



# THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

## History of the Foundation and its Headquarters

→ **2012:** Kresge restores and opens a 2,500-square-foot office and convening space in Detroit's Midtown district.

→ **2015:** A 16,000-square-foot addition to the Troy headquarters is dedicated, providing room to accommodate the Foundation's growing vision and staff.

by an 1850s-era farmhouse and barn on the site of the former 300-acre Brooks Dairy Farm outside Detroit. Nestled incongruously in the shadow of towering commercial office buildings in Troy, Mich., and ringed by wetlands and native prairie plants, the renovated 3-acre site now includes 44,000 square feet of modern office space integrated with the original farmhouse. A restored barn – purchased from the city of Troy for \$10 as a preservation project – was moved to the site in the early 1980s. The site's signature infrastructure – a pair of vintage windmills – still spin in gentle breezes and are the best way to spot the Foundation's campus from Big Beaver Road.

The campus is outfitted with an array of energy-efficient, water-conserving and health-promoting systems including geothermal heating and cooling, daylight-harvesting windows, rooftop solar panels, living green plant walls and pervious pavement to capture runoff stormwater. LEED-Platinum certification earned in 2008 put Kresge at the cutting edge of sustainable building design, and allowed the building to become a template for other environmental development projects in the Midwest and across the country.

A 16,000-square-foot addition completed in 2015 created a modern convening space, offices for a growing staff and an on-site cafeteria affectionately named "Sebastian's." The entire campus, including its workplace environment is designed to promote health and productivity, and to showcase the Foundation's commitment to collaboration, sustainability and healthy workplaces.

### IN DETROIT

In 2012, Kresge physically joined the revival of the city's Midtown district by fully renovating 2,500-square feet of office space in the Historic Woodward Gardens Block building. The workspace is a base for Kresge's Detroit Program team and provides convening space for partners and grantees working together to reinvigorate all sectors of the city from its perimeter, iconic neighborhoods to the centrally located Woodward Corridor.



3215 W. Big Beaver Road  
Troy, Mich. 48084  
248-643-9630

[kresge.org](http://kresge.org)

# KRESGE HEADQUARTERS: A Timeline



**1924:** The Kresge Foundation is created with a \$1.6 million gift from S.S. Kresge. It is headquartered in the Albert Kahn-designed S.S. Kresge Building (now the Kales Building) on West Adams Avenue across from Grand Circus Park in Detroit. Despite sharing the building, the two organizations are separate entities.



**1930 - 1982:** When the retail company requires a larger international headquarters, Mr. Kresge again enlists architect Kahn to build a new building on Cass Park. The Foundation offices move with the company. In 1965, the Foundation moves to a series of rented facilities in Detroit, Birmingham and Troy over the next 19 years.

Son Stanley Kresge is pictured in 1973 with a Michigan Historic Site plaque near the Foundation's temporary Troy headquarters.



**1982:** The Foundation purchases an 1850s-era farmhouse and barn that once were part of the thriving 300-acre Brooks Dairy Farm in Troy, Mich. Detroit architect William Kessler restores the original buildings and constructs the first modern structure on the grounds.



**1984:** The Foundation moves into its new 10,000 square-foot, glass-enclosed U-shaped headquarters.



**2006:** An ecologically-friendly facility is dedicated, replacing the 1984 office space. The new offices achieve the highest green certification possible – LEED Platinum – and become a model for architects and builders across the country.



## With a simple but profound directive, “To promote the well-being of mankind,” The Kresge Foundation was created in 1924 with a \$1.6 million gift from Detroit businessman Sebastian Sprig Kresge.

Just 25 years earlier, the eastern Pennsylvania native traded his partnership in a Memphis retail outlet for full ownership of a five- and ten-cent store in downtown Detroit, and subsequently incorporated the business into the S.S. Kresge Company. With swift expansion through the Midwest and across the nation over the next half century, the S.S. Kresge Co. would many years later become the iconic American department store chain, Kmart Corp. (Although located in the same building until 1965, The Kresge Foundation was and remains a separate entity from S.S. Kresge Co. and its successor, Kmart Corp.)

The success of the new dime-store concept, offering household goods at reasonable prices, allowed Mr. Kresge to direct much of his profits into charitable philanthropy. By the time of his death at age 99 in 1966, Mr. Kresge had generously donated personal gifts to the Foundation in excess of \$60 million.

For almost a century, Mr. Kresge's gifts to the Foundation have grown exponentially in resources, scope and impact. Today, The Kresge Foundation is a multi-billion dollar national philanthropy. But its mission, to promote human progress, remains as central to the organization as it was in 1924.

## EARLY DAYS

Early grants from the Foundation were awarded to churches and special youth and temperance programs as a reflection of its founder's religious faith and personal beliefs. After World War II, its funding shifted to support the construction and renovation of facilities, equipment and property through challenge grants, which required recipients to raise additional private funds. Across the nation and around the world, Kresge's support is acknowledged as the namesake for hundreds of libraries, hospitals, lecture halls, auditoriums, community recreation centers and summer camp lodges.

The capital challenge grant funding model endured until

2008, when new leadership recalibrated the Foundation's strategy.

## THE FOUNDATION TODAY

Today, The Kresge Foundation is a strategic philanthropy that awards grants and deploys other capital tools to address intractable social and economic issues at their roots. In many cases, the Foundation stitches together multiple support systems while measuring impacts and outcomes in a constant process of adaptation and improvement. As funding of public services wanes across the country, Kresge now invests in networks and collaborations of communities and people, rather than primarily in infrastructure.

Kresge's work has evolved to support organizations working to expand opportunities for low-income people in America's cities. The Foundation awards grants, convenes partners, shares knowledge and helps strengthen the civic sector through six program areas: Arts and Culture, Education, Environment, Health,

Human Services and community development in Detroit. In partnership with the programs, Kresge's Social Investment Practice leverages a range of capital instruments including loans, deposits, guarantees and equity investments to further address social challenges. Meanwhile, Kresge's American Cities Practice exports lessons from its role in Detroit's burgeoning recovery to partners working in other U.S. cities.

Since its inception, at least one S.S. Kresge descendant has continually represented the family on the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

As the organization's grantmaking philosophy has evolved, so has its home base.

Mr. Kresge enlisted architect Albert Kahn to design and build two successive S.S. Kresge Company headquarters buildings in Detroit in 1914 and in 1930. The Foundation worked from offices in the company's buildings until the 1960s, then from a series of rented facilities until 1984. That year, the Foundation moved to its current campus anchored