

Terry Simmons

Paying It Forward

When Terry Simmons established the CHIP Fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation in 2010, his motivation was simple: to help inspire others.

Terry's desire to help inspire others is really about paying it forward. In 1970, as a new college graduate, he moved to Washington D.C. to "change the world." Unable to find a job out of college, Terry began cleaning offices at night and that's how he met John "Chip" Schrott, a business owner and investor who would take Terry under his wing and teach him about owning and operating a business. Eventually, Terry became part owner of Reel-O-Matic Systems, a manufacturer of reeling and coiling equipment that he relocated to Oklahoma City in 1988. After Chip's death in 2001, Terry purchased the remainder of the company and retired as president and CEO in 2013.

Terry made a gift of appreciated stock to the Oklahoma City Community Foundation to establish an advised fund. During 2014, Terry recommended a significant grant to Neighborhood Services Organization for the benefit of its permanent supportive housing program for formerly homeless adults diagnosed with mental illness.

"After visiting the organization's homes for the mentally challenged and homeless families, the door to my heart was opened as well as were my eyes to the truism that all of us need a home, and someone who hears us shout 'I'm home!' as we walk through the front door," Terry explains. "In a way, NSO is the front door people walk through on their journey to changing their lives."

Terry believes the possibilities of helping individuals live meaningful and purpose-driven lives through his advised fund are endless.

"I guess one could call the Oklahoma City Community Foundation the one-stop shopping place when seeking where to make that perfect investment in mankind," he adds. "My hope is that everyone's contributions, whether financial or by other methods of support, provides greater hope to the hopeless, encourages the discouraged and inspires all of us as fellow men and women to reach the potential of being all we can be for one another that our creator intended."

Ms. Mickey, left, stands with Terry Simmons and Stacey Ninness, president and CEO of Neighborhood Services Organization that operates the Palo Duro residences in Oklahoma City. Palo Duro I and Palo Duro II provide housing for formerly homeless adults who are dealing with a mental illness. Ms. Mickey has been a resident since 2003 when she came to NSO for assistance. In 2014, Terry recommended a grant from his advised fund to NSO.

Photo by Brandon Snider

