It is our pleasure to explore the intersection of philanthropy and community well-being. What began as a series of informal discussions over time has turned into understanding and recognition that community well-being is of increasing importance and concern to those who work in and study philanthropy from scholarly and practitioner perspectives. This special issue enables more attention and scholarship to this important area of inquiry.

Phillips and Lee (2018) suggest that the *International Journal for Community Well-Being* “advances the knowledge and practice of community well-being as an interdisciplinary broad conception of human and societal well-being” (p.1). In developing the call for this special issue, we too wanted to explore the broader connections between the practice of philanthropy and its contributions to community and societal well-being. We explore the impact of philanthropy on community well-being from both objective and subjective measures in communities and public policy along with community partnerships and other related areas.

Scholarly efforts focus on philanthropic legitimacy for the actions of high wealth individuals (i.e., donors). These are viewed from the perspectives of altruistic behaviorisms and positive psychology to organizational and institutional behaviors, and ethical, moral and political philosophy for outcome/strategic metrics. Little scholarly attention is focused on the intersection of institutional philanthropy with community rather than the reporting of outcome assessments. There is scant examination thus far of philanthropic organizations’ impact on community well-being and/or quality of life.

The articles comprising this special issue all discuss and expand on this idea that philanthropy is building a new logic of philanthropy beyond its relation to the state and grantmaking to that of key players in community well-being and quality of life.
Overall, the goal of the special issue is to bring together both cutting-edge scholarship and practice that addresses and enhances community well-being and the practice of philanthropy.

**Philanthropy in Brief**

Conceptually philanthropy, like well-being and quality of life, has various definitions. Much scholarship in the field has focused on differing definitions of philanthropy seeking to answer the question, “what is philanthropy?”

Philanthropy, according to Muukkonen (2010), “comes from the Greek word philanthropia (philia, friendship, love + anthropos, human) and means “humanity, benevolence, kind-heartedness, humane feeling, kindliness, courtesy” or gods’ love for humans (Liddell et al. 1940, s.w. philia; philanthropia)” (p.26).

As we move from definitions of ancient Greek philanthropy to modern philanthropy, common threads such as humanity, benevolence, and the love of mankind are common threads in viewing philanthropy via a systems lens for community level action. What is philanthropy? In seeking an answer, Payton & Moody (2008) define philanthropy as “voluntary action for the public good.”

Philanthropy includes both voluntary giving and service. Further, how does one “do philanthropy,” at the individual or institutional level? Payton & Moody (2008) suggest that it is both transactional in the doing (donation, writing the check, conducting the service) but also values are led by “ideas and action” (p.6).

We are not engaged in the act of definition in this special issue. Rather, we adopt a broad conceptualization of philanthropy. We believe that philanthropy is the giving of time, talent and treasure for the common good to improve communities and enhance quality of life both subjectively and objectively. Simply put - **doing good to enhance community well-being**. Well-being, like philanthropy, stems from a philosophical and historical perspective relating to the promotion of “goodness” at a community or individual level.

**Community Well-Being in Brief**

Well-being and quality life are exceedingly important to society (including social sector organizations, philanthropic organizations and governments) as a measurement criterion both objectively and subjectively. Well-being and quality of life are measured at the individual and community levels. It is, in essence, implies how well we are doing – whether as individuals or collectives (community). Are we flourishing, staying at a steady state, declining or progressing? It is more than about temporary emotional states, it is rather how we are doing over the longer term, and in some measurements, over the life course or periods of time in communities of place. Community well-being has many facets to consider, and as Phillips and Wong describe (2016, xxix) it is “embedded with multidimensional values including the economic, social and environmental aspects that impact people. While each of these values or aspects has a vital role in influencing community well-being outcomes and percep-
tions, there are also many different ways these can combine, depending on the particular characteristics of place.” This implies a very strong connection and points for intersection with philanthropy – what can be done to influence community well-being in ways that are desired and valued?

**Philanthropy and the Distribution of Well-Being**

Nickel (2018) argues that philanthropy is the distribution of well-being. In this issue, we examine how philanthropy might accomplish this. We have examined philanthropy and community well-being from four different angles: foundation approaches, place-based approaches, emerging constructs in place-based approaches and finally an examination of philanthropy broadly construed. Articles include varying methodologies with quantitative and qualitative studies, case studies and theoretical perspectives presented.

In the first section, Part A: Foundations of Philanthropy and Community Well-Being, we consider foundational pieces to examine the intersection of philanthropy and community well-being. This is discussed via decision-making, community level and disaster relief indicators and individual actions.

Philanthropy is all about decision-making which is why we start off with Alaimo and Carman’s (2021) ([https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00125-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00125-7)), *Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: Community Foundations and Community Well-being*. Alaimo and Carman (2018) ([https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00125-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00125-7)) use Sirgy’s (2018) framework with indicators for Socio-economic Development, Personal Utility, Just Societies and Human Development to examine community foundation decision-making. The use of the quality-of-life framework moves beyond traditional philanthropic decision frameworks using indicators as benchmarks.

Kraeger, Phillips, Kuenzi and Ugboya (2021) ([https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-022-00162-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-022-00162-w)) in *Exploring Select U. S. Community Foundations and COVID-19 Responsive Community Philanthropy* also utilizes an indicator approach with indicators to examine responsive funding by 877 community foundations accredited by the National Standards for Community Foundations (CFs). They examine discretionary grantmaking opportunities across the National Standard CFs examining both financial capital and responsive mitigation indicators. This provides insight into community foundations funding priorities early in the pandemic, finding that selected foundations were responsive to communities.

Tonon, Rodriguez de la Vega & Barba (2021) ([https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00136-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00136-4)) in *How Individual Philanthropic Actions Influence Community Well-Being* take a deep dive into examining philanthropic actions in Argentina where the community’s practice of philanthropy is a newer phenomenon. Structured interviews using Thematic Analysis Strategy provide insight into motivations for philanthropic action to increase community well-being.

Indicators and themes are benchmarks for decision-making in part one which helps us then transition to a focus on place-based community philanthropy. In Part B: Place-Based Community Philanthropy Rural and Urban Frameworks, global perspectives are provided, comparing and contrasting place-based work. Communities
are place-based and place-based philanthropy allows both scholars and practitioners to examine how community well-being is practiced in different locales. This includes urban and rural along with practices from the global north to global south.

Reid, Palmer, Reid, & Murillo (2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-020-00089-0) in Rural Foundation Collaboration: “Houston we have a problem” examine grantmaking practices to solve complex social problems in a deteriorating rural America. In a mixed-methods study they focus on the needs for multiple actors to engage and the successes and failures of institutional and local foundations to effectively collaborate for change. This article provides a deep glimpse into the specific problems of rural America and how institutional philanthropy engages and could better do so as a result of the findings from this study.

Kim (2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00135-5) on the other hand focuses on an urban view of philanthropy and place in What kind of community development system can better support philanthropy’s effort to promote community well-being citywide? The answer appears to be citizen engagement from these Detroit city-wide engagement efforts occurring between 2016 and 2019. The article builds a seven-component community development framework for philanthropy based on interviews, participant observation, best practices and scholarly literature for philanthropic community development. Community development, theory and practice are hand-in-glove with community well-being. This seven-component framework is of interest to both practitioners and scholars seeking to test in practice and empirically.

The data focus of the Kim (2021) article provides a natural segue to consider data informed tools and further participatory community practices for enhancing place-based philanthropy in the community context.

Ridzi (2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00124-8) considers the use of transparent data tools as pathway to support community well-being in Place Based Philanthropy and Measuring Community Well Being in the Age of COVID-19. The article examines the important role of data and data quantification to examine outcomes in the place-based context of Syracuse, New York. Specifically, the author explores how the COVID-19 pandemic “affected local philanthropy’s relationship with data and information by increasing public awareness of community data as a tool for describing rapidly changing community needs, raising expectations for an expedited connection between data analysis and action, and compelling civic leaders to engage in scenario planning.” Data and data tools allowed for flexible and rapid action all the while keeping the public informed.

Ahmad and Khadse (2022, 2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00124-8) in Community Philanthropy as practice: a case study of Thousand Currents explores the practice of grassroots philanthropy to empower and build community capacity. The article examines community philanthropy as a tool to decrease the power differential through long term unrestricted grants in this organizational case study. The authors consider how to achieve desired goals of sharing power, building trust, and showing solidarity toward community self-determination for well-being. The case suggests that deliberate staffing and fund decisions provide a practical path to community philanthropy.

Each of the above place-based philanthropy articles focuses not only on outcomes but tools and practices to achieve these outcomes from systematic approaches, thus
providing insights for both scholars and practitioners. These tools and practices lead to a discussion of equity in place-based communities and leadership development.

Emerging Constructs in Placed Based Philanthropy and Defined Communities, makes up Part C and importantly examines philanthropy vis-à-vis equity concerns, involvement with the LGBTQ community as well as how philanthropy can support grass roots community building. Further, it examines community and economic development when human capital departs communities despite a high level of place attachment.

Mulé (2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00126-6) in Canadian LGBTQ Communities and Philanthropy: A Questioning of Well-Being examines “the role of philanthropic organizations in contributing to LGBTQ community well-being in Canada.” The focus of the article is on the “historical marginalization of gender and sexually diverse communities, and what currently constitutes potential philanthropic support and what does not” to shed insight on the intersectionality of philanthropic funders and the LGBTQ communities.

In Philanthropic Investment in Equity: Cultivating Grass Roots Leaders for the Equitable Revitalization of Marginalized Communities, Reece, Hanlon, & Edwards (2022) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00159-x) consider the role of the United Way of Ohio to develop a community leadership pipeline. They present a case study of the Neighborhood Leadership Academy as a catalyst for philanthropic investment by exploring the “why” of philanthropic investment in developing grass roots leadership. They also explore how it should be done through a grass roots leadership development model centered on equity that can impact policy outcomes, aid in building bridging social capital and help increase successful activism.

In the final article of this part, Reid, Butter & Voddon (2021) in a Sense of Place, Mobile Work and Philanthropy at the Intersection of Community Well-Being in Newfoundland and Labrador examine a specific phenomenon - increasing employment-related geographic mobility (E-RGM). This is occurring despite deep place attachment due to a fishery moratorium in New Brunswick and Labrador provinces in Canadian and the impacts that philanthropic monetary and voluntary donations can make to rebuild rural communities. Philanthropic actions may limit permanent E-RGM noting the community well-being impacts with temporary E-GRM. The article brings together elements of both community and economic development, community well-being and resiliency,

Noting that we have adopted a broad construction of philanthropy in this special issue, we have included in Part D: Community Philanthropy - Broadly Constructed, articles that focus on volunteerism and community building. Articles range from actions focused on older adults to philanthropic fundraising for libraries (noting that libraries are one of the earliest philanthropic areas of focus in the United States with the establishment of the Carnegie libraries).

With Philanthropy, Public Libraries and Community Wellbeing: The Role of Legitimacy in Challenges to Innovate and Customize Service and Resources, Dilworth (2021) (https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-021-00140-8) focuses on how “public libraries support community well-being missions related to access to information, knowledge creation, public service programming and social cohesion” in a case study of Mississippi libraries. Findings from the case study suggest that “philanthropy is
a fundamental partner in community well-being missions for these libraries even though, as a sector, public libraries measure low in philanthropic support.”

Next, Russell, Storti and Handy (2022) in their article, *Volunteering and Well-Being in Older Adulthood: Evidence from Hospital Volunteers* note much evidence connecting the giving of one’s time (i.e., volunteering) to both individual and community well-being and the extension of a volunteer’s span of lifetime activity. In their article they examine implications of older adults transitioning out of volunteering through a three-step model and subjective identity to the well-being of communities. The model helps readers to understand not only the motivation of volunteers but the sense of personal well-being that in turn impacts community well-being. Provocatively, they ask us and future researchers to consider what will happen to both individual and community well-being when these volunteers are no longer engaged.

Part V gives readers a peer reviewed commentary with the perspectives of deeply engaged and thoughtful practitioners examining how two foundations actually distributed funds, influencing well-being in the UK and in New Mexico during the outset of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Reid and Broadhurst (2021) in *Looking Back on Philanthropy in a Pandemic Foundation Colleagues Share Common Perspectives from Across the Pond* explores how these two foundations, like others, relaxed the traditional and often rigid guidelines to become adaptive and flexible to meet the pressing needs of their communities. The lens for such flexibility employed by these leaders was driven by humility. There are important lessons for both practitioners and scholars interested in flexible, adaptive grantmaking long past the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, Part VI provides readers with an examination of historical perspectives of philanthropy with a book review. Dilworth (2021) tells us that “[t]he collected essays by Charles H. Hamilton provide meaningful insight into the development of ideas and practices around civil society and philanthropy over the course of his long career as a practitioner who engaged deeply with the top philanthropy scholars of his time.” And perhaps most importantly, philanthropy calls for engaged action!

From beginning to the final product, call for papers to published research, the journey has been an engaged and exciting journey with the contributing authors. We hope that you are as excited too when reading these diverse scholarly approaches from across the globe examining the intersection of philanthropy and community well-being. As this work was in progress, the authors, despite being siloed and remote during the COVID-19 global pandemic, met once or twice virtually at conferences where the work was shared with each other thereby building our own community. This community of scholars has led to further collaborations between a number of the authors committed to examining philanthropy and community well-being.

We hope that this body of work will inform and inspire others to continue to research philanthropy and community well-being from an inter-disciplinary and collaborative approach. All articles including the invited commentary have been double-blind peer reviewed.
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