A great opportunity lies before us as we present the inaugural Community Focus: A Report for Springfield and Greene County. We as a community will be taking a close look at ourselves. We will see many of our successes and positive attributes, but we also will see many of our challenges. Through collaboration and mobilization of resources we can shape our community into one that serves all its citizens and continues to make Springfield a great place to live and work.

The idea for the “Community Focus” evolved over the past two years. It began with a Community Foundation of the Ozarks’ Needs Assessment Committee initiative. Representatives from Community Foundation of the Ozarks, United Way, Junior League of Springfield, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Southwest Missouri State University, Drury University, Springfield-Greene County Library District, Springfield/Greene County Health Department, Every Kid Counts, and the News-Leader discussed ways of communicating community needs in an ongoing and meaningful manner. Simultaneously, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce’s 2003 leadership trip to Lexington, Kentucky, learned of the Lexington Livability Report, an effort to assess strengths and weaknesses in that community.

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and the Needs Assessment Committee decided to join forces to produce our “Community Focus: A Report for Springfield and Greene County.” In addition, the Springfield-Greene County Library District has produced www.SpringfieldCommunityFocus.org, a website dedicated to needs-based data collection. It is my hope that both the report and the website will provide researchers, grantseekers, grantmakers, and community leaders with valuable information now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Maura Taylor, Chair
Community Focus Steering Committee