

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Community Foundation of Northern Illinois Awards Funds to Support RACVB's *Forest City Beautiful* Initiative *\$25,000 to Support Beautification Efforts in Downtown Rockford*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 26, 2014

ROCKFORD, IL – Today the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois presented a grant award of \$25,000 to support Forest City Beautiful, a recently launched initiative of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. The grant, awarded from the foundation's Dr. Louis & Violet Rubin fund, was made to further support the initiative and the growing partnership between RACVB and Rockford Sharefest.

Forest City Beautiful is a new, multi-year initiative aimed at creating and maintaining beautiful landscapes in downtown Rockford. RACVB leads the effort in collaboration with the City of Rockford. As part of the initiative, RACVB has the responsibility to plan, install and maintain landscaping throughout downtown.

Desiring an opportunity to extend "help and hope" to the community through focusing efforts in downtown Rockford, volunteers from Rockford Sharefest – known for its extreme school makeovers of Rockford Public School buildings since 2007 – have become key to the success of Forest City Beautiful. Sharefest volunteers were also instrumental in helping RACVB launch Stroll on State, a new event that welcomed 30,000 people downtown to kickoff the holidays last year.

From June 20 – 28, 2014, more than 700 Sharefest volunteers helped transform over 38,000 square feet of Rockford's downtown by prepping planting sites and then installing more than 5,000 perennials, as well as prepping and painting 70 light poles along with trash containers, fire hydrants, utility boxes and more. Rockford Sharefest, a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, is the recipient of and will administer the grant, in partnership with RACVB.

"We are grateful to have the support of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois. Their investment will help take this initiative to the next level," said John Groh, president/CEO of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "These funds will help enhance our community and will complement other public and private investments happening in downtown in the coming months and years."

"On behalf of the thousands of volunteers who make up Rockford Sharefest, I want to express our gratitude to the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois for supporting this project financially. Our community and their willingness to roll up their sleeves and make this a better place to live constantly amaze me. These funds give us a chance to work together to make continued community transformation a reality," states Craig Day, Rockford Sharefest executive director.

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*The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois is the area's largest provider of grants and scholarships. Celebrating 60 years of philanthropy, the Foundation's mission is to attract, grow and preserve an endowment for the needs of the people of Northern Illinois. [www.cfnil.org](http://www.cfnil.org)*

*Rockford Sharefest exists to identify, develop and lead projects that empower and release volunteers and donors to use their God-given gifts, abilities and resources to make an impact for the common good. Rockford Sharefest is bringing help and hope with no strings attached. [www.rockfordsharefest.com](http://www.rockfordsharefest.com)*

*RACVB is a private, non-profit organization established in 1984 to champion efforts to promote the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. The RACVB adds wealth to the region's economy by investing in marketing programs that grow tourism. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)*

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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