

“Connecting Our Community Through Giving”

The word “Philanthropy” comes from both Greek and Latin origins, meaning ”love or kindness to mankind”. Although philanthropists have existed for centuries throughout the world, it wasn’t until the early 1900’s that it became formalized in the United States. It was in 1917 that community foundations were organized as a structure to enable people to provide support for the needs of their community.

In 1925, David Woodward, an Atlanta businessman who summered in Watertown embraced the concept of community foundations and invited area business leaders to join him in establishing the Watertown Foundation. Their mission was to legally organize under the laws of the State of Connecticut for the purpose of receiving and maintaining funds and using the income to improve the social and living conditions in town.

On October 6, 1925, David Woodward held the first organizational meeting of the Watertown Foundation including six Watertown community leaders, each pledging \$500.00 in support of this new endeavor. At that first meeting, the original six founders wisely advised inviting others in the community to pledge a lesser sum of \$100.00 and forever be known as the charter members of the Watertown Foundation. It was thus established that citizens of both moderate means or substantial wealth might contribute to the needs in the community.

Because of their foresight, generosity and love of our community, the Watertown Foundation was established. Because of the continued diligence of the trustees who followed in their footsteps and the continued generosity of our members, the Watertown Foundation continues to support the needs of our community.

As we make plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our founding in 2025, we welcome your interest in joining us in continuing the wishes of David Woodward and our founding fathers as we “Connect our Community Through Giving”.

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