



News Release

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Century College Foundation Member Leads the Push for Online Giving

Have you ever asked yourself what you would do if you had unlimited resources?

When Century College Foundation Board Member Jerry Jordahl of White Bear Lake was asked that question, he said he would provide educational opportunities for anyone who had need and expressed a desire to attend college.

Needless to say, Jordahl doesn't have unlimited resources, but he does have a background in computer research and development, and a passion to help people help themselves. Putting those two things together, Jordahl has worked with Century College to come up with a plan to make it easier for all people to help students achieve their dreams.

A recently developed part of this plan is online giving. And the good news is, online giving, with the support of the entire Century College Foundation Board, is now available for people who want to donate to the Foundation.

For the first time, all people who want to donate to the foundation have to do is go to the following address: <http://www.century.edu/foundation/donations.aspx>. They can then enter in their information,

direct their gift to the selection of their choice and the donation is made. Later they will receive confirmation of the gift for tax purposes.

“There are many people out there who, like me, want to help young people succeed,” said Jordahl, who was the first to make an online donation via his Blackberry. “Now we have made it so much easier for them to do that. My vision is that once a person gives \$10 and realizes how easy it is to give, his or her level of giving will increase the next time around. Once they see how that money is used, and how it can help, I think they will be motivated to help even more. Foundation staff members will be more than willing to sit down with them and lay out the opportunities. But it all starts with those small gifts.”

Jordahl says he never forgets that it was public education that made it possible for him to build a comfortable life for himself and his family. Born in North Dakota, he grew up with a challenging home life. His mother managed to hold the family together by working her way up to a position as Extension Home Management Specialist at the University of Minnesota, and along the way earned a doctorate degree in her field.

Inspired by his mother, Jordahl attended the University of Minnesota and helped pay his way by holding down several jobs that for a time got him up at 5 a.m. and had him working until late in the evening. That schedule didn't leave a lot of time for study, and he ended up leaving the university and finishing his degree at Mankato State University, where he earned both his undergraduate degree and a master's degree in mathematics.

After his college graduation, Jordahl's hard work in college paid off when he was hired for his dream job at Control Data, the corporate leader in high-performance computing, where he remained for 21 years as an analyst and manager in software engineering. In the early 1980s, Jordahl attended night school at St. Thomas University and earned his master's degree in business administration.

In the mid 1980s, Jordahl went to work for an exciting start-up company called ETA Systems, and he worked there until it abruptly closed its doors in 1989. Forced to reconsider his work life, Jordahl decided

to start a career in the financial arena. He studied with the College of Financial Planning and obtained his Certified Financial Planner™ certification. He currently is an agent with the Principal Financial Group. He works with his wife, Sharon, who has a tax and accounting business in White Bear Lake.

Since Jordahl joined the Century College Foundation board in 1999, he has been pushing to make online giving a reality. “I have been persistent,” admitted Jordahl. “Maybe it’s my Norwegian heritage. Now that we have this online giving tool, I feel like we’ve just begun. I know the potential is there for many more people to give to the foundation because we have made it so easy for them to do that. Now we just need to get the word out to the community about how much their gifts can help struggling students. Over the next 15 to 20 years, those students are going to become very successful and they will go on to make a significant, positive contribution to our economy.”

Photo: Jerry Jordahl of the Century College Foundation

