



Doug Stegner, our 2019 Volunteer of the Year, in his home.



CHRISTOPHER FRYER

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If there is a need in the Louisville nonprofit community, Doug Stegner probably has a plan to address it.

The 90-year-old retired businessman and philanthropist has assisted local nonprofits with developing strategic plans for over 30 years.

It's a primary reason Stegner is Louisville Business First's fourth Volunteer of the Year award winner.

Stegner retired from Mercer in 1990 and has been spending about 25-plus hours a month on helping nonprofits.

Stegner says the most impactful volunteer experience that he's had in the community was helping strategically with the Community Foundation of Louisville in 1984.

Other organizations he has assisted include Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Gheens Foundation and The Healing Place, among others.

Also, Stegner helped create a nonprofit recently. The organization is called Citizens Attacking Addiction. Its office opened Aug. 14. Read more about it and how Stegner became involved in helping these organizations thrive in the Q&A below:

When did you begin volunteering?

To answer this question, I have to give a little background. About 50 years ago, I helped build a successful firm, Meidinger & Associates, and we reached a stage when we as a firm needed to clarify our future through a strategic plan. I organized our executive team to reorganize the entire firm. This gave me time to develop a five-year, long-range plan that was adopted by our board of directors.

With the great success we had with Meidinger's strategic plan, I realized that the process could be adopted easily to help nonprofits in Louisville and made this a priority. I wanted to give back to the community, specifically to nonprofits that directly help people.

Over the past 30+ years, I've assisted 30 nonprofits, both large and small, all nonbusiness related, to help develop their strategic plans at no cost to them. Some I've helped more than once.

The first strategic plan that I worked on was for the newly forming Olmsted Parks Conservancy in Louisville. I've lived in Cherokee Park since 1969 after moving to Louisville from Indianapolis. I was amazed at Louisville's park systems and learned about Frederick Law Olmsted, the Father of American Landscape Architecture and was asked to join a small group of citizens to help preserve his vision.

In 1987, then-Mayor Jerry Abramson, told us that if our small group would create the plan, the city would fund the charity with \$1 million dollars. We created that plan and the conservancy is still in existence today working with our city to maintain and protect Olmsted's vision.

What is your favorite part about what you do? And what is the most impactful volunteer experience you've had?

My favorite part of strategic planning is witnessing the energy and creativity that I see when people start working together to accomplish a goal.

This process can be very draining to all and people don't like me very much at the beginning of the process. But, when the group starts clicking, anything can be accomplished. It's amazing to watch.

I think the most impactful volunteer experience that I've had on the community is helping strategically with the Community Foundation of Louisville in 1984. It is now the largest charitable foundation in Kentucky with more than \$530 million in assets.

In 2017, CFL made 9,500 grants totaling \$73 million, approximately 80 percent of which stayed in Kentucky and Southern Indiana to support area nonprofits.

What advice would you give to people who want to volunteer more or want to start volunteering?

While giving money can certainly be a part of philanthropy, giving your time by getting involved is just as important.

Hands-on volunteers, in partnership with creative and strategic thinkers, are

the people who drive the plans that I have helped facilitate.

Find something that you love to do, something that excites you, and give that part of yourself in the form of time to assist a nonprofit.

Every person has special talents, no matter how small you think they are, that help make a nonprofit a success

Tell us about the organization that you founded recently.

In 2017, an independent task force was developed to address the recommendations made in "A Call to Action" report generated from the Louisville Heroin and Opioid Summit, sponsored by John Kuhn Jr., former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky.

This report spurred a task force to form to address these concerns and from there, we formed the nonprofit, Citizens Attacking Addiction.

CAA is an independent, nonpolitical, nonprofit volunteer group made up of Louisville citizens. Our mission is to stand united as citizens to end the scourge of addiction in our city.

CAA is not a treatment or recovery provider. We are about educating families on the options and resources available to them and then walking with them along the journey.

CAA resolves to improve prevention, access to treatment, funding, and peer-to-peer support for families in the greater Louisville area. **Z**



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DOUG STEGNER, Volunteer of the Year Award recipient for 2019