

‘A MEANINGFUL LEGACY’

CAP program celebrates 10 years of impact on Omaha giving

Mike Watkins

Special for the Omaha Community Foundation

In launching the Omaha Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy (CAP) program 10 years ago, Mark Weber, in conjunction with the Omaha Community Foundation (OCF), had a vision to make Omaha an even more generous community.

As a result of the success of this program, the Omaha community now has a model for more strategically focusing on philanthropy for current and future generations – and donors are finding more joy and satisfaction from their giving.



Mark Weber

“When I started the program, I never considered the possibility it would continue this long,” said Weber, an Omaha-based author. “However there is still a strong demand for people wanting to earn the (CAP) designation, so we continue to host the study group program.”

Today, Weber estimates that Omaha probably has more professional advisors – 131 in the Omaha program through 2021 – who have earned the CAP designation than any city in the U.S. And the upcoming 2022 class is full.



Donna Kush

“The Omaha program has created a life of its own,” he said. “The momentum is strong.”

The professional designation of Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy offered by the American College of Financial Services is earned by passing tests for three courses out of the Masters of Science and Financial Services curriculum.

Rather than simply earn the designation himself, Weber had the idea a decade ago to gather some of Omaha’s top professional advisors and nonprofit professionals to study together and learn from each other’s experience.

He asked the Omaha Community Foun-

ation in 2011 if they would be willing to host a study group program and help him with class administration.

“My thought was, if I could educate the professional advisors on how to help their clients incorporate philanthropy in their estate plans, the result would be a more generous community,” he said.

A recent survey of CAP graduates – accountants, attorneys, financial advisors and nonprofit professionals – conducted by Weber indicated their clients have committed to give more than \$9 billion to charitable causes.

“Through the knowledge gained in the CAP program, these advisors have added a whole new dimension to the philanthropic conversations they are having with their clients,” said OCF Executive Director Donna Kush.

“Additionally, they have built a network of trusted professionals who work collaboratively to accomplish their clients’ philanthropic objectives. When you think of the multiplier effect of 130 professionals, the results are widespread impact.”

A CAP program graduate, Ron Quinn, executive vice president and corporate secretary for Tenaska, said he sees the program as an opportunity to work together as a team – a community – and develop a “meaningful legacy geared to passing on a client’s values and philosophy, as well as financial resources.”

And while the Omaha CAP study group program has evolved over the last 10 years, it has expanded to help families do a better job of communicating with their children about their intentions, hopes and personal values.

As a result, families are growing closer, and children will be more responsible with inheritances they receive – all of which will make for a healthier more vibrant community.

“The mission of OCF is to maximize the power of philanthropy to strengthen our community,” Kush said. “With the significant transfer of wealth that is happening locally, the timing of this program could not



be more perfect as the foundation continues to be a trusted resource and partner to professional advisors and their clients to be even more effective, efficient and impactful in their philanthropic planning.”

Kush added that OCF’s role with Weber and the Omaha CAP program is to make conversations between advisors and their clients more easily extend beyond how to build and protect wealth, but also how to share their good fortune.

When people sit down with a professional who has earned a CAP designation, the conversation goes well beyond tax savings and asset management. They’re thinking holistically about how to plan and implement the client’s goals – discussing family giving and what their legacy may look like. This becomes an integral part of client meetings – and the result is a more educated, engaged and philanthropic community.

“Mark’s contribution to Omaha is immeasurable but is very significant,” Kush added. “Moreover, he is also having an impact regionally and nationally, authoring two books, consulting and speaking on financial planning topics and getting CAP programs started in other cities.

“The ripple effects of his efforts will

never be measurable, but is incredible and as significant as any monetary donation that he could have made.”

Along with his work with CAP Weber recently completed writing his second book, “The Legacy Spectrum.”

Weber said the book is nontechnical and written for the average person. The basic premise is that each person has a choice of how to be remembered after death.

“In the book I share a number of stories of how some families use their estate plans to pass their personal values onto their children and grandchildren,” he said “The result is that instead of the inheritance being the cause of bitter litigation between children, they grow closer together and use the money to achieve their highest potential. The book provides a roadmap parents can use when thinking through their own estate plan.

“We are changing the culture of estate planning in the city of Omaha. The result will be stronger families and more generous families. Because of the number of CAP advisors, the impact of the program will be felt for decades to come in our city.”