



## National Philanthropy Day®

### National Philanthropy Day® Honors Finalist Information Form

**Nominee Name: The Joanna Foundation**

**Nominator Name: Daniel Prohaska**

**I. For each organization the nominee has supported, list the support the nominee has provided (money, time, other resources, etc.).** The Joanna Foundation focuses on projects and organizations with beneficial impact in three counties of Lowcountry South Carolina (Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester) and two Upstate communities (Joanna and Newberry). During the past 28 years, the Foundation has supported > 300 organizations in 7 broad categories (see below). To each, the Foundation has provided funds, ranging from \$500 shot-in-the-arm grants to > \$200,000 over many years to entities with broad scope and diverse programs. In response to every request, whether funded or not, the Foundation trustees have provided both time – listening, responding and reviewing; and care – encouraging, suggesting and spreading the word. Most importantly, The Joanna Foundation has provided possibilities – of starting something new, of making a difference, of making things better, of positive change.

**Summary of Grants, 01/01/1988-06/15/2016**

	Arts/Humanities	Education	Environment	Health	Human Svcs	Public Benefit	Churches	Total
<b># of Orgs</b>	58	42	42	32	118	16	5	313
<b>\$ Amt</b>	\$929,050	\$609,080	\$812,300	\$347,050	\$1,242,268	\$163,500	\$41,000	\$4,144,248
<b>Percent \$</b>	22.4%	14.7%	19.6%	8.4%	30.0%	3.9%	1.0%	100%

**II. Describe the top three impacts the nominee has had on the community, the world, etc.** The Joanna Foundation values its impact in terms of opportunities to empower others, ascribing to the tenet aptly phrased by Margaret Mead, to “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” A notable attribute of the Joanna board members is their willingness to take risks, to take a flyer on bold ideas rather than simply supporting the tried and true. These include diverse programs for at-risk youth, parenting skills, community renewal, performing arts, and environmental awareness, among others. Not all have taken off, some have flared and fizzled, but all have been worthwhile and The Joanna Foundation gave them a chance. Three notable successes – each one initiated from scratch by visionary individuals in Charleston, and given high-risk ground-floor gifts and extraordinary encouragement by The Joanna Foundation are the **Center for Birds of Prey, from Darkness to Light,** and **Wings for kids.** A nature/environmental conservancy and educational organization, an awareness, advocacy and training network to battle child sexual abuse, and an innovative after-school enterprise that helps underserved children live responsibly and joyfully – these are landmark efforts with national and global impact that illustrate the impacts.

**III. What is the nominee’s most inspiring philanthropic story?** The nominee’s most inspiring philanthropic story is arguably its own history. The Joanna Foundation was established in 1945 in the unincorporated town of Joanna, SC by members of the Regnery family who operated a textile mill there. It was literally a “community foundation,” providing access to healthcare, housing, recreation and education to residents and families, black and white alike, in an under-resourced corner of a rural state. Time passed, the textile industry faltered, the mill closed, and The Joanna Foundation went dormant, holding assets of little to no value. Fast forward to 1988 – adult children of the Regnery family who had relocated to the Charleston area learned that a trust established by a grandparent had reached maturity and would make a distribution that could be directed to a charitable organization. Thus, The Joanna Foundation was revived to benefit communities in the greater Charleston area comprising Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties as well as the communities of its origin, Joanna and Newberry, SC. The trustees considered a spectrum of options and decided to manage for long-term sustainability so that The Joanna Foundation could become a reliable, permanent resource in a community and state that at the time could be described as a philanthropic doughnut hole. During 28 years of thoughtful grant-making, The Joanna Foundation has made grants totaling more than \$4.4 million to 313 distinct organizations and projects in the Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester, Joanna and Newberry communities. With a current corpus of about \$4 million, the Foundation has given away the proverbial cake and kept stewardship of the recipe and ingredients to keep on baking. Now the Foundation is bringing along the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of stewards who believe that long-term community change is possible when everyone collaborates and a little boost can create a burst of momentum for forward movement. The [Joanna Foundation website](#) features photos of recent grantees on a rotating basis.