



# "Giving" Advice



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## ABOUT YOUR FOUNDATION

Since 1973, the **Toledo Community Foundation** has provided individuals, families and businesses interested in the well-being of our community with an *efficient, effective, low-cost, professionally managed* mechanism to achieve their charitable goals.

For philanthropists wishing to maximize the impact and life of their charitable gifts, the Foundation provides *resources for thoughtful giving*. Using its expertise and personalized services, **Toledo Community Foundation** helps donors transform their philanthropic impulse to measurable

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## Small Gifts, Big Results

Philanthropy news is often dominated by gifts of astonishing size, such as Bill Gates's pledge of \$40 billion to charity and this summer's anonymous \$50 million donation to Dartmouth College. Yet it is small amounts from millions of donors that support the bulk of charitable works: Some 89 percent of U.S. households give annually, with an average donation size of just \$1,640.

In this economic environment, clients are giving less thought to how much they donate and more to ensuring that their gift has the biggest impact possible. Community foundations know their communities and work a spectrum of charities, so they are ideal partners to help identify effective causes that match a client's wishes.

## Small Giving Can Add Up

Community foundations can help amplify the effect of these smaller donations. "People tend to focus their attention on the size of the gift rather than the act of giving," explains Roman Herrington, executive director of the Community Foundation of East Mississippi.

But putting the spotlight on large gifts may inadvertently convince some that their more modest gifts aren't useful. He recently worked with a donor who felt much the same and coordinated with the foundation on a program to encourage small gifts from others in his community. "He wanted people to see that philanthropy isn't an act of the very wealthy, but an act of making a difference in the place it is most needed." The result was a program called the \$50 Philanthropist, in which the donor pledged to match 100 individual \$50 donations to the foundation.

The response was swift. Not only did the 100 matching gifts roll in, but so many other small gifts came in from the resulting publicity that the donor's \$5,000 gift ended up raising a total of \$24,000. Even more gratifying, says Herrington, is the fact that it drew in many people who never supported public charities before: Of the 300 people who gave, some 225 were new donors through the community foundation.

community impact. Beyond the gifting of assets, the Foundation helps donors identify issues of importance to them and *inspires engagement* with community organizations addressing these issues, thereby maximizing the impact of charitable gifts and creating a greater sense of fulfillment.

The idea has spurred others to do similar types of campaigns. "Individuals are very much interested in cutting through the clutter and seeing that they are making a difference," adds Herrington.

### **Create Big Incentives With Minimal Resources**

For those with a cause close to their hearts, community foundations can craft programs in which a few dollars can have life-changing results. In North Dakota, the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation worked with a couple who wanted to boost children's literacy but, because of time constraints, couldn't develop a program on their own.

The result was the Read to Ride Program, in which elementary school students in Fargo's poorest school were given individual monthly reading goals from their teachers and, if they met them, were rewarded with small gifts such as rulers and pencils and a chance to win a bicycle in monthly drawings.

The students, 80 percent of whom needed government meal aid, responded to the incentive. Of the 200 kindergarten through fifth-grade students in the school, 80 joined the program immediately, growing quickly to 100. The program awarded 68 bikes, helmets, and locks, various recognition gifts to goal-meeting students each month, and every student got a year-end silicone bracelets saying "Read to Ride." The bulk of the students continued the reading program throughout the year. Reading scores are up. The school doubled its after-school reading program.

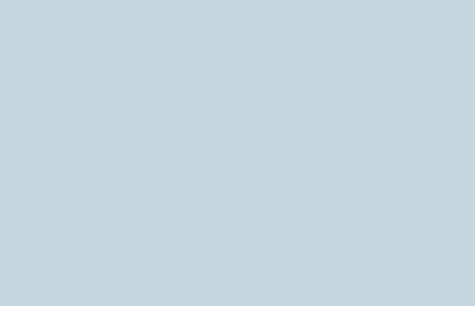
The cost for all this? Less than \$10,000. Just as gratifying, explains Cher Hersrud, advancement officer of the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation, is the fact the donors were able to participate in the monthly drawings and interact with the students in person. "The students were so touched by the fact someone who didn't know them would do this for them that they wrote unprompted thank-you notes."

### **Be Active in Your Community**

For those wishing to start their own organizations, community foundations can be a good place to get some guidance. A group of five women in Aspen, Colorado, were inspired recently to open a food pantry for struggling families. Not knowing how to start, they approached the Aspen Community Foundation for help.

Since community foundations work with a wide variety of charities, executive director Tamara Tormohlen was able to locate another food pantry willing to help the women get their program off the ground. The foundation helped get the food pantry qualified as a nonprofit to buy at the discount charity rate from a regional food distributor and set up a donor advised fund for the pantry, which the women seeded with around \$500 each. Today, that fund is the conduit for accepting and managing the monetary donations to the pantry.

"Many people are looking for ways to meet others' needs with smaller



gifts and voluntarism,” says Aspen’s Tormohlen. “If you have to make a choice about what charities to support, we have the community knowledge to help. And if you want to get involved beyond your check, a community foundation can match you with those organizations doing the same kind of work you are interested in.”

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