

## NCCFF Summer Internship Reconnects Luke Partsch to His Hometown



While growing up in Nebraska City, Luke Partsch formed a deep connection with his community. Since graduating from high school in 2020 and moving on to start his educational journey at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, it became clear to him that he didn't want to lose this special link with his hometown.

Accepting a summer internship with his hometown non-profit, the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF), seemed the perfect way to keep this connection strong as well as productive. Luke wanted to be an NCCFF intern so he could give more back to Nebraska City. "Being in Lincoln this past year has distanced me from the activities I did while in high school to keep me involved." He is pleased that his internship has thrown him right back into the thick of things in his hometown.

As an NCCFF summer intern, Luke is one of 19 college students from across Nebraska who have returned to their hometowns in conjunction with the Nebraska Community Foundation's Hometown Internship program. His summer position with NCCFF is partially funded by the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) in Lincoln. Like the other interns, Luke's goal is to help strengthen the community that raised him.

Two NCCFF Advisory Committee members, Carol Crook, a nature tour guide at the Tree Adventure, and Denise Davis, a librarian at the Morton-James Public Library, are supervising Luke's work.

"NCCFF is fortunate to have another Hometown Intern this summer," Davis said. Both of Luke's supervisors agree it is invigorating to work with a young person who is enthusiastic about his hometown. "It is always energizing to collaborate across generations around a shared passion."



The son of David and Tammy Partsch, Luke attended Lourdes Central Catholic School. Involvement with NCCFF has been a family affair for Luke. "My parents were involved with the Foundation in the past," he said. "They set that example for me a while ago, so I want to continue that."

While in high school, Luke took up this NCCFF family tradition by becoming a leader in NCCFF's Youth Advisory Council, or YAC, which involves students from both Nebraska City high schools who brainstorm for ways to "invest in the people" of their hometown. Like many activities during the recent pandemic, YAC meetings were suspended and interest waned.

"YAC needs to be revitalized," Luke said. He sees his internship as a good opportunity to bring new life to this community youth organization. Through YAC, he hopes to work with local high school students on ways to help this community. He would like to see them develop a sustainable program to welcome newcomers to Nebraska City.

"Luke was involved with YAC while in high school, and it is great to see him rally new interest in YAC among local youth this summer," Davis said.

While in high school, Luke's favorite activities were participating in musicals and speech contests. These skills will lend themselves nicely to another major summer internship goal. Luke will be planning, promoting and inviting everyone in Nebraska City to NCF's "The Dream Switch Project." This hometown-

oriented musical production will be performed in Nebraska City on Sunday, Aug. 29th. It is an original community concert event featuring live music, performed by Nebraska's own rising star, Andrea von Kampen. Set to a pop-folk blend, *The Dream Switch* explores sense of place, belonging and the joy of blooming where you're planted.

When Luke's internship concludes in the fall, he hopes to have achieved his own personal goal. "I hope to gain new insight into what makes this a strong community and what can make it even stronger," Luke said.

Launched in 2020, NCF's Hometown Internship program is attracting ambitious young Nebraskans to return to their hometowns for the summer and further the work and mission of their local Nebraska Community Foundation affiliated fund. This program is helping young people feel more connected to their hometowns, hone job relevant skills and network with adults and job creators in the area. Importantly, it's allowing them to envision a bright future right in their own hometown.

Founded in 2000, the Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund focuses on investing in the people of Nebraska City, which the Foundation considers its most important asset. NCCFF has raised and granted over \$6,000,000 to improve the quality of life for all generations in Nebraska City. This includes supporting youth, providing scholarships for non-traditional students, developing future leaders, assisting families and enabling donors to give back so the community can look forward. New and progressive ideas for growing and improving Nebraska City are always welcome.