and equipped with resources to distribute their work across platforms. Students from Grand Valley State University will help staff the bureaus. The non-profit Community Media Center will pull the content into a hub and create a “widget” that will send the news feed to 50 local Web sites.

**Applicant:** Grand Rapids Community Foundation supports Kent County (Michigan) nonprofits and leads the community in making positive, sustainable change. Its success is connected to the generosity of donors and the expertise of grantee organizations.

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**Recipient:** The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia

**Project:** ConnectNetwork

**Award:** \$120,000

**Summary:** Founded by the foundation and a local university, ConnectNetwork began as a way to build a community knowledge exchange that links residents information, ideas and other people for social action. Right now, more than 4,000 residents use it to share information and enhance communication across nonprofits, government and civic groups so that communities can address local challenges. This grant will help expand and institutionalize the network, so that computer link-ups will translate to in-person gatherings in the civic interest.

**Applicant:** For 40 years, The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia has connected the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to organizations working to improve metro Richmond. With assets of \$667 million, the foundation has given more than \$400 million in grants since 1968. From providing after school enrichment for students to assisting local art programs, from expanding affordable housing options to offering support for those affected by violence, the foundation continues to enhance the region.

**Recipient:** Marajen Stevick Foundation

**Project:** Access to Basic Information

**Award:** \$100,000

**Summary:** The foundation will use this grant to devise ways to reach the 20 percent of the area's residents living below the poverty line, many of them without access to services. The strategy may include cellphone alerts, bilingual radio and television reports and training citizen reporters. An interactive Web site also will be created.

**Applicant:** The Marajen Stevick Foundation was created by the estate of Marajen Stevick Chinigo, the late owner and publisher of the Champaign-Urbana (IL) News-Gazette, for the purposes of preserving local ownership of her family's newspaper and radio stations and benefiting the University of Illinois and the community. Grants are made exclusively to carry out the charitable, literary and educational activities of The University of Illinois Foundation and the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois.

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**Recipient:** The Community Foundation - Boulder

**Project:** A Civic Blast

**Award:** \$100,000

**Summary:** This effort will use student-designed content and new media to inspire action and advocacy in young adults. The effort, launched by The Community Foundation, along with Colorado University - Boulder, the Institute for Ethical and Civic Engagement and New Era Colorado, will build a framework for exploring 18 to 30-year-olds' preferences for information consumption. The targeted age group doesn't tend to be civically engaged, yet could form the basis for a new and diverse Boulder leadership.

**Applicant:** The Community Foundation exists to improve the quality of life in Boulder County now and forever, and to build a culture of giving.

**Recipient:** The Minneapolis Foundation

**Project:** Donor-funded News Beats

**Award:** \$100,000

**Summary:** MinnPost.com, considered a leader among online news start-ups, is growing – attracting 150,000 unique visitors monthly. However the site, which serves the Greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area, is not yet profitable. This grant will help the Minneapolis Foundation introduce local donors to funding media initiatives. Donors will be able to fund a beat at MinnPost.com, such as education or economic disparities. To ensure wide distribution, the reports will be available for free to print news outlets and ethnic and community weeklies. The donors' gifts will be matched by the Minneapolis Foundation, and that combined amount will be matched by Knight Foundation.

**Applicant:** Established in 1915, The Minneapolis Foundation is one of the nation's oldest and largest community foundations. It manages more than \$680 million in assets, administers more than 1,000 charitable funds created by individuals, families and businesses and distributes more than \$35 million in grants each year. The foundation also works with others to improve the quality of life in the region and serves as a catalyst for dialogue and action on critical issues in the community.

## 2009 Winners of the Knight Community Information Challenge

**Recipient:** Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County (Wisconsin Rapids)  
**Project:** Community Progress Initiative  
**Award:** \$87,500

**Summary:** The shrinking local newspaper that serves this community of 40,000 is about to cease operation, leaving residents without a source of local news. The foundation, led by the incoming chairman, the former publisher of the paper, will develop an online news platform to provide this rural area with the vital information needed to lead informed lives.

**Applicant:** Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County (Wisconsin) promotes strategic philanthropy, builds social capital and connects community resources for the common good. The foundation works to create a resilient, thriving community that embraces and supports all people.

**Recipient:** The Park City Foundation  
**Project:** Carbon and Water Footprint Project  
**Award:** \$86,740

**Summary:** Snow-driven Park City is deeply concerned about global warming and water consumption. In order to raise awareness about and understanding of carbon and water usage, the community foundation will establish a Web site where residents can calculate their carbon footprint, exchange conservation ideas and plan joint activities.

**Applicant:** The Park City Foundation connects private philanthropy with the greater Park City community by optimizing the impact of each charitable gift. The foundation also offers professional strategies and services for donors and support to strengthen local nonprofits for the betterment of the community.

## 2009 Winners of the Knight Community Information Challenge

**Recipient:** Manatee Community Foundation

**Project:** Connect Manatee

**Award:** \$41,250

**Summary:** Built in conjunction with Manatee Educational TV and Bradenton.com, Connect Manatee will provide a virtual town square for residents, nonprofits and government agencies. The site will be an online “one-stop shop” that integrates news and local information about Manatee County culture and services.

**Applicant:** Having just celebrated its 10 year anniversary, the Manatee Community Foundation continues to serve Manatee County by connecting the charitable interests of donors with the ongoing needs in the community. In 2008, the foundation successfully completed a \$1 million capital campaign to provide a permanent “home” for the foundation offices. In addition, program grants and scholarship distributions reached a record high of \$898,000.