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The National Center for Family Philanthropy
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“Profiles in Family Philanthropy”

In August, Profiles in Family & Philanthropy features the Claude W. and Dolly Ahrens Foundation of Grinnell, Iowa. The foundation was established in 1993 by the late Claude W. Ahrens. Mr. Ahrens enjoyed a long, successful business career in the playground and agricultural manufacturing fields and desired to return some of the fruits of his labor, with a focus on his special interest in parks and recreation.

In a speech to the National Recreation and Parks Association in the fall of 1993, Claude W. Ahrens encapsulated his philanthropic philosophy by telling the assembled crowd that “...our obligation in life is to leave the world a better place than we found it.” It is a philosophy that resonated with the foundation and its board today, which in addition to its other grantmaking activities, gives out the “Leave It Better” Awards to local individuals and community organizations that exhibit a commitment to this credo. Since the awards were first created in 1994, more than 300 individuals and groups have been honored for their efforts.