

Introduction



Last year we released the first *Community Focus Report: A Report for Springfield and Greene County*, also known as the Community Report Card by many in the community. The idea was to identify our strengths—blue ribbons—and our weaknesses—red flags—on a yearly basis and

to track our community's success in changing those red flags to blue ribbons over time. We hoped that the identified red flags would rally our community and spur it into action to address these needs in our community. Through collaboration and the mobilization of resources, we believed we could change our community into one that serves all its citizens, especially the most vulnerable—our children.

Our community is stepping forward to address these challenges through the collaborative work of many organizations and individuals. These groups are working with our children in poverty, mentoring and tutoring, providing programs to address child abuse and neglect, and working together to identify the needs of all our children through groups such as the Mayor's Commission on Children. Funding grants have been awarded to organizations focused on addressing the red flags.

The latest development, occurring as this report goes to press, is that a group of local charitable funders is developing a coalition called the Grantmakers Challenge for Children to address the community red flags as they pertain to children in our community. The coalition's purpose is to marshal and leverage resources to impact problem areas, to enhance overall awareness of community problems, and to challenge other fortunate members of Springfield and Greene County to make charitable investments in the future of our children.

I would like to thank the supporters of this report: Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Junior League of Springfield, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield-Greene County Library District and the United Way of the Ozarks, and also the members of the Steering Committee, who committed their time and expertise to this important project. It is my hope that, by all of us working together as a community, we can meet the challenges identified in the report today and in the future.

Sincerely,
Maura Taylor, Co-Chair
Community Focus Steering Committee



I am pleased to have been a part of creating this second Community Focus report. No project this extensive is completed without the help of many individuals and organizations. Particular thanks go to the Steering Committee members, listed on the

back cover, who gave freely of their time and knowledge to produce this report. The dedication of these volunteers highlights a significant community strength: people who live in this community are willing to give their time, expertise and resources to improve our quality of life

The committee began its work in December by reviewing last year's report and discussing ways to improve it. One of our first major decisions was to involve more individuals in providing information for the report. This process worked almost too well—the subcommittees responsible for writing each section generated much more information than we could include in this summary. That led to another major decision, which was to make that additional information and data available to the community on the website dedicated to this report. We are indebted to Annie Busch and the Springfield/Greene County Library District for providing staff assistance and web space for both the report itself and for what we have been calling the “back-up report” with the details we couldn't include here, including sources of our data. Readers can access the back-up report for each section by going to the website and clicking the button following each section heading in the table of contents.

As with last year's report, this remains a work in progress. Each year, we refine and improve our process. We welcome your feedback; use the “Contact Us” link on the website (www.SpringfieldCommunityFocus.org) or call the Community Foundation, 864-6199.

Sincerely,
Gloria Galanes, Co-Chair
Community Focus Steering Committee