

Scott Von Rueden

American Family
Lead Customer Experience Consultant

Organization:

University of Wisconsin Foundation – Carbone Cancer Center

Scott's mother's treatment at the Carbone Cancer Center extended her life five years beyond average expectancy, giving her more time with family. Because of this, Scott cares deeply about supporting the important research done by the center. He became a member and is currently serving as chair of the Carbone Cancer Center's Emerging Leadership Board. A highlight of his fundraising work was his role as lead organizer for Trivia Night with Andy North, an annual event hosting 400-plus people. The evening raised more than \$100k in one night for the center. For this event and others, Scott works tirelessly to uplift the life-changing work of the center.

"Cancer will unfortunately impact all of us either through our own experience or with friends and family. Donations like this allow doctors at the Carbone Cancer Center to invest in early-stage treatment research in order to eventually receive funding from larger health organizations, with a \$5,000 donation potentially creating a \$50,000 impact. It's funding like that which allowed for the trials that extended my mom's life."

Community Champion



Alexis Farris

AFICS
Manager, Adjusting Services

Organization: Ivy Heart Memorial

The Ivy Heart Memorial was founded by Alexis' sister and brother-in-law who tragically lost their newborn daughter to a rare heart condition. The organization raises funds to provide support to families going through a similar experience. The organization specifically provides families with care packages and financial support for medical or funeral expenses. Ivy Heart is still a new effort and Alexis took the helm by helping organize the organization's first fundraising event, a golf outing. The event hosted 220 golfers and had 100 sponsors, ultimately raising more than \$38,000.

"The last thing a family should have to worry about when going through a tragedy of this kind are financial strains. Ivy Heart Memorial can be someone's shining light in their darkest days and make the worst situation more manageable. By providing care packages with items like special tape for hospital cords, swaddles, and hats or funds towards end-of-life care or medical bills, families have more time to focus on what's most important."

Community Champion



Alex Beideck

Homesite-CONNECT
Senior Product Analyst

Organization: Dane County Humane Society

Alex has taken his family's passion for community service to the next level in his work with the Dane County Humane Society. Alex has spent more than 500 hours over more than four years matching individuals with animals who need a home. He is quick to step in, picking up extra shifts when the organization finds itself short-staffed and exhibiting leadership by training newer volunteers. Alex was awarded Adoption Center Volunteer of the Year by the Humane Society for his incredible work. This donation will be made in memory of his mother, Ellen, who recently lost her battle with multiple system atrophy. She had cared for the family cats for nearly two decades.

"Not only have I met some truly wonderful people during my time as a volunteer but I learned you also get back far more than you put in. These funds mean that more animals will make it to their forever homes by covering the adoption fees for approximately 10 puppies or more than 30 kittens. That kind of impact means the world to me."

Community Champion



Joe Pelkey

Main Street America

Senior Manager, Production Underwriting - Lic

Organization: Swanzey Cal Ripken

Having started as a T-ball coach when his son was just four years old, Joe has now been involved with Swanzey Cal Ripken, a youth baseball league, for eight years and counting. From volunteer coach to director of the minors division to becoming president of the organization's board of directors, Joe has stepped up to the plate, supporting and leading the organization. Since starting his role as board president after the previous president unexpectedly stepped down, Joe, with the help of the board of directors, turned a \$2,000 deficit into nearly \$30,000 in funds that will allow the organization to start building new dugouts for its 100-plus younger players.

“As a nonprofit, we fundraise endlessly in order to support the league, and these dollars will give us breathing room to reassess internal strategy and take projects off the backburner. Because we serve nearly 200 children each year, our goal is to be able to provide the best experience for our youth which includes having an adequate space and gear.”

Community Champion



Aarian J. Forman

The General
Sponsorships, Partnerships & Events Specialist

Organization: Xceleader

Grateful for the many things he learned attending a historically black college and university (HBCU) and serving as student government president, Aarian co-founded Xceleader to mentor and provide leadership development to student leaders currently attending HBCUs. As the organization's development director, Aarian is responsible for strategy, fundraising, and maintaining donor relationships. He also serves as the program lead for Xceleader's School of Hustle, which trains, connects and deploys successful Black entrepreneurs to strengthen the economy. In just a few short years, Xceleader has empowered four cohorts of students across 35 HBCUs.

“An investment in Xceleader is an investment in sustaining the rich legacy of HBCUs and shaping the future of Black leaders who are making a significant impact in the world. By hosting a diverse series of events and programs for HBCU students, Xceleader strives to create a meaningful impact in these students' lives while also creating a community of changemakers, champions of equity, and world-class citizens.”

Community Champion

