



Quarterly Newsletter 2015 Q1

Dear REACH Family,

My high school principal, who I admired very much, always told us, “Remember who you are and where you came from.” Recalling that advice, I decided that instead of our usual Quarterly Newsletter, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the history of our program. Thanks to the caring thoughts and persistent nature of Bob Grauberger, 1464 Lineman, the REACH fund was officially approved 10 years ago. Since then, we have certainly come a long way! My wish has always been that when employees see a co-worker in need, that they look to REACH as an option. I believe we have made significant progress toward this goal.

Setting up a 501(c) (3) not for profit is not as simple as it sounds and so, even after the idea was approved in 2005, there was extensive legal work and other necessary steps to get the fund off the ground. I happened to be on the Winning Culture Council at the time the REACH fund (Relief to Aid Employees in Catastrophic Hardships) was named, approved, and getting ready to be implemented. Our Winning Culture core team worked with 1464 Leadership as well as the officer team to bring Bob’s idea to fruition. I remember meeting with the Kansas City Missouri Police Department who has a similar fund and reviewing program information from Home Depot’s “Homer Fund”. These discussions shaped how our fund was structured and continue to be significant programs for benchmarking. As we were finally ready to roll out the fund to all employees in June 2007, the fund received \$500 seed money and an additional donation from the 2006 IBEW picnic in the amount of \$1,041. Yes, the starting fund balance was only \$1,541 in total! I remember being in the Bull Room at Johnson County giving my very first REACH presentation that June. That day, I not only personally filled out but also collected my first REACH payroll deduction cards from fellow employees. I distinctly recall the feeling that people were giving because they knew Bob and they knew how important this was to him, not because of anything I said. Today, all these years later, I hope that people give because there is no reason not to.

Our fund that started with a mere \$1,500 now has a fund balance of over \$750,000. In addition to annual fundraising, the fund is largely supported by the 37% of KCP&L employees who give via regular payroll deduction and the 50 cent match the company provides for every dollar given by an employee. Although \$750,000 may be a great accomplishment, similar employee aid programs have had comparable balances virtually emptied after catastrophic events like tornados. And at KCP&L, we have seen the demand for assistance increase year over year. The fund has provided over \$300,000 in assistance to employees and their families. Direct grants have been provided to 40 employees and 64 members of the KCP&L family have received over 90 “pass the hat” matching grants where you felt strong enough to raise money for your co-workers and REACH matched those funds dollar for dollar. We all should be proud of the help we have provided thus far, but there is so much more to do.

Administration of the fund continues to be managed solely by volunteer board members representing management and bargaining members across the company. Roughly 25 employees have served as board members since the program started in 2007. In addition, various other employees throughout the company have supported the fund by managing investments, tax returns, website administration, payroll processing, etc. If you know any of these people, please thank them. Their time and investment in REACH has been invaluable.

Though we are obviously proud of the financial strides the fund has made, there have also been many notable changes and improvements: REACH was the first internal fundraising effort to have a video; additional board positions were added in 2011 to support ongoing fundraising, communications, and administrative needs of the growing program; matching grants were approved and implemented in 2012. We also held our first



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employee focus group in October of 2014 to educate and gather input from the employees that this fund is intended to serve. REACH now assists part time and full time employees and has recently been extended to include retirees within their first 90 days after retirement. Change is necessary and healthy, and I expect many continued opportunities for growth and improvement.

So, after being involved with the REACH fund for the past 8 years, I am completing my second two-year term as Chairman. We turn over the reins to Joe Medina who has been selected as the next Chairman of REACH. I always say that you should leave things better than you found them, which is why Joe is a perfect candidate for this role. Since meeting Joe in 2005, I have been impressed not only by his professionalism but by his heart. Joe is very active in the local charitable community and brings a passion and new ideas that I think you will all find impressive. Please congratulate Joe and the other new board members and reach out to any of them for needs or concerns that you may have moving forward.

In closing, I want employees to know that this role has honestly been the most rewarding volunteer effort that I have ever been involved in. Though I support many other organizations through volunteerism and financial giving, this experience has been different. I have had the humbling opportunity to help people I know or know of. I have handed over a check that changed someone's outlook for the future and provided hope. I have experienced the strain of learning how to be the best steward of this employee fund by making grant award decisions based on fact even though my heart was always sympathetic. I have had many tearful conversations and have been hugged by people I had never met before. I have received thank you cards, Christmas cards, and even memorial contributions from employees' families who felt so strongly about the assistance REACH provided that they decided to donate back to the fund. It has been an amazing and overwhelming experience.

We encourage each of you to continue to support the REACH fund and your co-workers in any way possible. Our work is never done...and trust me, it feels good to help.

Keep your fork...the best is yet to come,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Paulsen".

Shannon Paulsen
Past-Chairman and REACH Ambassador

Current Reach Board:

Joe Medina – Chairman
Randy Hamann – Treasurer
Julie Welch (1613) – Secretary
Teresa Keller (Legal) – Director
Eric Gall (1464) – Director
Edward Anderson (412) – Director
Amy Keith-Dodd – Fundraising Chair
Renee Mosby – Administrative Chair
Shawn Spiwak – Special Events Chair