My journey to Bellevue LifeSpring started when a good friend of mine invited me to my first Bellevue LifeSpring Luncheon 10 years ago. I thought I was just going to lunch to catch up with friends but instead, I was moved by what I heard and was greatly impacted. During the luncheon, I learned that there are thousands of children within our Bellevue Schools living at the poverty line, that need help with the most basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. At that moment I decided it was important for my family and I to get involved with such a great organization that was helping families right here in Bellevue.

What intrigued me most about the organization was that it is located we volunteered in any way we could with programs like “Break Time MealTime” and “Adopt-a-Family” over the holidays. Our real estate company became table sponsors and our brokers attended all of the events. A few years into the organization, I was asked to join the advisory board, then the Board of Directors, then the Executive Board, and last July, after nine years of service, I was appointed President and Chairman for the next two years. So lessons learned, you better watch out, a free lunch could change your life!

What is Bellevue Lifespring? We are a non-profit organization founded over 100 years ago by a group of women living in the Hunts Point community who gathered together to help their neighbors in need.
In the early 1950s they were serving 200 people a year and today, we have grown to now serve over 15,000 people a year! Today our focus is serving children living within the Bellevue School District boundaries and providing them with adequate food, clothing, education and emergency assistance to ensure their success. Bellevue Lifespring is local, we are Bellevue.

My favorite part of Bellevue Lifespring? Our nine Neighborhood Circle groups throughout the city. These groups meet monthly, just like they have for the past 100 years, fundraising, assisting neighbors and volunteering their time to help those less fortunate in the Bellevue community. A lot of their volunteer hours are dedicated weekly to our Thrift Shop which opened in 1939 and remains a big part of who we are today.

In 1947, Kemper Freeman Sr. got involved with Bellevue Lifespring and ensured the Thrift Shop would always have a home at Kemper Development Company and guaranteed our rent at $1 per year, forever! This same $1 rent continues today at our current home in Bellevue Square, where we have been since 1981.

Kemper Freeman, Jr. is continuing the Freeman family legacy of supporting Bellevue Lifespring with a new vision for Bellevue Lifespring. In July, we will finally have our Thrift Shop and administrative offices all together for the first time in one large flagship location on the third floor of Bellevue Square. The Freeman family is not just providing Bellevue Lifespring with a bigger space, but the Freeman family has insured it will be completed with brand new tenant improvements, a project valued at close to $500,000 (thank you Freeman family)!

Now, through the generosity of the local businesses who answered Kemper’s call to donate, or drastically reduce their fees to help with all of the tenant improvements, Bellevue Lifespring’s dream is becoming a reality this summer and we are honored to be a part of the Freeman family legacy and their commitment to Bellevue and Bellevue Lifespring.