

Karen A. Simmons, President/CEO

Chester County Community Foundation

Since 2001, Karen A. Simmons has led the Chester County Community Foundation. In her capacity as President/CEO, she "connects people who care with causes that matter, so their legacies make a difference, now and forever." The Community Foundation works with families to establish endowed legacy funds, and helps focus each family's philanthropic vision, values and goals. The Community Foundation increases each family's understanding of community issues, and assesses nonprofits to ascertain the best beneficiaries of the family's grants. As fiduciary agent, the Community Foundation handles the investments, finance, reporting and legal issues related to endowed legacy philanthropy.

Prior to joining the Community Foundation, Simmons served for 15 years at LaSalle University's Nonprofit Center in Philadelphia. As Executive Director she orchestrated capacity building programs serving Greater Philadelphia nonprofit CEOs and Boards. In addition to her managerial, fiscal, programmatic and resource development responsibilities, Simmons provided training and consulting to Philadelphia nonprofits in the areas of strategic planning, resource development, board development, and impact evaluation. Under her leadership at LaSalle, the Nonprofit Center grew from a single program with a \$75,000 annual budget to a diversified array of nationally recognized programs with a \$1.3 million annual operating budget.

Simmons came to nonprofit world through the arts. During the 1980s, Simmons served as a program associate and then Board member with the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, and she managed Dance Conduit, a Philadelphia-based modern dance company. She also worked in NYC in fundraising and touring programming with the Jose Limon Dance Company and the New York City Ballet's School of American Ballet at the Juilliard School. Prior to this, she worked in marketing and fundraising at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and programming/touring with the SUNY Programs in the Arts.

Simmons served as a founding Board member of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management in Washington D.C. which formed as a result of a merger of three national organizations. In addition, she has served on grant allocation panels for the Aspen Institute, William Penn Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts, among others. She assisted in organizing the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations affinity group, helping grantmakers nationally to better understand how to evaluate effective charitable management and governance practices. In 1998, Simmons was recognized as one of fifty of the nonprofit sector's most influential leaders by the Nonprofit Times.

Simmons earned her B.S. at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York and her M.Ed. at Temple University in Philadelphia. She resides in Kennett Square, PA.