

# What's Next? Building on Community Success

Defining the 'Greater Good' Has  
Many Different Approaches

BY ANGIE BAUR



Angie Baur

“Success comes from striving for something beyond what we did yesterday.”

**As I reflect** on the past—my life experience, formal education and career path—I recognize I've been on a quest for success.

Success is different for each of us as unique individuals. Also, the various roles we play give shape to what we would call a successful life. Though I strive to be a good daughter, a good sister and a good Christian, this writing looks at my role as “public servant.”

Increasingly, I have embraced the value of public service as a professional in the not-for-profit field which aims to bring “greater good” for the human family. Becoming a colleague with Public Square Communities five years ago added a new perspective: that of “community success.” Just as individuals define success differently, so do communities.

In September, I attended the Kansas Association of Community Foundation's annual conference. The theme was *Building On Our Success: What's Next?* As a community foundation employee, I thought about how we strengthen financial generosity—we call it “philanthropy”—within our communities. As a Public Square colleague, I then thought about how we encourage individuals to give time and talent toward creating successful neighborhoods, cities and counties.

Whether I realize it, as I foster financial and civic generosity at the local level, I'm actually building the success that 4-H youth pledge “for my club, my community and my world.”

The community foundation field is currently celebrating its 100th birthday in the United States and more than 30 years in Kansas. The *What's Next?* conference concept proved timely for me, as the day after the con-

ference I was promoted to Executive Director for Central Kansas Community Foundation. With six years of front-line community foundation work under my belt and 28 years in not-for-profits, I was struck by these words: “If we are doing our work well (i.e. building community, meeting human need, convening groups around key issues) we should always be questioning *What's Next?*”

So *What's Next* for me?

In Mulvane, I'm facilitating a Downtown Revitalization Community Conversation to respond to “What's Next?” The Conversation is a tool Public Square Communities model used to foster movement toward success. We will link historic downtown success with current challenges, then explore opportunities to advance the entire community.

At the Central Kansas Community Foundation, we will test our commitment to delivering the highest level of service by reapplying for accreditation in 2015 with the National Standards process. This framework measures our success—legally, ethically and practically.

Success does NOT come without challenges, mistakes and misdirected expectations. Success DOES come from moving toward, learning from mistakes, and striving for something beyond what we did yesterday.

So *What's Next* for you and for your community? Email me at [abaur@buildthesquare.com](mailto:abaur@buildthesquare.com) and share your story. This column aims to tell success stories from across Kansas. Next could be yours! **KCL**

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