Philanthropy is nothing new to Jeannine Kennedy. Her mother donates to the Community Foundation of Acadiana in her native southern Louisiana. Son Stuart Kennedy spent 10 years working for foundations in Florida. Jeannine became a community donor in the last five years and recently created the Jeannine Brown Kennedy Fund for general charitable purposes in the El Paso Community Foundation. “It’s a perfect fit because I believe in El Paso,” she said.

Jeannine wants the fund to contribute to the quality of life of the city she has come to love. She has lived here with husband Thomas H. Kennedy, an executive with Rocky Mountain Mortgage, for 27 years, “longer than anywhere else I’ve lived,” she said. The Kennedys met in Austin, where they attended the University of Texas, and where daughter Katharine Kennedy is a veterinarian. Jeannine taught elementary school in Round Rock for seven years before the Kennedys moved to El Paso.

The Jeannine Brown Kennedy Fund is the latest in a long list of ways she is addressing the needs of this growing community. A former El Paso elementary school teacher and University of Texas at El Paso grant administrator, Jeannine has a long history of community volunteerism. It was her two years as executive director of Trinity-First United Methodist Church’s Kelly Memorial Food Pantry that really opened her eyes to the needs of El Paso’s nonprofit organizations. “Community volunteerism has helped me to understand the needs of some of our nonprofits, such as food pantries,” she said.

Jeannine and Tom are big supporters of the arts, too. They attend numerous cultural events in the area, including the El Paso Community Foundation’s annual Plaza Classic Film Festival. They are longtime patrons of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, have donated to the El Paso Museum of Art Foundation, and commissioned El Paso artist Sabina to create a tile and glass mosaic for their home.

Jeannine Kennedy’s Great Gift to El Paso is her love of her adoptive hometown and her generous donation of time and money to making it better. “My thing is quality of life. I truly believe that’s the key to having a vibrant city, which is why I created this fund,” Jeannine said. “The El Paso Community Foundation understands this concept and is doing such good work supporting quality-of-life programs that make our city a great place to live, work, and explore.”