



\$8 million estate to benefit 13 local groups

Kathleen McLaughlin March 11, 2011

Local attorney Lawrence Reuben has chosen two fledgling organizations—the Immigrant Welcome Center and Grameen Bank of Indiana—for the largest of \$8 million in gifts from his mother’s estate.

Each will receive \$1 million. The remaining \$6 million will be divided among 11 other groups that reflect the broad humanitarian interests of Reuben’s parents, Albert and Sara Reuben. Several of the gifts will help launch new initiatives or establish endowments.

Sara Reuben, who died in January 2010 at age 95, came to the United States as a child from Belarus. Larry Reuben said that’s why he decided to devote a sizeable chunk of his mother’s estate to the Immigrant Welcome Center, a program that recruits acclimated immigrants as mentors to newcomers. “That was the story of her life,” Reuben said of his mother. “I’m truly taken by it.”

The Immigrant Welcome Center, launched in 2007, has one full-time staff member, Executive Director Terri Downs, who works with 60 volunteers. Downs said the plan is to use a small portion of the \$1 million to hire another staff member, who will work with more volunteers. The remainder of Reuben’s gift will be paid over time from a donor-advised fund at the Central Indiana Community Foundation.

“We’re very small still,” Downs said. “It’s going to be truly transformative for our organization.”

CICF President Brian Payne began raising money last year to establish a [Grameen Bank](#) branch in Indianapolis. Grameen, a not-for-profit, makes micro-loans of up to \$1,500 and has been recognized with a Nobel prize for its work in third-world countries. Grameen also has U.S. branches, including one in Omaha.

Reuben was not convinced that the Grameen lending model will work here. “I’m not optimistic,” he said. “I hope to be proven wrong.”

The gift for Grameen will also go into a donor-advised fund at CICF. If the organization fails, Reuben said, whatever is left of the \$1 million will be distributed to other groups benefiting from his mother's estate.

Here's a rundown on the other gifts:

- \$750,000 to the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention for a new 12-bed shelter, which will target people who otherwise land in hospital emergency rooms or are arrested for public intoxication. The Alfred G. and Sara I. Reuben Engagement Center is proposed for a building adjacent to Horizon House on East Washington Street. It would be owned and operated by the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County.
- \$750,000 to the Julian Center, a shelter for victims of domestic violence, for a counseling center, also to be named for the Reubens.
- \$750,000 to WFYI public broadcasting, which will produce feature films about each of the other recipients.
- \$600,000 to the Jewish Welfare Federation's ElderSource program, which supports people staying in their homes as they age. The program will be named for the Reubens.
- \$500,000 to the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana for an educational initiative.
- \$500,000 to Planned Parenthood of Indiana for educational initiatives.
- \$500,000 to the Humane Society of Indianapolis to upgrade the Michigan Road shelter and to help establish a clinic and outreach center in the Fountain Square neighborhood.
- \$500,000 to Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana's Excel Center, which helps adults finish their high school educations. Goodwill will establish the Albert G. and Sara I. Reuben College and Career Counseling Centers.
- \$500,000 to United Way of Central Indiana to establish the Sara I. and Albert G. Reuben Endowment Fund for early-childhood development.
- \$250,000 to Congregation Beth-El Zedek to support programs for teens.
- \$250,000 to the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University to support the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism.
- \$50,000 to the Bureau of Jewish Education for remote-learning technology and Holocaust educational material.

Albert and Sara Reuben grew up and met in Omaha and later moved to Ohio before settling in Indianapolis in 1948. Albert started an aluminum-siding franchise, which capitalized on the post-World War II housing boom. He died in 2002. The Reubens' other children, Elaine and David, live in the Washington, D.C., area.