

# Shafer Giving Society

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**RICK ROWRAY IS THE PROUD AND LONG-SERVING CEO OF THE YOUTH OPPORTUNITY CENTER. BELOW ARE HIS COMMENTS FROM THE 2018 SHAFER GIVING SOCIETY LUNCHEON, WHICH WAS HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2018:**

Good Afternoon! My name is Rick Rowray and I am the CEO of the YOC. We appreciate each of you being with us today for the 12th Annual Shafer Giving Society Luncheon.

Did you all know that you are, in fact, members of the Shafer Giving Society? Supporting the YOC in giving at \$1,000 or more makes you a member. We are here to say Thank You and to encourage you that your gift is meaningful and worthwhile. So, thank you all for your support of the YOC!

This Shafer Giving Society Luncheon and the Shafer Giving Plaza - the area just outside that recognizes donations - were both initiated by Phyllis and Hamer Shafer to be a catalyst for on-going support of the YOC Mission. The Shafers wanted to let others know that they thought these kids - that the YOC serves - mattered, and they wanted others to follow their example.

At the center of the Giving Plaza is a sculpture of two children, and each child has a sapling growing out of their hand. Your program today has the image on the front. The title of the sculpture is Awakening Potential, and its symbolism is rich. It acknowledges that the kids at the YOC have significant life issues that have muted, thwarted, buried and caused to be dormant their individual, God-given potential. The sculpture reminds us all (staff, visitors, donors, kids, and families) that these kids matter. It also reminds us of the YOC's Mission to "Awaken their Potential". These kids were important to Hamer and Phyllis, and, as you have demonstrated, they are important to you.

The YOC has been seeking to awaken potential in kids for over 25 years, and as we mentioned earlier, we have been celebrating your support at this event for 12 years. Yet, this year is a special year. This year we are pleased to recognize an individual that so personifies everything represented in this Giving Society and in the Plaza. A person who so exactly represents what the Shafers had in mind. My wife Elizabeth and I tell our own kids that great things never happen when things are easy. Tough times, tough challenges elicit the accomplishments that matter the most.

I am, today, along with the YOC Board of Directors, submitting to you another example to follow. Someone who has taken on very tough challenges for the YOC's kids: **Mr. Kelly Stanley**. One of the YOC's most critical challenges in our history since Steve Caldemeyer's original efforts was successfully accomplished by Kelly; raising significant Capital Funds to ensure YOC sustainability into the next generation by chairing the YOC's very first Capital Campaign. This issue affected not just the future of the YOC, but its very existence.



This critical obstacle needed - in fact, demanded - the right person, with the right abilities and the right passion, to bring it to success. You now know that the outcome was good! But it is hard to feel the importance, the urgency, the desperation, and the consequences of those moments.

In different ways, this issue brought a sense of fear, doubt, and an always present uncertainty at the YOC. This is the kind of hurdle that causes you to toss and turn at night, to continually assess consequences and scenarios that had major impact on others. It meant millions of dollars - and more importantly, it directly related to either sustaining or compromising vital services to vulnerable kids.

It was in this setting and for these reasons, when asked to lead, when asked to solve the issue, when asked to be responsible, when asked to sacrifice time, that Kelly Stanley said yes. **Yes to the YOC. Yes to the Community. And yes to the kids.** Permit me to emphasize: Kelly was THE driving force in raising \$4.8 million dollars for the YOC Capital Campaign.

Through planning meetings, brainstorming times, update sessions, scheduling of activities, identifying points of influence, utilizing connections, through late night texts, detailed and numerous emails, impromptu phone calls, and seeking accountability from others, Kelly demonstrated a drive and a focus to accomplish this daunting goal, all while keeping an eye on the kids!

It is for this reason and many more that we will be unveiling a tribute to Kelly in the plaza today. We do this to honor Kelly's often times heroic and sacrificial efforts, but also to motivate others to follow Kelly's example. Maybe most importantly, for our kids to know that Kelly and those he inspires have their eyes on them and on their potential.

A verse in Galatians tells us to "never weary of doing good". Matthew communicates to us that Jesus said that when we serve those desperate for help that "we do it unto Him".

When asked "why", Kelly recounts a story of his and Donna's visit to the YOC; of how a little boy he met touched his heart, and it has never been the same. But, due to Kelly, the YOC will also never be the same.

Now, in advance of the unveiling, will you all please join me in congratulating Kelly and Donna and their family for this honor, and thanking them for all they have done...**For the Kids!**



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