

The Donna Nigh Foundation

Transferring a private foundation allows couple to focus on grants

Every cause needs a champion. For the developmentally disabled citizens of Oklahoma, that champion is Donna Nigh.

For more than 40 years, Mrs. Nigh has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for the developmentally disabled. Her husband, former Oklahoma governor George Nigh, is her biggest advocate. During his second term, she used her status as the state's first lady to encourage the passage of legislation that modified zoning laws in order to allow group homes in neighborhoods and to increase the number of shelter workshops such as the Dale Rogers Training Center in Oklahoma City.

In 1985, a group of friends created the Donna Nigh Foundation, the first statewide foundation for the benefit of the developmentally disabled. The Nighs transferred the assets of the private foundation to the Oklahoma City Community Foundation in 1997 and remain very active in the distribution of grants that provide adaptations, classroom equipment and other types of aids for the benefit of the developmentally disabled.

In 2013, the Donna Nigh Foundation awarded a grant to the Dale Rogers Training Center to support the installation of a crosswalk to allow clients to safely cross Utah Street to access a new 11,000-square-foot training and skills development building. The sidewalk is considered the safest available with features such as in-ground amber LED lights, pedestrian signage, audible sounds and automatic pedestrian detection.



Left: Dale Rogers Training Center clients cross Utah Avenue utilizing one of the safest crosswalks in the country. A grant from the Donna Nigh Foundation helped to fund the construction of the crosswalk.

Below: Donna and George Nigh are joined at the crosswalk by Connie Thrash McGoodwin, executive director of Dale Rogers Training Center, and several clients of the center.

Photo by Brandon Snider

