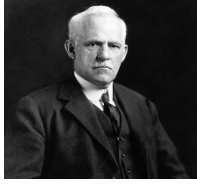


A Little History about The Baltimore Community Foundation



*Frederick Goff, Humanitarian
1853-1923*

Frederick Goff's big idea – In 1914 Cleveland was to pool the charitable resources of Cleveland's philanthropists, living and dead, into a single permanent endowment for the betterment of the city. This was an entirely new concept in philanthropy where captains of business and industry could channel their wealth into philanthropic activities. Donors could be confident that the income produced by their gifts would be used wisely to respond to the constantly changing conditions. And, because distributions were to be made primarily from earnings on principal, the gifts made to a community trust would form a permanent and, in time, sizable endowment. To put it in contemporary terms, one might think of Goff's concept as a community savings account that earns interest and investment income. Citizen trustees, representing all sectors of the community, could award grants from these earnings to worthy nonprofit organizations and causes. Community leaders would then forever distribute the interest that the trust's resources would accrue to fund charitable purposes that would improve the lives of Clevelanders. Frederick Goff and The Cleveland Foundation paved the way for BCF.

Today there are some 800 or more community foundations across the U.S. and hundreds more worldwide. Virtually every community in this country is served by a community foundation and only in rare cases do multiple community foundations compete within a geographic area. This means that ours is a remarkably collegial field, willing to share insights and ideas.

Community foundations have certain things in common, but we diverge in many ways. Each community foundation has been shaped by its community's culture, traditions and needs. But we all share the fundamentals of Frederick Goff's big idea: a permanent endowment created and nurtured by multiple donors in service to a defined geographic community.

The Community Foundation of the Greater Baltimore Area, Inc. was founded in 1972 by leaders of Baltimore's five major banks of that time, none of which exists today. Robert H. Levi of Mercantile-Safe Deposit and Trust and the Foundation's first Chairman, is credited with bringing the community foundation concept to Baltimore. He had been impressed with achievements of community foundations in other cities, especially Cleveland, and felt strongly that Baltimore needed, "A philanthropic organization that was a gathering of all people—no color line, no religious affiliation, no special cause. We needed an organization that could provide a birds-eye view of the things that should be done to make Baltimore a good place to live and could bring together the resources to make it happen."

The Foundation grew slowly at first. Eugene Struckhoff, a nationally recognized community foundation expert who served as Executive Director during much of the 1980s, theorized that \$10 million in assets was the "takeoff point" for community

foundations. He therefore recommended that the board launch an endowment campaign to build the Foundation to that point.

The campaign was successful, and by 1987, when the Foundation was renamed the Baltimore Community Foundation, it had amassed \$10 million in assets and was distributing \$1 million each year in grants. Still, growth was slow.

Then, in 1989, the Morris Goldseker Foundation suggested an affiliation with BCF, offering to share its CEO, Timothy D. Armbruster, as well as office space and other resources. This arrangement brought BCF significant ongoing operating support from its new partner and triggered a growth spurt: In five short years, BCF's assets tripled to \$30 million, and by 1996 were doubled again, reaching nearly \$60 million. During this same time, grantmaking increased fivefold, enabling \$5 million in philanthropic funds to reach the community each year.

The Goldseker affiliation ended after ten years, when each foundation reached a point where it needed a full-time CEO. Tom Wilcox became the president and CEO of BCF, and focused his energies on identifying and nurturing big ideas that BCF could leverage. This was the era when A-Teams helped bring rigorous measurement to out-of-school activities in Baltimore, when Healthy Neighborhoods was first piloted and then ultimately grew and grew until today it's a Community Development Financial Institution applying federal, state and local funding to strengthening Baltimore neighborhoods.

Also during this time, BCF served as incubator and fiscal agent for countless community projects, including Pierce's Park, Great Kids Farm, and the Teacher Appreciation Fund. When we ran a cost analysis, we recognized that while we were performing a service to the community by housing these small project funds, financially we were losing money on operating them and we made a decision to close or move out most community project funds.

On the national scene, community foundations continued to grow. The Council on Foundation facilitated development of national standards for community foundations, which provided a big step forward for our field. There is no IRS definition of a CF, and we needed a way to point out and recognize "real" community foundations. Community foundations certified under national standards must follow best practices in governance, financial management, and all areas of operation. That's why we proudly include the national standards seal on our website and our print materials.

National standards were a crucial tool when Maryland's community foundations banded together to approach the state legislature to create a state tax credit for gifts to permanent endowments at qualified Maryland community foundations. Without national standards, we would have had no way to define who was qualified. That tax credit will, we hope, in the coming years be expanded from \$250,000 to \$1 million per year available to community foundation donors.

Today, BCF manages 950+ component funds including

- unrestricted funds, *"Support broad charitable mission of BCF"*

- funds for Baltimore, *“Support charitable mission of BCF through grantmaking, initiatives and advocacy”*
- field of interest funds,
- civic leadership funds,
- designated funds,
- organizational endowments,
- scholarship funds
- and more! (initiatives, comm projects, giving circle, loan fund, supp org, trusts)

We serve donors and the community. Donor intent is the only absolute for us.