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On September 21, 2019 beginning at 5pm, the inaugural event for the newly created USD 323 Endowment was held at Flush Hall. The event was titled Rock the Endowment, and was a very successful beginning to say the least. The Caring Community Foundation, Inc. based in Onaga, KS, with Executive Director Susie Kufahl, was instrumental in guiding the creation of the Endowed Fund.

Prior to the event, a planning committee was formed consisting of Karol Fike and Trevor Jensen (USD 323 BOE members), Amy Reed, Mike Heptig, Rick Ebert, Nick Cahoj, Jim Moore, Debbie Kirby, Steve Kirby, Dave Nelson, Eric Woltje (USD 323 Patrons and Supporters), Megan Umscheid, Kristi Timm, Kevin Logan (USD 323 Employees), and Susie Kufahl. This group worked together on the goals for the event, the vision for the Endowment, and finding Founding Sponsors for the Endowment.

The 200+ in attendance for the evening enjoyed a social hour beginning at 5pm, which included a silent auction, some grab bag items, and a nice mini-concert by the Rock Creek High School Select Choir. At 6pm Dinner was served, Smoked Beef Brisket and Chicken Cordon-Blue was the main course. The meal was catered by the Friendship House of Wamego. Following the meal both Kevin Logan and Jim

Moore gave welcomes on behalf of USD 323 and the Caring Community Foundation. The evening was kept moving along by emcee Dr. Brad Burhneide, the “Voice of the Mustangs,” and our auctioneer for the event, Jeff Ruckert.

The planning committee sought funds to sponsor the event and to begin gathering capital funds for the account. Our title (Mustang) sponsor was Wamego Telecommunications Company (WTC), and our two Silver sponsors Dave & Mary Jo Nelson and Midwest Concrete Materials (MCM), more than covered funding for the evening. Additional sponsors came in at Black or Blue level sponsors with those 36 additional sponsorships going straight into starting the endowed fund.

Between the over \$71,000 asked for, and received in those early sponsorships, and the almost \$25,000 brought in at the “Rock the Endowment” event, the Endowment should begin with just over \$80,000 in this account. (The final amount to be endowed is not finalized as the committee still has a couple of bills which have not come in and a sponsorship or two yet to be funded.) The committee is hopeful the account does well enough to have the first grant(s) applied for/funded in late summer/fall of 2020.

An Endowment steering committee has been set up to keep the capital fund and the momentum of the USD 323 Endowment moving forward. The committee’s membership is a mix of some initial planning committee members (Trevor Jensen, Mike Heptig, Eric Woltje, Megan Umscheid, Kristi Timm, and Kevin Logan) with the additions of Daneille Sumners, Alyssa Cahoj, Dennis Post, Jessica Steel, Gary Fike, Tanya Purvis, Amy Wilkens, and Seth Gordon.

Both the Planning and Steering Committee’s of the USD 323 Endowment would like to thank our sponsors and all of those who either participated by attending, working, or planning this outstanding evening.