

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY PHILANTHROPY PRESENTS



FAMILY GIVING NEWS ENCOURAGING YOUNG PHILANTHROPISTS, PART II

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Last month's Family Giving News tackled the question of how today's giving families encourage children to be generous. This month's issue asks: how can charitable children become effective family philanthropists? How does a family prepare the next generation for possible roles as board members, fund advisors, or philanthropic donors in their own right?

Many family philanthropists feel that charity is something to be expected of the younger generation. But it's possible to raise an incredibly charitable young adult who doesn't seem interested in the grantmaking, management, governance, and family dynamics that characterize modern family philanthropy. Additionally, the demands of school, college, career, or raising a family may leave little time for philanthropic activities. Families face the dual challenge of engaging young people on their own terms and at their own pace.

That's why it's important for families to remain flexible about when and how young people participate in family philanthropy—giving them time to find their own passions, articulate their own values, and act on them in their own ways while giving them opportunities to learn by doing.

Offer opportunities to participate in the work of the philanthropy. Look for discrete tasks that young people can take on. For example, bring them along on site visits, pointing out the hows and whys of the fund's and the grantee's work and impact.

"Site visits are our favorite thing because then you really see what you're doing," says Sarah Miller, member and former chair of the adjunct board of the RGK Foundation in Austin, Texas. "You're not just giving money to someone. Because we're doing this, these 100 children are being taken care of. I think that makes a big difference when you see what the philanthropy is doing."

A web-savvy teen could help with or even build the fund's web site. Others might conduct Internet research on potential grantees in preparation for an upcoming board meeting, or chronicle the family's history and accomplishments through recorded interviews with family members.

Create a dinner-table foundation. To more accurately model the group dynamics and

Previously in *Family Giving News...*

December's issue of *Family Giving News* featured Part I of "[Encouraging Young Philanthropists](#)," exploring how today's giving families encourage children to be generous.

decisionmaking young philanthropists will encounter as board members and fund advisors—as well as have quite a bit of fun—consider creating what National Center Vice President Susan Price calls “a dinner table foundation” in her book *The Giving Family* (Council on Foundations, 2005).

Family members gather at a specified time around the dinner table, turn the TV off, let the answering machine grab the phone, and get down to the business of grantmaking.

Price suggests deciding in advance how much the family will give to charity, and posting the amount you plan to allocate to charity at the top of an easel or large pad. List the preferences of each of the family members gathered, and vote on which organizations to fund and in what amounts.

Carol Weisman, President of Board Builders and author of *Raising Charitable Children* (F. E. Robbins and Sons, 2006), suggests something called a “Joy and Sadness” meeting. Ask family members what made them happy in, say, the past year. Ask about what happened that made them sad. Finally, discuss what they might do so that others might share in the joy, and be spared the sadness.

Create a next generation board. A sort of “fund within a fund,” a next-generation board meets periodically to recommend grants to the governing board. Foundations and funds give these committees a fixed portion or percentage of the year’s grant budget for the purpose, and young people go to work researching nonprofits, making group decisions, and recommending, monitoring, and evaluating grants.

“At the time our children began to reach young adulthood, we began our adjunct board,” says Cindy Kozmetsky, a board member of the RGK Foundation and Miller’s mother. “A privilege of being on that board is the opportunity to serve on the grantmaking committee or the finance committee of the main board. They absolutely get into the whole process.”

Such boards are typically for next-generation family members who are teens or young adults, but some families have seen success with even very young children.

The Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation’s “Little Foxies” recently welcomed an eight-year-old family member to the next generation board.

“If you get the kids involved in what they’re interested in, instead of telling them what they have to do, you will get their participation and you will find that you get to places you never thought you’d be,” says Dana Marcus, Executive Director of the Fox Family Foundation.

Explore grantmaking with other organizations. A number of organizations, such as community foundations and high schools, are offering youth grantmaking opportunities.

Kozmetsky points to the world of giving circles. The Women’s Fund of Central Texas, of which Kozmetsky is a member, recently created a program whereby the daughters of members could participate in the circle’s grantmaking.

“Going through the grant process, making those decisions, deciding what the criteria are--the only way you’re going to learn it is to get into some kind of organized philanthropic situation, a foundation or a giving circle,” she says.

(For more information on these types of opportunities, see the resources section.)

Encourage peer learning opportunities. While they are learning by doing, encourage your younger generation to pause and reflect on their experiences and share them with others.

Persuade young family members to attend and even present at conferences and other peer learning opportunities. Whether it's through organizations like Resource Generation, your community foundation or regional association, or simply in conversations with friends, such reflection will further their philanthropic education.

"It makes you sit back and think about it," Miller says. "It puts you in situations where as you're trying to teach people what you do, you're also learning from other people who've also done it."

Some families even include young people outside the family in their grantmaking. The Fox Family Foundation, for example, allows the children of staff members to join the "Little Foxies" next-generation group. Your foundation or fund could also consider funding a youth grantmaking committee at a local community foundation or high school to help other young people learn about philanthropy.

Resources

From the National Center:

- [Growing to Give: Instilling Philanthropic Values in Teens and Preteens](#)
- [Opportunity of a Lifetime: Young Adults in Family Philanthropy](#)
- [Successful Succession: Inspiring and Welcoming New Generations of Charitable Leaders](#)