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Statue of L. William Seidman, a prominent business leader in Grand Rapids, Mich., former chair of the F.D.I.C. during the savings and loan crisis, and one of the principal founders of Grand Valley State University.

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Editorial

Dear readers,

This issue of *The Foundation Review* tackles the persistent, complicated, and often difficult topic of “donor intent and legacy.” This has been a focus of my work as the Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy for the past couple years, including intensive discussions at the 2017 National Summit on Family Philanthropy about how family donors can honor intent and steward legacy *while also* maximizing impact in today’s world. The original research reported in this special issue offers further keen insights and practical lessons on this perennial philanthropic challenge.

The complexities of donor intent and legacy touch all aspects of philanthropy — from writing mission statements, to devising strategy, to making grant decisions, to evaluating impact. Intent *and* legacy both enable and constrain grantmaking practice; they can be the source of inspiration *and* frustration. Navigating the complicated issues around donor intent and legacy means confronting many of the core questions of effective giving — questions about power, transparency, collaboration, expertise, loyalty, and the engagement of diverse voices.

The three articles on family foundation initiatives, and one book review, contained in the special section of this issue touch on this range of complicated issues. The first, by **Baker, Cox, Chopus, and McGinty**, gives a remarkably candid and reflective account of the lessons learned by the Robins Foundation in Richmond, Virginia, from an ambitious initiative to “prepare young children in a low-resourced neighborhood for kindergarten.” The analysis describes the Foundation’s intent in creating the project, reviews unexpected challenges that arose (especially in the funder-grantee partnership), and ends with three practical recommendations for how to structure such partnerships to avoid “unplanned” legacies from “big bet” initiatives.

Chernoff and Chaudhry offer an equally candid case study of the Leeway Foundation’s 25-year transition, explaining how the organization has remained true to the founder’s vision while fundamentally transforming its approach to funding women artists in Philadelphia to better incorporate concerns of social and racial justice, gender equity, and trans affirmation. The Leeway story shows how such organizational transformations, while “messy,” can be informed by close engagement with external partners (like with the Robins case in the previous article) and can actually help clarify the original donor’s vision over time.

The **Medinger and Brodsky** article offers exceedingly practical tips for a common legacy initiative of family foundations: creating a family and donor legacy video. The authors detail the benefits of video storytelling, and offer compelling evidence from one family foundation of how the creation of

Michael Moody, Ph.D.

a legacy video actually ignited greater multigenerational engagement in the foundation. We see in this article how donor intent and legacy can be dynamic and inspiring to grantmakers, if captured and utilized in effective ways.

Finally, veteran consultant and family foundation trustee Ashley **Blanchard** offers a thoughtful review of the second edition of a book many consider a “classic” resource for family foundations. Blanchard describes how *Splendid Legacy 2* continues to be an indispensable resource for families, especially as they face tough decisions about how to best institutionalize their goals and insure their own “splendid legacy.”

In addition to the special section, this issue of the *Review* also includes two other fascinating and widely useful articles. The first, by Carla **Roberts**, describes a multi-year strategic transformation of the Fremont Area Community Foundation in Michigan. While focused on a community foundation rather than a family foundation, challenges related to implementing “donor intent and legacy” surface in this case study as well. Roberts describes similar efforts to balance a core commitment to improving the quality of life in the community — a mission that has guided the foundation since its founding — with efforts to refine grantmaking priorities for greater impact. She also offers lessons on how to manage this goal-oriented transformation in close dialogue with grant partners.

The second article, by **Myrick, Powell, and Bain**, is based on a large survey of grant managers and other key staff from a diversity of grantmakers. The survey investigated how values influenced the foundations’ practices, and how this values-practices link can be made most effectively, for the benefit of both “grantmakers and grant seekers alike.” Of course, in many grantmaking organizations values emerge from, or are closely tied to donor intent and legacy. And this thorough article shows how those core values show up — should influence — all aspects of any grantmaker’s work.

I hope all of the articles in this issue shed new and helpful light on the challenges raised by the ever-present issue of donor intent and legacy — an issue that touches all aspects of grantmaking, and always seems to be part of the philanthropic conversation.

Michael Moody, Ph.D., Guest Editor

Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy

Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University

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The Foundation Review is published quarterly by the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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From Charitable Giving to Strategic Impact: The Fremont Area Community Foundation

Carla A. Roberts, M.F.A., Fremont Area Community Foundation

Keywords: Strategic philanthropy, theory of change, community engagement, resident engagement; strategic planning; strategic framework; technology of participation; evidence-based outcomes; outcome measurement

Introduction

The Fremont Area Community Foundation primarily serves rural Newaygo County in Western Michigan. With a population under 50,000 and an economy based largely on agriculture, food processing, and tourism, the county is a place of contrasts and contradictions. Newaygo is home to beautiful rivers and lakes, lush forests — and also to rural blight and to small towns that have been losing local businesses for two decades.

Newaygo County is also a place where many have enjoyed success and created wealth. Perhaps the best historical example of its entrepreneurial spirit is Gerber Products Co., now a subsidiary of Nestlé Global. Gerber's hallmark product, baby food, was created when Dan and Dorothy Gerber's infant daughter needed special strained foods recommended by her pediatrician. After initially straining fruits and vegetables at home, the Gerbers concluded it could be done more easily at their local business, the Fremont Canning Co. As community demand for the baby food grew, the Gerber brand was born.

In the process of building a company, the founders created significant family wealth and an engine for community prosperity. Local farmers grew crops for the brand and new companies were created to supply the Gerber plant's needs. Other service providers and retailers emerged and took root. The individuals who found success — even modest success — started what became a rich tradition of community philanthropy dating back to the Great Depression.

The story of the Fremont Area Community Foundation began in 1933, with the generosity of two visionary philanthropists: A gift of \$5,700

Key Points

- In 2011, the Fremont Area Community Foundation launched a community investment strategy, focused on education, poverty, and economic development, that shaped corresponding aspirational goals aimed at improving the quality of life for residents of rural Newaygo County, Mich.
- While there had been significant community involvement and input into foundation planning for a number of years, the announcement of these strategic goals and their implementation created some apprehension among the local nonprofits. The new funding paradigms were a big change, and it took several years for many of the grantees, with assistance in the form of backbone services and tools to monitor impact, to make the transition to new ways of thinking about their work.
- As the foundation moves ahead with its second five-year strategic plan, it is being guided through a continued process of change by research and learning, community feedback, results from key grantee surveys, and evidence of where the work has contributed to positive outcomes for the population it serves.

from the estate of Harry Williams established a fund to support the general well-being of Newaygo County, and a bequest of \$31,000 from J. Andrew Gerber was dedicated to the benefit of the “worthy poor” and “charity patients.” Mattie Gerber added to her husband's endowment in 1944 and, in 1951, Fremont attorney William J. Branstrom consolidated the Williams and Gerber funds with his own contributions to create the

Since inception, the Fremont Area Community Foundation has granted millions of dollars each year to local organizations and programs. While much of this came through grants in response to community needs, the availability of funds relative to the population base also enabled strategic investments. The most notable of those investments was the 1995 launch of broadband capability. The foundation's \$1.9 million investment leveraged other funding partners to provide the first internet access for schools and public offices.

Fremont Foundation. In 1972, the foundation reorganized as a public community foundation and was established with \$10 million in assets. What began with relatively modest charitable contributions is now one of the largest community foundations per capita in the U.S. While charitable giving and bequests have fueled that growth, the primary impetus has been the power of endowment. Given Newaygo County's relatively small population base of under 50,000, gifts from local donors do not keep pace with community foundations of similar size. The foundation's philanthropy has grown to significance primarily through good stewardship of its investments.

Since inception, the Fremont Area Community Foundation has granted millions of dollars each year to local organizations and programs. While

much of this came through grants in response to community needs, the availability of funds relative to the population base also enabled strategic investments. The most notable of those investments was the 1995 launch of broadband capability. The foundation's \$1.9 million investment leveraged other funding partners to provide the first internet access for schools and public offices. While this capability was far ahead of other rural areas, the local economy nonetheless declined, along with the rest of the state, in the early years of the new century. A national recession triggered by the collapse of the dot-com bubble and exacerbated by the 9/11 terrorist attacks continued its drag on Michigan's economy even as other states began to recover.

As early as 2003, the foundation began to plan how philanthropic interventions could make life better for the residents of Newaygo County. Through surveys and focus groups involving community and nonprofit leaders, the foundation identified three areas for action: social wellness, environment, and economics/job development. But the onset of the Great Recession in 2007 prevented implementation of those plans. The area was not to see significant evidence of economic recovery until around 2015, and Newaygo County was hit hard: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2009 unemployment peaked at 15.1 percent. U.S. Census Bureau data indicated that in 2010 the poverty rate was 19.8 percent; and educational attainment was stagnant with less than 23 percent of the population holding an associate degree or higher. For the foundation, these demographic indicators were the impetus for a bold strategic journey. In 2011, the foundation started on a path toward major changes in grantmaking strategies that had a significant impact on the way the foundation functions and on its relationships with grantees — and, ultimately, on local systems and networks.

The Pivot Point

The foundation had weathered the Great Recession with minimal disruption to grantmaking. The asset base began to recover, but the foundation remained heavily focused on basic human services. Libby Cherin, the

foundation's CEO for almost 17 years, had planted the seeds for strategic change both through the community planning process that started in 2003 and deep trustee engagement with experience economy concepts. The experience economy concepts of Pine and Gilmore (1998) challenge modern companies with the necessity to create memorable experiences for their customers rather than just deliver a product or service.

When Cherin announced her retirement, a national search was launched for her replacement — a bold step for a rural foundation in a tight-knit community — and I was hired as the new CEO. While not local, I was able to bring significant rural experience to the foundation and, together with the board and staff, we began to lay the groundwork for the future. We began to research what our foundation had funded in the past and what had been successful, and to look at other models and solutions that could be adapted to our communities. A planning retreat with trustees and staff in September 2011 produced a strategic framework for 2012 through 2016 that was built upon community surveys, focus groups, and the planning that started in 2003. At the retreat, the foundation was introduced to a facilitation process called the Technology of Participation (ToP), whose methods, developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs, have been deployed internationally as a consensus-based approach to community development. ToP facilitators led the full staff and board through the process, which produced the strategic framework for 2012–2016. To best prepare for working through the details with community partners, in June 2013 the entire staff was trained first in experience economy marketing concepts and then in the ToP consensus approach. But the journey was not linear, and we continued to refine and hone the framework by working alongside grantee partners and community leaders.

A Lumina Foundation learning session attended by the CEO and board chair at the Council of Foundations 2011 fall conference inspired a new effort in support of local education. In November 2011, we became the first community foundation to embrace Lumina Foundation's Goal 2025, focused on 60 percent postsecondary

One trustee asked, “How can we take on a goal that is probably impossible to achieve within that time frame?” But others understood the power of a goal that would address a community need – a level of education necessary to maintain a vibrant economy. We believed that responding to that need was more important than focusing on where we could claim success. We knew that if we moved postsecondary achievement forward at all, it would be an important milestone for our community. More importantly, if we could change the local mindset to one that valued education, the effort would gain momentum.

achievement by the year 2025. This was a stretch for a county with only 23.1 percent of the population holding at an associate degree or above in 2011. Our definition of postsecondary achievement includes traditional degree granting institutions starting with the associate degree, but also apprenticeship and certificate programs that result in a work credential. The foundation's board was both excited by the notion of a concrete goal and daunted by the task at hand. One trustee asked, “How can we take on a goal that is probably impossible to achieve within that time frame?” But others understood the power

of a goal that would address a community need — a level of education necessary to maintain a vibrant economy. We believed that responding to that need was more important than focusing on where we could claim success. We knew that if we moved postsecondary achievement forward at all, it would be an important milestone for our community. More importantly, if we could change the local mindset to one that valued education, the effort would gain momentum.

Our goal for education was the first to be firmly established at the foundation. Each goal that followed was formed after another period of research and learning.

Research and Learning

The 2011 strategic framework contained a new vision for the future, based on five forward-thinking goals:

- A nonprofit sector working towards positive, evidence-based outcomes;
- A continuum of effective educational systems;
- A sustainable local economy;
- Preservation and promotion of our natural resources; and
- Shifting from poverty to empowerment through revitalized community values and connections.

To implement the framework, we conducted both internal and external research. In the first two years, we funded three graduate fellows from the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development at Illinois State University, who examined what the foundation had been funding in three key areas: education, poverty, and economic development. The research included both our historical approaches to grantmaking and their impact, and discussions with our grantee partners about their work. The fellows also looked into effective models and approaches across the country. This

research phase became the basis for a shift in our grantmaking strategy.

Another approach during this early phase was to lift up and enhance the work of the Newaygo County Community Collaborative (NC3), a forum for collective impact. The foundation brought the collaborative in-house, where we could provide more administrative support. A part-time coordinator was hired in June 2012 and the NC3 began to organize subsets of social service and government agencies around specific social problems and to introduce the agencies to the principles of collective impact. The work of the NC3 has been a tremendous supporting effort, through which local nonprofits are engaged collaboratively with other agencies that share or overlap with the primary service population that is their focus.

This effort to address the goal of a nonprofit sector working toward evidence-based outcomes was enhanced by a significant program of training and technical assistance led primarily by the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University; work began in 2012 and continues. Several workshop series have been offered, as well as individual organizational technical assistance sessions designed to build the capacity of grantees. These efforts have been coupled with opportunities for grantee partners to learn about new approaches and models through training programs and site visits.

Research and learning launched the change process for trustees and staff and for the foundation's partner agencies. As different phases of this strategic change have unfolded, such learning is expected to continue as evaluation components are more fully implemented.

Phase One: Early-Stage Implementation

Our work is accomplished through community investment — a term that refers not only to grant dollars, but to all of the resources we engage. We invest in building nonprofit partners through training and technical assistance. Our staff invests in the community through

FIGURE 1 Community Investment Strategy

in-kind donations of time and talent. We also invest in research, building public awareness, and advocacy. Our trustees' vision ultimately led us to a community investment strategy that consolidated the five focus areas identified in the 2011 strategic framework into three big goals — Education, Poverty to Prosperity, and Community and Economic Development, each with a specific target:

1. Increase the proportion of local residents who hold college degrees, credentials, or certificates to 60 percent.
2. Reduce the local poverty rate to at or below the national average.
3. Maintain the local unemployment rate at or below the national average.

We refer to these three big goals as our aspirational or decade goals, because we know that they are not easily achieved and will require sustained focus over the next 10 to 20 years. (See Figure 1.) Some, in fact, may not be fully achieved, but our trustees view them as the right goals to move us toward our mission. These goals are generational and will ultimately require mindset shifts and systems change.

Committees were created for the three goals and grantmaking frameworks were introduced to grantees in June 2014. The three frameworks identified the targets for intermediate outcomes and suggested the types of projects that would be most competitive for grants. The frameworks led to the identification of key measures of progress toward each goal. (See Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2 Decade Goals and Measures

Community and Economic Development	Poverty to Prosperity	Education
Outcome measures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total employment 2. Labor force participation rate 3. Median income 4. Households above ALICE threshold 	Outcome measures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Households above ALICE threshold 2. Post-high school certificates awarded 3. Total employment 4. Fewer low-birth weight babies 	Outcome measures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindergarten readiness 2. Third-grade reading level 3. Eighth-grade math skills 4. High school graduation rate 5. Post-high school certificates awarded
Outputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of new businesses 2. Number of jobs created 	Outputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of people demonstrating skill development 2. Number of people increasing assets or wealth 3. Number of people reporting increased social capital 	Outputs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance/participation 2. Academic achievement measured by state and standardized assessments

Outcomes: Level of achievement generated in part by grant-funded programs/partners and initiatives; often long term

Outputs: Data generated during the grant-funded year measuring specific accomplishments, such as the number of people served

Making the Case

While there was significant community involvement and input into foundation planning starting as early as 2003, the announcement of these strategic goals created apprehension among the local nonprofits. However, trustees remained committed to community engagement and moving high-level goals forward as the way to make the greatest impact. We have made the case for these goals by clarifying the importance and interconnectedness of the goals:

- For education, 60 percent postsecondary achievement is needed to have the workforce talent to fuel a healthy economy. Without that talent, our key economic drivers — food processing and agriculture — will not be able to grow and prosper.
- Reducing poverty is critical, and the best way out of poverty is a good job with benefits. We must mitigate barriers that can prevent individuals from making the journey out of poverty and into the middle class.

- The unemployment rate in Newaygo County has declined significantly since the Great Recession. We would like to see unemployment remain at or below the national average. But simply having a job is not enough — we must also focus on increasing the median income and reducing the number of workers who do not earn enough to meet the basic needs of their families — or those at what the United Way terms the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold.

Working With Partners

For each of the three goals, we worked closely with our community partners on implementation. Our staff convened key players to work together on changing how the community gets things done. One example of this is in the area of tourism.

While tourism is a significant economic driver in Newaygo County, it has been a fragmented effort. The foundation addressed this by working with two partner agencies to convene actors in the county's tourism industry, such as the

Newaygo County Convention & Visitors Bureau and local chambers of commerce, to discuss what they could do together to be more effective. These discussions led to the creation of the Newaygo County Tourism Council, which developed a joint marketing campaign. By pooling members' resources and partnering with a printer who had produced an earlier county tourism guide, the council created one central publication; and a new website serves as a one-stop source for information about tourism in the county, including a way for visitors to share their travel stories online.

Unemployment was high when we began this work, but it has steadily declined as the economy continues to improve. The fact that more people are working does not, however, mean that everyone is better off. While the workforce participation rate has improved, the poverty rate is merely inching down. The median annual wage in Newaygo County, \$44,900, remains well below Michigan's, at \$54,700, and the nation's, at \$61,000; more than 40 percent of those in the county who are working still cannot meet basic needs. At the same time, local employers have a desperate need for steady workers with good technical and soft skills. In response, the foundation has recently sought to work more collaboratively with employers; one effort, a local employer resource network, is in the planning stages. The foundation is seizing this moment as an opportunity to mitigate local poverty.

During the change process, we also focused on maintaining the best possible working relationships with grantees. We created more opportunities for personal interaction with potential grantees, successful applicants, and even applicants who did not receive funding. The new funding paradigms were a big change, and it took several years for many of the grantees to make the transition to new ways of thinking about their work. In the words of the executive director of one grantee organization, "I understand where you are headed and I know it will make us stronger, but it was just easier before." Over time, most local agencies came to realize that the new parameters did not require a major shift in their activities, but rather a sharper focus

During the change process, we also focused on maintaining the best possible working relationships with grantees. We created more opportunities for personal interaction with potential grantees, successful applicants, and even applicants who did not receive funding. The new funding paradigms were a big change, and it took several years for many of the grantees to make the transition to new ways of thinking about their work.

on the impact or results of those activities. We have recognized the need to assist with measuring impact. This process has required some significant adjustments from grantee agencies, and some trepidation about our movement to strategic grantmaking was to be expected. In terms of donors and the general public, we routinely receive very positive feedback about the new strategies.

Phase Two: Laying the Groundwork for Implementation

As 2016 drew to a close, the foundation began to plan its next five-year strategic framework. As part of this process, we chose to ask residents what they considered to be the most important focus for our work. To take the pulse of the community, we engaged the Aspen Institute to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that involved Newaygo and three surrounding counties, Lake, Mecosta, and Osceola, where we operate affiliate community foundations. The

FIGURE 3 Region Reflections and Priorities

The table below shows some of the cross-cutting issues for the region as a whole that were lifted up during the community conversations. It is important to recognize that each "vote" for a topic, like economic development/jobs, reflects the analysis of a table. Individual responses (organized in each county's conversation journal results file) provide another layer of rich data that will be useful as the four counties explore collaboration. These individual responses — in combination with the survey data — are likely to provide a deeper sense of what is important to most people in the region and are worthy of further analysis.

	Lake			Mecosta			Newaygo			Osceola		
	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change	Before	After	Change
Economic Development/Jobs	23%	29%	5%	40%	22%	-18%	18%	26%	8%	28%	35%	7%
Engagement/Communication	23%	7%	-16%	13%	17%	3%	5%	5%	0%	28%	25%	-3%
Retain Youth	0%	7%	7%	13%	11%	-2%	3%	4%	1%	17%	20%	3%
Health	8%	14%	7%	7%	11%	4%	3%	7%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Education/Training	0%	0%	0%	7%	6%	-1%	26%	18%	-8%	6%	0%	-6%
Broadband	8%	14%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	11%	5%	-6%
Poverty	0%	0%	0%	7%	11%	4%	8%	5%	-2%	0%	0%	0%
Environment	0%	0%	0%	7%	11%	4%	3%	5%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Amenities	8%	7%	-1%	0%	6%	6%	0%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Transportation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15%	9%	-7%	0%	0%	0%
Activities for Youth	8%	7%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	-5%	6%	0%	-6%
Safety/Substance Abuse	8%	7%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	-3%	0%	0%	0%
Housing	8%	0%	-8%	7%	0%	-7%	5%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Other	8%	7%	-1%	0%	6%	6%	8%	9%	1%	6%	15%	9%

1. In general, groups of participants maintained or tweaked their community priorities from the beginning of the session.
2. Groups of session participants in all four counties were most likely to name "economic development" or "jobs" as priorities for their counties. Responses included focusing on small entrepreneurship strategies, workforce training, and industrial recruitment. Several groups mentioned "job quality" and "living wages" as critical components of economic development.
3. The priority area that grew the most from the beginning to the end of the presentations was "health" and specifically "health factors." In Lake, Mecosta, and Newaygo counties, groups were more likely to mention addressing preventative health behaviors.
4. As Lake County participants went through the presentation — and perhaps because they were identifying specific community opportunities and challenges — they were less likely to mention "community engagement" and instead focused on priorities such as "retaining youth."

assessment compiled key data sets supplemented by resident engagement through an online survey that included open-ended questions.¹ The survey was followed by community conversations, which were summarized in a regional report. (See Figure 3.) Economic development and jobs emerged as the primary concern for residents of all four counties. These results told us to stay the course on our decade goals, with greater emphasis on workforce development.

Which brings us to today. Our big, bold goals will take generations of focus — success won't happen overnight. But we are confident that maintaining that focus will move the needle on our core issues.

At the outset of this strategic work, the combination of low educational attainment, high poverty rates, and a stagnant economy were creating an ever-widening opportunity gap for local residents. This was especially true for the next generation — and disengaged youth are the hardest population to reach. We took a two-generation approach that addresses unemployed and underemployed adults while also encouraging young people to build local careers. In a key achievement for the current five-year strategic framework, in 2017 we created the Newaygo County Workforce Development Task Force, comprised of key agencies dealing with talent development and barriers to employment. The task force commissioned a report from Talent 2025, an alliance of business and education that

¹ Full reports for all four counties are available at www.facommunityfoundation.org/communityreports.

FIGURE 4 Theory of Change

is focused on ensuring world-class talent for West Michigan. The report provides data on and insights into the state of our local Newaygo County workforce.² The report highlighted the county's "phantom workforce," residents who are able to work but are not employed: Some of these residents are caring for children or other family members, some have barriers to entering the workforce, and some have simply become discouraged. Over the next five years, our goal is to get 200 of these individuals back into the workforce and to help them be successful. That goal requires an average of 40 placements per year, and we are already making progress — there were 24 placements directly attributed to funded activities in 2017.

A Theory of Change

Ultimately, the research and development of these strategic approaches led us to a coherent theory of change. Our theory of change denotes five key roles for the foundation: to catalyze, fund, monitor, evaluate, and report. (See Figure 4.)

In relation to the range of activities and approaches undertaken in our community, the foundation sometimes serves as a leader and at other times as one of the participants at the table. These activities include:

- Identifying relevant data by sharing existing reports and data sets, or by commissioning studies;

²The complete Talent 2025 report can be accessed at www.facommunityfoundation.org/talent2025.

- Identifying key community players and convening them;
- Introducing alternative, effective models or practices;
- Supporting training and travel that allows practitioners to learn new models and see them in action;
- Facilitating purposeful dialogue designed to lead to collective action;
- Providing a support system for the conversations to continue;
- Allowing appropriate individuals and organizations to take the lead in areas where they have greater expertise; and
- Being prepared to support the launch of new activities with financial resources, and then to help sustain them.

While we use the term “catalyze” instead of “leadership,” in some cases the foundation did play a leadership role — in the convening of local tourism industry stakeholders and in the creation of the Workforce Development Task Force, for example. At other times, community leaders approached us; activity around small-business development and retention came from concerns voiced by downtown business owners. And sometimes there has been a shared impetus for action: The foundation and the local education community, for example, are working together on the intersecting issues of educational opportunity and career readiness.

The role of funder is a familiar one in the field of philanthropy. In each of these examples, the foundation funded local agencies or consortia, or even created a new grantee, such as the Newaygo County Tourism Council. We are funding projects we believe will lead to long-term outcomes and the fulfillment of our decade goals. Often our partners’ goals and ideas line up with ours by this point in the process. In other words, they own it and are equally vested in success.

To monitor the results of our catalyzing and funding activities, we needed a shared mechanism to enable our grantees and the public to determine how well the community is progressing toward the intermediate outcomes. The projects we fund won’t immediately produce outcomes, but they will generate activities or outputs to move us closer to our goals. In 2017, we simplified our grant evaluation forms to ask only for information that would be used and to capitalize on data that grantees are already collecting. Results from the annual evaluations submitted by grantees are only part of the picture. We also need to monitor how those outputs are leading to the intermediate outcomes: Are we increasing our third-grade reading scores, eighth-grade math scores, high school graduation rates? Are graduates furthering their education or securing work credentials? And we must evaluate whether the foundation is making a difference: Are we progressing towards higher postsecondary achievement? Do census figures and other indices point to demographic changes?

As we were looking into creating appropriate evaluation tools, we discovered that the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance (WMRPA), or Region 4 representing 13 counties in West Michigan, had already created a regional tool. As one of 10 economic regions identified by Gov. Rick Snyder — who asked leaders from several key sectors regional planning, adult education, workforce development, economic development, transportation, and higher education to undertake activities to promote prosperity — WMRPA established the West Michigan Regional Dashboard under the leadership of The Right Place, an economic development agency serving the 13 counties in Region 4. This tool utilized a set of shared metrics to track progress on 34 critical economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

We commissioned The Right Place to create a Newaygo County Area Dashboard, which collects a comprehensive set of local data in a one-screen format that allows users to focus on specific data points, observe trends, and use the information to assist in their own planning and evaluation. (See Figure 5.) The county

FIGURE 5 Newaygo County Area Dashboard

dashboard has 30 data points, nine of which correspond to the intermediate outcomes in our theory of change.³

To prepare for the evaluation component, grantees were introduced to the principles of evaluation at a practical, hands-on training

provided by the Johnson Center in the fall of 2017. The foundation followed up in January 2018 with a grantee workshop to introduce its theory of change, the Newaygo County Area Dashboard, and its updated online evaluation forms for grant recipients. The new forms were designed to eliminate cumbersome reporting

³ The Newaygo County Area Dashboard can be found at www.ncdashboard.org.

requirements for smaller grants, and for larger grants that require comprehensive evaluations, to focus only on measures that advance the work of both the grantee and the foundation. At that time we also introduced policy changes, including a board decision to adopt best practices around general operating support as outlined by Charity Navigator, GuideStar, and the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The policy clarifies that our foundation will consider appropriate administrative overhead up to 35 percent of total project costs. The response from grantees, expressed in evaluations for the day's sessions, was overwhelmingly positive.

Finally, it is our responsibility to report back to the community: Have more county residents joined the workforce? Have our efforts collectively created the qualified workforce needed to drive economic growth? In most of our communication materials, from annual reports to social media posts, we intentionally include stories that touch on our three decade goals. Data collected from our evaluation work allow us to show forward movement. We also schedule events throughout the year to update donors on our work and solicit their feedback.

Navigating the Change Process

The change process has been difficult for some in the local nonprofit sector, and this has been evidenced by the results of Grantee Perception Surveys conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP). An initial survey was conducted in 2012 before the foundation's shift to a strategic grantmaking approach, and therefore provides good baseline data. Another survey was conducted in the spring of 2017, before we introduced our theory of change, policy changes, and the evaluation component of our work.

In both surveys, grantees rated the foundation in the top 15 percent of the CEP's data sets in having a strong impact in local communities. While ratings on the extent to which the foundation understood grantee work didn't increase much from 2012, they were in line with ratings for a typical funder. A few highlights from the summary report shed light on the challenges and

conflicts that grantees have experienced with the change process:

- Perceptions of the foundation impact on grantees' fields of work are similar to the typical funder in CEP's data set, but trend higher than the typical community foundation. Grantees with our Poverty to Prosperity focus area hold the most positive perceptions of the foundation's impact on their fields of work, rating above the highest-rated funder in the CEP's data set; and ratings from these grantees trend higher throughout the survey. The foundation receives lower than typical ratings, however, for its understanding of grantees' fields — in the bottom 10 percent of CEP's data set.
- The role that the foundation plays in its grantees' organizations emphasizes organizational sustainability more than organizational impact. In the 2017 survey, grantees' ratings of the extent to which the foundation improves their ability to sustain their grant-funded work trend higher than in 2012 — in the top 20 percent of the CEP's data set and toward the top of the community foundation data set. But the grantees' rating of our impact on their organizations is significantly lower than it was in 2012, and ratings are now similar to the typical funder.

Though ratings for the foundation's understanding of our grantees' organizational goals and strategies are higher than in 2012, they remain in the bottom quarter of the CEP's data set. This is important because the CEP's research shows that understanding grantee goals and strategies is one of the strongest predictors of perceived impact on grantee organizations, as well as on funder/grantee relationships.

The foundation now provides a significantly larger proportion of its grantees with intensive nonmonetary assistance — characterized as at least three forms of field-focused assistance or at least seven total types of assistance — than it did in 2012. Notably, grantees receiving

nonmonetary support (from intensive to just one form of support) rate the foundation's impact and the funder/grantee relationship significantly higher than do those receiving no support.

- Grantee perceptions of the helpfulness of the foundation's selection process have significantly improved since 2012 and are now similar to the typical funder in the CEP's data set. Grantees rate the foundation staff as significantly more involved in the proposal development process than they were in 2012, and their ratings on the level of pressure they feel to modify their priorities in order to receive funding are now in the top 10 percent. This increased sense of pressure is notable because foundation grantees experiencing the highest levels of pressure — rating 5, 6, or 7 on the 7-point scale — report a significantly less positive experience with us across the survey.

It is easy to understand that there will be consequences when a funder transitions from open grantmaking — essentially, being responsive to the proposals submitted by grantees — to strategic grantmaking, or being more proactive and oriented toward significant positive impact. While we do not discount the perceptions of grantees, we have significant hands-on expertise in the areas where our strategy is focused and we have examined best practices across the country. We also believe that we are fostering change that is in the best interests of our constituents. In particular, lower scores from grantees engaged with education provide a platform for future learning. Newaygo County has six school districts and no institution of higher education. Schools are stressed in many ways and do not have staff dedicated to maintaining relationships with grantmakers. While we are concerned about the low scores from this sector, we recognize the circumstances and remain focused on developing and building the relationships.

In response to the CEP ratings, the foundation has implemented strategies to improve grantee relationships, primarily via better information and improved communication. To address the

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perception that foundation staff does not understand a particular field, we now intentionally highlight the expertise and skills of staff, board, and community members engaged with grant review through such channels our e-newsletter, posts on social media, and handouts that detail staff and committee members' relevant expertise. To address a perceived lack of responsiveness, we have enhanced our communication throughout the grantmaking process to include an initial email to confirm application receipt and identify the staff member who will be reviewing the grant; an automated notification midway through the grant review period as a reminder of the timeline; and a commitment to respond to a grantee communication within 24 hours, or to send an email or voicemail message to explain when that may not be possible.

FIGURE 6 Newaygo County Community Collaborative (NC3)

We believe that everyone in the community wants the same positive outcomes identified through the resident engagement process, and the foundation is committed to maintaining our positive relationships even as the change process continues.

End Game = Mission Accomplished

The groundwork for most of our activities was laid with a relatively small financial investment from the foundation. We believe our investments of time and thought leadership have been the most important elements to date. We have changed not only how we are funding, but what we are funding, in order to achieve the greatest impact for our community investments; and we have provided tools to monitor impact. We have also invested significantly to promote collective action among grantees around the critical issues in our service area.

For the most part, the foundation's goals have become a shared community agenda. Many of

the goals are implemented through the NC3, which provides backbone services to help local agencies work together toward shared outcomes. The NC3 agencies focused on education are directly pursuing the foundation's decade goals, while other agencies address various barriers faced by residents that indirectly affect the ability to meet those goals. (See Figure 6.)

The goals of the Fremont Area Community Foundation are talked about in the community, embraced by the nonprofit and government partners who do the work, and featured in traditional and social media. We are relentlessly optimistic that we have set a change process in motion that will ultimately provide greater opportunity for residents in Newaygo County. Our mission — “to improve the quality of life” in the county — hasn't changed, but it has come into focus. Through this process, we have defined what we mean by quality of life: a vibrant economy; an effective public sector — government and

nonprofit; and well-being across socioeconomic levels, because everyone must be doing well for any of us to truly thrive.

This is the beginning of a new chapter. The 2017 CEP survey results captured grantee perceptions at a time when all the components of a shift to strategic grantmaking were not yet in place. With the evaluation tools implemented and a clear commitment to enhance relationships with our grantees, it will be instructive to see the results of the next CEP report. We know that we will continue to pursue learning and research phases as subsequent iterations of this community process unfold.

It is our firm belief that this path, and the partners we've secured along the way, will lead to powerful, lasting change in Newaygo County. No one organization or entity can accomplish these goals alone. This is truly a community project, involving individuals from all walks of life and backgrounds. The foundation is not a service provider and must rely upon our partnerships for strategic, collective impact. We are confident that over the next decade (and beyond!), as we actively embrace all of the roles from our theory of change — to catalyze, fund, monitor, evaluate, and report, the community will succeed in improving the quality of life in Newaygo County.

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Leading With Values: Grants Management and the Case for More Consistent, Effective Grantmaking Practices

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Introduction

Publicly stated or not, all grantmakers have values — priorities, aspirations, and an overall world view. Organization values provide grantmakers with both the mandate and the guidance to ask questions about meaning, intention, aspiration, and application. While shared values may not create instant alliances or resolve every difference, conversations about values can help grantmakers get to know one another, explore commonalities, avoid labels and blame, and understand differences in new ways — all of which can help them become more empathetic, consistent, and effective.

Like a compass pointing north, values offer direction — but getting there is on us. When it comes to grantmaking practices, grants management staff are uniquely positioned to carry the compass and to encourage colleagues, boards, senior leadership, and even the broader field on a journey toward values-driven practices. After all, grantmaking practices are one way — sometimes the only way — a grantmaker's values are revealed to applicants, grantees, and other stakeholders.

As anyone familiar with grantmaking can tell you, practices vary widely in our field. The lack of a single definition of or expectation for grantmaking practices can be a challenge for both foundations and grant seekers. Organization values, however, tend to be less divergent and, by definition, go to the very essence of the organization. The type of foundation — community, private, corporate — or a donor's life story certainly influence a

Key Points

- This article identifies and explores a set of philanthropic priorities and aspirations that are widely shared by grantmakers today, and examines how the notion of shared values might inspire a fieldwide pursuit of more consistent, effective, values-driven grantmaking practices.
- To study the relationship between grantmaker values and grantmaking practices, a survey of more than 300 organization members of PEAK Grantmaking, a national association of specialists in grants management, asked how the respondent foundations' values influence their work. The results of the survey not only provided an overview of common values, but also captured reports from grantmakers on how their organizations are actively putting their values into practice.
- The research led to four recommendations for grantmakers: articulate organization values; find common ground with others around shared values; identify the most effective values-driven grantmaking practices; and pursue those practices to the benefit of grantmakers and grant seekers alike.

grantmaker's values. Community foundations and other public charities, for example, may emphasize transparency and public service, or might mirror the religious values present in communities they serve. Private foundations established by a single donor or a family often attempt to embody the founding donor's values, in no uncertain terms and in perpetuity.

For example, the Ruth Mott Foundation, of Flint, Michigan, continues to make this connection explicit almost two decades after the death of its founder. Ruth Mott's values and conduct call on us to:

- Be welcoming, inclusive, and egalitarian.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Act with kindness and good humor.
- Promote civic hope and pride.
- Encourage personal responsibility.
- Practice prevention.
- Maintain the "long view."¹

How grantmaking organizations commit to specific values is as varied as grantmaking itself. Rather than focus on the ways type, donor, origin, or other factors might influence or even restrict a foundation's values, this article focuses on the ways those values might connect to grantmaking practices and connect grantmakers to one another. Our hypothesis is that explicit, publicly shared statements of values can help grantmakers make a stronger connection between how grants are made — grantmaking practices — and the priorities, aspirations, and overall world view of the grantmaker itself. This article seeks to shed light on values that grantmakers already — and perhaps unknowingly — share, and how shared values might help to operationalize more consistent and effective grantmaking practices. Referring to Mott's values, we might ask: How can grantmakers, guided by the similar values of egalitarianism, kindness, and the long view, operationalize those values into consistent and effective practices? What might more egalitarian, kind, long-view grantmaking practices look like?

We suspected that a number of commonly held values might be identifiable across the many different types, regional priorities, and missions of

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philanthropy. Viewed through the prism of organization values, grantmaking practices can be assessed differently: Do our wait times reflect our value to be responsive and respectful? How could our declination letters embody the value of learning and engaging with the community? Beyond connecting an individual grantmaker's practice to values, we wondered whether certain values are shared among many or most grantmakers and, if so, if a notion of shared values could inspire a fieldwide pursuit of more consistent, more effective, more "values driven" grantmaking practices.

A Survey of Grantmakers

In January 2017, we surveyed more than 300 organization members of PEAK Grantmaking, a national association of specialists in grants management, to ask how their foundation values influence their work. We used their responses to explore the relationship between grantmaker values and grantmaking practices. What we learned has been powerful and illuminating:

- Many grantmakers operate with either explicit or implicit organization values.

¹ See <http://www.ruthmottfoundation.org/who-we-are/about-us>

- Most grantmakers believe that intentionally linking practices and values is vital to effectiveness, accountability, and impact.
- Grantmakers we surveyed share a number of values; 10 discrete values were cited most frequently.
- Grants management staff are uniquely positioned to align grantmaking practices with organization values.
- Our research led us to four recommendations for grantmakers in philanthropic infrastructure: to articulate grantmaker organization values; to find common ground with others around shared values; to identify the most effective values-driven grantmaking practices; and to pursue those practices to the benefit of grantmakers and grant seekers alike.

Methods

Qualitative research methods were utilized to determine whether and how organization values inform or might inform more consistent, effective grantmaking practices. A survey of 319 institutional members of PEAK Grantmaking to collect values statements and related commentary was supplemented by analysis of member websites to develop a database of values statements from at least 160 respondents. Survey responses and respondents' websites were studied to analyze an actual or intended relationship, if any, among stated values, grantmaking practices, and effectiveness. One-on-one interviews with grants managers were conducted to capture experience connecting values to grantmaking practice.

The 10 most frequently cited and similarly defined organization values were identified by comparison and analysis of values statements, noting frequency and patterns as well as similar and/or contextualized meanings across differently worded values, using the following methods:

- Coding text: We identified useful concepts and marked key phrases, frequency, and

other descriptive categories. Consistent patterns/words/concepts were identified, noting when implicit versus explicit; noting and, when possible, ranking frequency (most, least), and noting whether and how values were described, touted, or achieved in practice.

- Memoing and theorizing: The researcher kept running notes on each of the concepts and codes identified, including memos or field notes about the concepts and observations and insights. Memos presented a representative set of values that related (directly or indirectly) to, or perhaps even incentivized, ideal practices.
- Integrating, refining: Once coding categories emerged, we organized data around a central category: common language/themes that hold everything together.

We used grounded theory to analyze survey responses and individual members' value statements. Grounded theory enables the researcher to identify and conceptualize latent social patterns and structures through constant comparison. Later, in a deductive phase of grounded theory process, the researcher uses the developing theory to suggest what data should be collected next and which more-focused questions to ask.

Our survey collected 97 responses, a response rate of 30 percent. (See Figures 1 and 2.) While we did not ask respondents to share the number of years in their role or position, we did collect respondent titles, which might proxy for role and leadership responsibility. (See Figure 3.)

Responses

Ninety survey respondents (93.7 percent) reported that their organization operates with either an explicit, publicly shared statement of values (62); an explicit, internally shared statement (14); or an implicit statement (14). Seven respondents (7.2 percent) reported having no statement of values and beliefs. To supplement this survey response we analyzed the websites of 67 members, of similar size and type to the response pool, from

FIGURE 1 Survey Respondents by Annual Grantmaking Dollars

FIGURE 2 Survey Respondents by Type of Foundation

FIGURE 3 Survey Respondents by Title

TABLE 1 How Values Show Up: A Spectrum

Values are imparted but seldom discussed. [9 responses]	Values are present at inflection points. [15 responses]	Values are ever-present. [29 responses]
Representative Comments		
<i>"Our trustees met. They decided what they felt they should be. It was communicated on multiple occasions to staff (staff meetings, retreats, board meetings, etc.)."</i>	<i>"Both in board meetings and at staff meetings, we are reminded of the underlying values and principles of the benefactor and what donor intent means as it is passed down over decades."</i> <i>"Informally through the 'smell test' on new work and processes; formally through annual evaluations."</i> <i>"Values are posted on large posters that are referenced when discussing strategy and practices. ... We just discussed results of CEP grantee survey, and values were a part of that conversation."</i>	<i>"Our desire to promote racial equity, economic well-being, and fundamental fairness for all is rooted deep within each grant we make. We are constantly re-evaluating our funding priorities to ensure that those values are at the center of our work."</i> <i>"We speak about how values influence how we operate as professionals with each other as well as out in the world when we interact with grantees and partners."</i>

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among those that did not respond to the survey. This analysis brought the total number of PEAK Grantmaking member organizations included in the study (164) to just over 50 percent. The review of the websites found that 34 from the selected “nonrespondent” pool (50.8 percent) do share explicit values statements.² The remaining 33 from the pool (49.2 percent) do not publicly display or share (i.e., on their website) explicit values statements.³ Of the 164 organizations included in this research, 124 operate with either explicit or implicit values statements.

To get a feel for how values “show up” in organizations, the survey asked respondents to share

how frequently values statements were discussed inside their foundation. The 53 responses suggested a three-category spectrum — values are imparted and seldom discussed, values are present at inflection points, and values are ever-present — with some accompanying comments. (See Table 1.) At one end of the spectrum, respondents described values being “handed down” from trustees or an individual donor or family as a *fait accompli*. At the other end of the spectrum, respondents described a more nimble process in which values were identified and refined over time, organically.⁴ For these grantmakers, values were “ever-present” and developed through continual inquiry among

²In reviewing the websites of those selected from the nonrespondent pool, online statements labeled “beliefs,” “guiding principles,” “core beliefs” and the like were also considered “values statements.”

³A lack of publicly shared values statements does not mean foundations are not guided by values; these organizations may have stated values but choose not to publish or share them.

⁴More survey respondents (29) described their values in this way. Such active engagement with values might have led to a higher number of submissions from these kinds of organizations, or might simply align with PEAK Grantmaking’s membership, which includes more independent foundations with larger staffing arrangements and, typically, nonfamily trustees. It would be interesting to delve into this more deeply in future research.

FIGURE 4 When Values Are Connected to Practice, What Types of Effectiveness Result?

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staff, trustees, donors, and even grantees and communities — apparently open to interpretation on a daily basis.

Another group, of 15 respondents, fell between the two extremes, with values present and influential when major decisions or planning processes arise. For these grantmakers, values and practices might be addressed formally or informally, during strategic planning and other inflection points. Conversations might be led by the board, executive staff, or program and grants management staff as new programs are being designed.

We also asked survey respondents to identify who, at which levels of the organization, discussed organization values. Fifty-eight of the 66 responses (88 percent) reported that values and practices were discussed at staff meetings; 43 described discussions occurring at the board level; and 44 noted conversations among senior staff leadership. Those selecting “other” specified discussions that took place “during educational programs and funding sessions we hold for grantees around the world,” “during an annual educational board retreat,” “while creating [a]

new, unified grantmaking process,” and “among [the] grants management team when discussing how our values are reflected in our grants management practices, with plans to include the rest of the staff later.”

While the frequency of and participants in values discussions suggest a relationship between values and strategy, we wondered whether alignment of values with practices could result in more effective practices. To find out, the survey asked whether respondents believed “grantmaking is more effective because grantmaking practices reflect and support their organization’s values.” Seventy-three respondents agreed with this statement; as one respondent commented, “otherwise, why bother having values?” Respondents were asked to go further by selecting one or more experiences they associated with values making grantmaking more effective. (See Figure 4.)

Among the four options, “better relationships with grantseekers” (57 percent) and “better fit between applicants and funding areas” (56 percent) were most often cited; “more consistent

[illegible]

their practices because ...” Of the 64 responses, the following were typical:

- “It sends a much clearer message to the community about what we value and support.”
- “It fosters transparency and trust in relationships with potential grantees.”
- “It keeps funders accountable to their founders and communicates a clear message to the broader nonprofit community.”
- “As stewards of charitable dollars, it is up to us to maintain the highest level of integrity.”

The survey concluded by asking respondents to complete this open-ended sentence: “It is important for grantmakers to align their values with

Over half the survey respondents agreed that linking values to grantmaking practice is a relevant and worthwhile pursuit. But the survey

FIGURE 6 PEAK Grantmaking Practice Categories

- **Strategy & Policy:** High-level decisions that affect implementation, e.g., division of responsibility between board and staff; what types of grants and other support the funder is authorized to use; and policy decisions about organization eligibility, focus, geographic range.
- **Approach & Structure:** How grants are structured to achieve outcomes, e.g., the size, type, and length of grant; the relationship between a request and what you actually give; decisions about funding partnerships; and relationships with other funders and with nonprofits.
- **Requirements, Process, & Workflow:** Application and reporting requirements, retention practices, due diligence, award letter and reporting specifics, and workflow – who touches what and when, and the systems in place.
- **Interface – Communication & Relationships:** How the organization communicates about its work, e.g., alignment of requirements; transparency; feedback loops; relationships with grantees through such approaches as customer service-related practices, site visits, telephone availability; and standards around response time and follow-up.
- **Knowledge & Information Management:** What to do with data and information; outside sources that can supplement/complement that information.

FIGURE 7 How Well Do Areas of Practice Reflect and Support Values?

also asked respondents how well they believed they were doing at aligning practice with values, using PEAK Grantmaking’s practice categories as a guide. (See Figure 6). Respondents were asked to “self-assess” how well their own practices aligned with organization values. (See Figure 7.) Respondents perceived “above average” alignment of practice with values, with best

alignment in strategy and policy. All categories showed room for improvement, but no category appeared bereft of values. To the contrary, each practice category represents an opportunity to build on a perhaps underdeveloped, but compelling interest. Given the relevance to multiple audiences and the high importance placed on aligning values and practice, finding ways to

[T]he language and context that give meaning to values change over time. One hundred years ago, a grantmaker might think nothing of terms like “worthy poor” or “widows and orphans”; today, their use might make us cringe. Similarly, it is worth considering that these 10 values mark today’s grantmakers’ place in time, signaling which core beliefs and priorities are most relevant.

start these conversations — within organizations and across the field — is vital.

Findings: 10 Common Values

For PEAK Grantmaking’s membership, a set of shared values may offer common ground for a fieldwide discussion of consistent and effective grantmaking practices. To home in on that common ground, the 124 values statements collected from PEAK Grantmaking’s members were analyzed, compared, and contextualized.

To be clear: The research is descriptive. We did not seek the best values or the one best way to align values with practices. Rather, the research sought to document and describe shared values, by tracking recurring words, similar phrases, and comparable examples. Values statements were defined, coded, and sorted. To be confident that similarly defined terms were grouped together, each value was studied within the context of the organization espousing that value. For values statements culled from member websites, we studied clarifying statements as well as the

foundation’s mission, vision, and strategy. For those responding to the survey, we were able to ask, How does your organization live its values? Taking both online and survey examples into account allowed us to group values with similar definitions and examples; alternatively, a value could be isolated if its definition proved distinctive.

From this sorting, 10 discrete values emerged most frequently across PEAK Grantmaking’s membership:

1. Collaboration, partnership, teamwork, working together;
2. Respect;
3. Integrity, honesty, ethical behavior;
4. Diversity, equity, inclusion;
5. Accountability, responsibility;
6. Transparency, openness;
7. Risk-taking, innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, creativity;
8. Stewardship;
9. Learning, continuous improvement; and
10. Leadership.

Undoubtedly, the most frequently stated values are both familiar and commendable. Because values exist within a larger context of history, language, and practice, we recognize these words as well as the ingenuity, current events, and aspirations surrounding them. Yet, the language and context that give meaning to values change over time. One hundred years ago, a grantmaker might think nothing of terms like “worthy poor” or “widows and orphans”; today, their use might make us cringe. Similarly, it is worth considering that these 10 values mark today’s grantmakers’ place in time, signaling which core beliefs and priorities are most relevant. This research is a snapshot, and might have looked different 10 or

even five years ago. Would “diversity, equity, inclusion” appear on a list from 2007? Would “transparency” be on a 2012 list? It’s hard to say. Getting a sense of how values are defined and applied — or “lived” — is useful for those attempting to connect values to practice, and for the field in documenting what grantmakers and stakeholders cared about in 2017.

Based on survey responses and a study of members’ mission, vision, and values statements, we formulated definitions for the most frequently stated values and included comparable terms and related concepts when grantmakers listed those alongside their stated values. To help highlight any nuances in these strictly philanthropic uses, we sought for comparison general definitions drawn from online dictionaries. Yet even with the best of definitions and intentions, stating a value is meaningless if practices are misaligned or stakeholders fail to see a value in practice. Survey respondents submitted numerous examples of how grantmakers are putting organization values into practice; these representative practices, presented in survey respondents’ words, offer real-life applications of concepts that often remain abstract and aspirational.

1. Collaboration, Partnership, Teamwork, Working Together

Merriam-Webster.com defines “collaboration” as “work[ing] jointly with others or together, especially in an intellectual endeavor.”⁵ Survey respondents went deeper, defining this value as cooperating, both internally and with community partners, because combined efforts lead to better outcomes.

Reports from respondents on how their organizations are putting this value into practice included:

- “The foundation believes support for regional-level work is critical so that regions across [the state] can better collaborate, share information, and align systems that support the success of all students.”

- “We believe in partnerships and do a great job of co-creating with grantees what the project/outcomes should be to meet mutual objectives; we stay in regular conversation with grantees to talk through challenges/opportunities; we are open and receptive to changing course as needed.”

2. Respect

Dictionary definitions of “respect” include “esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person” and “deference to a right, privilege, privileged position, or someone or something considered to have certain rights or privileges.”⁶ Survey respondents define it as holding people with whom they work (grantees, partners, community members, staff and board members, etc.) in high regard and treating them accordingly, generalized to a belief in the worth and dignity of all people and often noted alongside the inherent power dynamics at work in the funder/grantee relationship. Comparable terms offered by respondents included dignity, kindness, trust, fairness, collegiality, and equity.

Examples of how the value of respect shapes respondents’ practice included:

- “Humility, open-mindedness, and fair competition are all reflected in our open submission application process, whereby any organization or person can propose a project idea that will be evaluated. ... We recognize that the best ideas don’t necessarily come from our staff, and over half of our funding over the past six years goes to open submission projects.”
- “The foundation strives to be responsive and respectful to grantees so that technical limitations do not impact their ability to be successful grantees. We also offer technical support to grantees via subsidized training programs at a local nonprofit training center.”

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/collaboration?src=search-dict-box>

⁶ <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/respect>

Survey respondents mentioned incorporating and including views and voices of staff, boards, and community members in all aspects of decision-making and rejecting bias, injustice, and other inequities that exist in the world. Comparable terms included fairness, accessibility, respect, empowerment, and opportunity.

- “The majority of our grants provide general operating support.”
- “[We make] the application process and the post-grant reporting simple and straightforward.”

3. Integrity, Honesty, Ethical Behavior

GoogleDictionary defines “integrity” as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.”⁷ Survey respondents identified such specifics as telling the truth and holding themselves accountable to the highest ethical standards, both internally and when interacting with grantees and the community. Related concepts included stewardship, transparency, respect, and accountability.

Respondents described putting this value into practice by “invit[ing] all grantseekers to discuss their proposed programs before applying” and providing “honest feedback regarding funding outcomes; we are clear about our intentions.”

4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Merriam-Webster.com defines “diversity” as “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements ... the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.”⁸ Survey respondents mentioned incorporating and including views and voices of staff, boards, and community members in all aspects of decision-making and rejecting bias, injustice, and other inequities that exist in the world. Comparable terms included fairness, accessibility, respect, empowerment, and opportunity.

Examples of how respondents are practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion included:

- “‘Tzedakah — social justice towards those in need.’ Our foundation focuses on accomplishing our mission by serving those with the least access to resources.”
- “For our open grants, we are careful to choose a diverse panel and award grants to a diverse range of applicants. We have redesigned our application to make it more inclusive to the types of groups we want applying.”
- “Everybody matters. We live this value by an intentional effort to diversify our staff so that we have a variety of inputs into our grantmaking and other decision making.”
- “[We are] revising how we do hiring, assess staff performance, conduct ... risk assessment; moving to much greater transparency; working with staff and board to educate ourselves about racial equity and currently determining how greater focus on racial equity can be applied to our grantmaking as well as internal practices.”

5. Accountability, Responsibility

A dictionary definition of “accountability” is “an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility

⁷<http://googledictionary.freecollocation.com/meaning?word=integrity>

⁸<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity>

⁹<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accountability>

or to account for one's actions.”⁹ To survey respondents, this means holding themselves personally and organizationally answerable to the mission, purpose, and results of actions taken, including the expenditure of foundation resources. Among the related concepts mentioned were stewardship, transparency, and integrity.

Examples of how respondents are practicing accountability and responsibility include:

- “As a small, place-based funder with our trustees living in the communities we serve, it is critical for us to ‘walk the talk.’ We utilize outside consultants to rate our work as well as regular convenings with our grantees. We have a clear and rigorous vetting process for our grants and our trustees hold us accountable as agents of the foundation.”
- “Our individual performance objectives include how we reflect our values in our work.”
- “We take [Center for Effective Philanthropy] survey results very seriously and create work groups to address issues.”

6. Transparency, Openness

Merriam-Webster.com defines “transparency” as “free from pretense or deceit, ... readily understood, characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices.”¹⁰ Respondents define transparency and openness as making operations, decision making, and other processes visible, often noting that transparency has not always been the rule in philanthropy. Comparable terms included integrity, honesty, accountability, and access to information.

One respondent's organization is putting this into practice by “making information public regarding grants, financial statements, and policies. We are highly engaged in the community. We are available for open discussions with

potential applicants and grantees.” Another reported, “We publish evaluation reports on our website and hold community meetings to share information and get feedback.”

7. Innovation, Risk-Taking, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Creativity

“Innovation” is defined by one dictionary as “a new idea, method, or device.”¹¹ Survey respondents interpret this value as finding new ways to look at problems, investing in ingenuity, and supporting creativity to solve tough problems.

Examples of these values in practice include “us[ing] our funds to get important ideas implemented, and then work[ing] to get projects noticed and supported by other, larger funders”; and “support[ing] projects that we believe will lead to systemic change, as well as projects that can work together to produce that change.” Another respondent reported that, “given our focus on people and the environment, [we] support staff by making sure we have the tools and resources to do our jobs effectively, in a LEED Platinum-certified building and office space.” Said another: “While we only fund organizations, we recognize that organizations are powered by individuals. People are the innovators.”

8. Stewardship

Merriam-Webster.com defines “stewardship” as “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; ... the careful and responsible management entrusted to one's care.”¹² Respondents define it as striving to responsibly manage and care for financial and other resources entrusted to their use and being stewards of a donor or founder's vision and legacy; the concept of “accountability” was also mentioned.

For one organization, stewardship in practice means prioritizing funding for areas “that the [family/donors] addressed in their personal giving — education, health care, human services, arts and culture, conservation and wildlife, and youth

¹⁰ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transparent>

¹¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/innovation>

¹² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stewardship>

Survey respondents see learning and continuous improvement as seeking new knowledge and carefully evaluating and drawing insight from their own actions.

and amateur athletics.” For another, it is looking “for established marks of quality programming in grantees’ proposals, while remembering the hallmarks of the family’s philanthropic interests of education and family stability.”

9. Learning, Continuous Improvement

Merriam-Webster.com defines “learning” as “knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study ... modification of a behavioral tendency by experience.”¹³ Survey respondents see learning and continuous improvement as seeking new knowledge and carefully evaluating and drawing insight from their own actions. Comparable terms included evaluation and curiosity.

Respondents said their organizations put this value into practice by “regularly host[ing] convenings of grantees and other stakeholders to keep all parties apprised on the issues of health care” or “only ask[ing] for information that we will use and will help us learn.” One organization reported “an anonymous feedback loop with our grantees to get their feedback on their experience”; another said “senior staff review of metrics help[s] to ensure we are performing well to meet our values and mission.”

10. Leadership

Merriam-Webster.com defines “leading” as “providing direction or guidance.”¹⁴ Survey respondents expanded on that, defining “leadership” as cultivating and celebrating effective leaders inside their organizations and in the

communities they serve, and accepting responsibility for and offering guidance on issues relevant to their mission and role.

One responding organization characterized the practice of leadership as “invest[ing] in leadership development and other capacity-building investments.” Another took a broad view: “We are intentional about choosing grantees whose leadership and work is rooted in the communities they aim to impact. Most of our grantmaking is for grassroots organizing and several of our grantees are led by people of color.”

These definitions and clarifying examples ground the common values in current experience and conventions. Several of the definitions place a value within the larger context of philanthropy’s efforts to evolve, challenge inherent power dynamics, or address systemic oppression. For example, grantmaking’s reputation for being opaque is implicitly understood and rejected by stating values of transparency and openness. This signal may be clearly understood by students of philanthropy in 2017, but could be considered too obvious to require stating for someone stumbling upon a 2017 values statement in 2037. Values can be viewed as philanthropy’s effort to acknowledge past failures and improve. It is so much more important, then, to understand this context and hold grantmakers accountable in practice to their stated values.

Shared values offer common ground for conversation and dialogue among grantmakers seeking to discover how practices might be aligned more consistently and effectively with, say, shared values of collaboration; diversity, equity, and inclusion; or learning. Discussion of consistent and effective grantmaking practices, when grounded in values, suddenly becomes relevant to board members, senior leadership, program and grants management staff, grantees, and other stakeholders. The many examples of values-driven practices submitted by survey respondents strongly indicate that grants management staff recognize the relationship

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/learning>

¹⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leading>

between practices and values. Interviews offer even more evidence of grants managers ensuring alignment, prompting conversations about values-driven practices, and, sometimes, sounding the alarm when misalignment occurs.

A Look at Three Grantmakers

How do grants management staff prompt alignment of grantmaking practices with organization values? It depends. Organization mission, culture, and even staff seniority can influence whether and how conversations about values and practice happen.

Like many grantmakers, HealthSpark Foundation, the Summit Foundation, and the Maine Health Access Foundation developed the wording and intent of their respective organization values during the founding process. Those values, with only minor changes, have remained central to mission and strategy since that time. Jennifer Pedroni of HealthSpark, Jamie Amagai of Summit, and Catherine Luce of Maine Health Access arrived at organizations whose values were already well established. In fact, each recalled considering the foundation's values when deciding whether to join. All three expressed a strong commitment to aligning grantmaking practice with values, and, in ways that vary based in part on their organization's culture and their particular role, each has taken opportunities to introduce values into formal and informal discussions of practice with senior leaders, staff, and even board members.

Pedroni is vice president of administration for HealthSpark, a private, independent foundation providing support to organizations that address the health and human services needs of residents of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. She joined the foundation as finance manager and grants administrator in 2003, shortly after the foundation was established, and was promoted to vice president in 2010. Pedroni manages staff operations and leads the areas of finance, budget, grants management, information systems, human resources, and facilities:

When I step back and look at the grants manager's role, I am in a unique position because I have

The many examples of values-driven practices submitted by survey respondents strongly indicate that grants management staff recognize the relationship between practices and values. Interviews offer even more evidence of grants managers ensuring alignment, prompting conversations about values-driven practices, and, sometimes, sounding the alarm when misalignment occurs.

been here a long time, so I have authority to ask questions that others might not. This role gives me access and perspective that few others in the foundation have. I will sometimes say, "I'm going to put on the grantee hat," and so we play out what [a practice or policy] looks and feels like for grantees.

These conversations, Pedroni says, are particularly informed by one of HealthSpark's values: "Fair, respectful, honest and professional relationships with all who come in contact with the foundation."

As director of grants management for Summit, Amagai says she lives the foundation's value of "investing in people" by focusing on grantees: "If I see things that don't make sense or that something in our process seems off or difficult for grantees, I bring it up." She says she focuses on ensuring that the grants process moves smoothly, effectively, and by the book, and that she considers herself as an "advocate for the grantees."

Luce, director of grants management at Maine's largest private health care foundation, oversees operations with an eye to making sure they are

[O]ur research did find that organization values seem to allow for different kinds of conversations, at all levels, on matters as significant as strategy, policy, and impact. Bringing values into a discussion of more consistent and effective grantmaking practices seems an obvious method for achieving those practices.

coordinated and integrated with the foundation's other program and administrative functions. "Guided by the voices of the people we're dedicated to serve" is the foundation value that Luce says resonates most profoundly with her:

I always think of myself as a liaison or an advocate for applicants, trying to minimize the barriers; and it is something we, as a foundation, think a lot about. I think I always try to bring the applicant and grantees to the table.

An explicit value of "respect for grantees" certainly gives grants managers unique responsibility and opportunity to align practices with values. Many of the most frequently named values fall within the purview, if not the direct responsibility, of grants management staff. Of course, not all grants management staff, by virtue of title alone, can make a stand for values-aligned practices. Seniority helps, too: Pedroni says she knows she can gently push colleagues to remember HealthSpark's values. "I often question things, and that's my role," she says. "And so I might bring up the potential implications of decisions." Not every grants manager has Pedroni's institutional authority or her years of experience, just as not every

grantmaker's culture supports empathy and self-reflection. As Pedroni acknowledges, "It is a delicate balance to lead from wherever you are."

Nevertheless, our research did find that organization values seem to allow for different kinds of conversations, at all levels, on matters as significant as strategy, policy, and impact. Bringing values into a discussion of more consistent and effective grantmaking practices seems an obvious method for achieving those practices. "Using values to prompt those discussions is a valuable tool," Pedroni observes. "I want to be sure we are behaving in ways that people believe we are living our values."

Sometimes, Amagai notes, values provide a different way for colleagues to frame and understand different points of view. At Summit, for example, realizing that two competing values were at the heart of an issue helped the foundation achieve compromise. One value — "achieving results" — is interpreted to mean the need for specific outcomes and very specific application guidelines. This interpretation had kept the foundation from approving a more applicant-friendly common application form. Rejecting that form, however, seemed to fall short of another Summit value — to "respect grantees." Rather than label one argument "right" and the other "wrong," Amagai sought instead to strike a balance: "We try to make our forms similar to other organizations', to make it easier for grantees. I try to always have processes and questions generic enough so that we are not asking for something no other foundation asks for."

Luce and Pedroni describe similar tensions arising from the competing values of risk tolerance and risk management. Historically, risk management has been core to grants management. As Maine Health Access looks to balance its value of "accountability" with its value of "promoting innovation and cultivating bold ideas," Luce says she urges her grants management team to tolerate a bit more risk:

I always say, if an organization is a 501(c)(3), then there is really nothing else we need to know; a 501(c)(3) has already met the compliance requirements. ... [I]n the past, we were very focused on due diligence, but now that we are more established I try to think about risk as it relates much more to our values — not just basic compliance.

At HealthSpark, Pedroni saw similar tensions emerge when trustees sought, understandably, to protect the foundation from risk. Framing the discussion around values, she says, helped defuse the tension:

In that particular dialogue, once I knew that they were concerned most about risk, then I understood. Just by having a conversation, we could address the concern but also introduce other values. By focusing on all the organization's values, we could keep an eye on what was most important, rather than "I'm right and you're wrong."

Pedroni says she believes knowing and discussing the organization's values helps her foundation achieve healthy compromise: "I have this mantra, 'assume positive intent.' I may not always agree with the decision, but we at least discussed it. Values don't provide an answer, but they remind us to ask the question."

Conversations about values help grantmakers learn what matters to them and how "what matters" is or is not borne out in practice. These conversations are vital not simply because they will help grantmakers to practice what they preach and feel grounded in organization values, but because without this accountability, grantmaking is at best hypocritical and at worst dishonest — two values that definitely were not surfaced in this research.

An Opportunity for Grantmakers

With shared values and illustrative practices identified, this research suggests an opportunity for grantmakers to go on to adopt consistent, effective, values-driven practices. Once grantmaking organizations articulate their values, they've established common ground to name and adopt consistent practices that "live" those values. Our findings indicate that

Indeed, grantmakers appear eager to align practice with values even if they are not yet confident they are doing so; many examples were described as "a work in progress."

grantmakers are already having these conversations. Indeed, grantmakers appear eager to align practice with values even if they are not yet confident they are doing so; many examples were described as "a work in progress." These continuing conversations must be encouraged and documented.

As the stories shared in this article suggest, values-led practice is being driven by some grants management leaders in some grantmaking organizations. More examples of how foundations themselves report values influencing practice will deepen our understanding of this pursuit. Perhaps even more important, more examples of how grant seekers and grant recipients experience foundation values in their interactions with funders would strengthen our understanding while giving grants management staff and others who interact routinely with grant seekers and recipients additional evidence to bring to conversations with senior leaders and trustees. Additional research, including off-the-record interviews with grant seekers and grant recipients, would add immeasurably to what is still a developing body of research.

While many foundations are ready to coalesce around shared values and consistent practice, let's not forget that roughly 25 percent of the organizations included in this study either do not operate with or do not make public their organizational values. We urge grantmakers without organizational values, as well as those with less commonly seen values, to initiate a conversation by asking these questions: What role do values play in your philanthropy? How do organizations

begin to articulate their values? Do grant seekers and grant recipients experience your practices? Do these experiences align with your values?

Our research suggests a profound willingness within grantmaking organizations to link their values and practices, which we believe can be tapped to the benefit of grantmakers and grant seekers alike.

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Unplanned Donor Legacies: How to Avoid Them, and How One Family Foundation Corrected Course With an Evaluation

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Keywords: Preserving donor legacy and intent, evaluation, building equitable partnerships, understanding community need, navigating funder-grantee power differentials, effective large-scale partnerships, mutual learning, local “big bet” philanthropy, engaging beneficiaries and residents, transformative neighborhood change

Introduction

When foundations consider the social impact of their key investments or initiatives, it is typical to look outward — to the quality of their grantees, the reach of a collaborative network, or the changes in a neighborhood they intend to influence. Yet, the legacy of a foundation’s investment is also reflected in its relationships with grantee partners, connection to the community it seeks to serve, and its definition of long-term success. Thus, philanthropic expectations and relationships can both shape and reflect the project’s impact and are as important as the quality of the programs themselves. How these relationships and expectations are initiated, structured, and operationalized influences both the trajectory of a project and the foundation’s legacy.

Based on our recent work together on an evaluation of a place-based initiative in Richmond, Virginia, we delineate the ways in which a foundation’s relationship with, influence on, and expectations around a collaborative community-based partnership shaped its legacy. In this particular case, the foundation’s intent was threefold: (1) to pilot a more efficient and unique form of comprehensive collaboration for serving young children; (2) to share the knowledge of the pilot more broadly with the philanthropic field and its home community; and (3) to demonstrate to the neighborhood the foundation’s long-term commitment to serving vulnerable children through a major investment, ultimately with a new building. Yet the way that the primary partnership and additional collaborations were

Key Points

- As funders turn to community change, intentionally addressing the unique power differential between funder and grantee partners and structuring ways to mitigate this imbalance is essential to honest communication. Funder relationships with their grantees impact the legacy of major community initiatives. This article explores this relationship and its effects through the lens of the recent evaluation of one family foundation — the Robins Foundation in Richmond, Virginia — and its follow-up actions.
- Through a participatory evaluation process, we derived three principal approaches for this donor, and others, to consider in contemplating funder-grantee partnerships and the way these may influence the impact of the work and the likelihood of a positive legacy: build equitable partnerships, set up structures for mutual learning, and evaluate with intent.
- We will show how the Robins Foundation, a funder committed to continuous learning; its grantee partner, the Partnership for Families; and the evaluators modeled these approaches in the assessment process and how the foundation is recalibrating its approach to grantee partnerships and integrating the three approaches into all of its work.

structured had an unexpected impact on the foundation's intent.

We show how the experience of developing and completing a comprehensive evaluation — which involved a look outward at impact and a look inside the relationship network of the partnership — ended with a family foundation reflecting on its work and modifying its approach to grantmaking and community partnerships.

We offer three principal approaches for donors to consider in their own reflections on their funder-grantee partnerships and the way these may be influencing the impact of the work and the likelihood of a positive legacy:

1. Create an equitable working partnership.
2. Engage in continuous mutual learning.
3. Evaluate to match implementation with intent.

Although we were familiar with these ideas, we learned that knowledge was not enough; donors will be more successful if they intentionally address these steps as core elements of program design and implementation. These approaches, together with guidance on implementation, will help small and mid-size philanthropies investing in large-scale community partnerships protect against undue influence, plan realistically for donor legacy, and develop an honest and trusting funder-grantee relationship.

In this article, we provide details on the case, followed by our learnings and results related to each of three approaches listed above. For each approach, we frame it within relevant literature and our initial reflections (*Guidance*), share what we learned had happened at the foundation and partnership over the period of time we evaluated (*Evaluation Learnings*), describe how we structured the evaluation process itself to model the approach and support course correction (*The Assessment*), share changes the Robins Foundation has put into place as a result of this process (*The Practice Change*), and provide guidance to philanthropies throughout.

The Partnership for Families

Investment in the Partnership for Families was a philanthropic “big bet” for the Robins Foundation in Richmond, Virginia — an eight-figure gift intended to facilitate transformative change and be a model for other neighborhoods. The Partnership for Families was established in 2003 to actualize the foundation's commitment to early childhood development and coordinate a neighborhood-wide initiative to prepare young children in a low-resourced neighborhood for kindergarten. The foundation sought to deploy resources in an innovative way that would accelerate improvements for children and families. It piloted a coordinated approach that the foundation believed would be more effective than providing individual grants to nonprofit agencies and would change the educational indicators for all young children in the neighborhood over time. By 2016, the foundation had invested over \$20 million — more than it had in any other project to date.

As a symbol of its commitment to this signature initiative, the foundation constructed a LEED gold-certified center of partnership operations in the heart of Richmond's Northside neighborhood, and invited a nationally certified early childhood education center to become its anchor tenant.

As part of their early efforts to design the initiative, Robins staff and board members sought to engage the community by speaking with parents, service providers, and local leaders. They worked to ground the effort in evidence and best practices by speaking with other funders, studying census data, and consulting leading researchers in early childhood development. For its time, the Partnership for Families model drew from best practices in both the early childhood field and philanthropy (Heckman, 2006; Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005). National funders were reflecting on their roles in “field building” and investing in promising and risky ideas where they believed there was potential to bring about significant cultural and environmental change.

This field-building literature was geared toward large national foundations, yet the leadership

FIGURE 1 Assessment Timeline

of local foundations like Robins saw potential to change the local landscape and disrupt conventional service-delivery models. The Robins board and executive director took the moral leadership of the field seriously and felt an obligation to share their knowledge and support their hometown community. For the foundation, making such a large investment in the Partnership for Families model meant having a reputational, moral, and financial stake in the partnership's success.

The Assessment – Timeline and Approach

In the fall of 2016, Robins engaged Communitas Consulting to conduct an evaluation to answer this question: What impact has the Partnership for Families had over time? Robins and the partnership had a lot at stake — donor legacy and use of funds for the foundation, and future survival for the partnership, which relied on the foundation for 82 percent of its funding in 2015. (See Figure 1.)

Each party also recognized that the other was essential to their success. The partnership needed to maintain the support of its major funder, and the foundation wanted its high-profile investment to be genuinely effective, achieving its intended legacy of neighborhood transformation. Both institutions were committed to improving the Northside community. This honest examination was facilitated by shifts in leadership at both organizations: neither the foundation nor the partnership executive had been deeply involved in the creation or execution of the partnership; thus, their collaboration allowed for fresh eyes on the past. We selected the 2012–2015 period,

as it corresponded to the period in which a new business plan was created and implemented for the organization.

The Communitas Consulting evaluation team did not begin work thinking it would emphasize the foundation's role as well as the grantees' role in shaping the project's outcomes and community legacy. But early on, it became clear that the Partnership for Families' performance was one part of the story, and how the initiative had evolved was another. The funder and the evaluation team felt it was equally important to review the foundation's role in the project's formation as we began to understand the power and impact of the mutual relationships. This was particularly important as one of the principal goals of the study would be to recommend a way forward for both.

As we began the assessment, the evaluation team realized that it would be easy to continue with an imbalance of power and create a research scenario where the foundation held the cards and the partnership was reluctant to share data that left its team and organization vulnerable to critique. Such an approach had potential to bias or limit the evaluation. However, all of us — funder, evaluators, and grantee partner — wanted to assess the real results without fear. We subsequently committed to designing an approach that would allow both parties to improve, refine, or discontinue the model. We wanted to create a space where the odds of obtaining honest and real information about program progress were high, where disruptive thinking was encouraged, and where it was reasonable to ask difficult questions. We wanted to

In successful large-scale community change, relying on initial agreements to preserve donor intent is precarious. That vision must be maintained over time through ongoing alignment and calibration.

be able to keep the option on the table of rebooting or discontinuing the whole enterprise if the results merited the change. We wanted to make it more likely that the outcomes mattered to the Northside neighborhood.

To move forward, we formed a small evaluation planning team — with members from both the foundation and the partnership — to guide the research and organizational assessment work. The evaluation “client” then became both the foundation and the executive of the program being evaluated. We established a productive space for reflection and troubleshooting among all parties, facilitating the sharing of informal and critical information throughout the assessment process.

Create an Equitable Working Partnership

Guidance

A complex community change initiative — particularly when the balance of power favors one party — requires careful cultivation of trust; safe, well-used avenues to share news of real progress and setbacks; and routine calibration of the work (Wei-Skillern, Ehrlichman, & Sawyer, 2015). On the part of funders, building trust includes relinquishing the expectation of control. Recent research in effective practices in philanthropy confirms the importance of honest communication and having a peer relationship with grantees to accomplish ambitious community transformation (Nonprofit Advisory Council, 2017; Huang & Seldon, 2014).

Foundations recognize an inherent power imbalance in relationships with grantees. Our experience underscores that recognition is not enough — action to name each party’s role early in developing governance structures, adopt communication channels, and formalize decision-making relationships is essential. Putting a structure in place preserves the original donor intent and gives grantees the freedom to adapt as needed while staying focused on the shared goal of deep impact. Clarity and agreement across partners from the outset of the work are helpful on two levels: confirmation of the initiative’s purpose, scope, and approach, and setting parameters around decision-making, governance, and management.

In successful large-scale community change, relying on initial agreements to preserve donor intent is precarious. That vision must be maintained over time through ongoing alignment and calibration (Trent & Chavis, 2009; Brown & Fiester, 2007). Alignment on community change efforts

... does not automatically result from a one-time community planning process or from a foundation-sponsored initiative. The alignment that is needed is about fundamental ways of working and addressing goals, activities, capacities, relationships, and learning priorities. It also needs regular recalibration as the work proceeds. (Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, & Dewar, 2010, p. 12).

Brown and Fiester confirm this from another foundation’s experience: “Lead[ing] with relationships, not money” is essential to a funder’s successful legacy (p. 54).

Evaluation Learnings

It may be counterintuitive to think that the intent of a large philanthropic investment could be hampered by a steadfast commitment on both the part of the funder and the grantee to make it succeed. But, in this case, funder involvement had unexpected and lasting results on the culture and incentive structure of the funder-grantee partnership. In particular, the high-stakes relationship between the Robins Foundation and the Partnership for Families appeared to inhibit transparency and rigor in problem solving.

In unpacking the partnership's formal and informal governance and decision-making structures, the evaluation showed that the foundation influenced the shape and scope of the partnership in three ways: (1) as primary funder with a clear vision of success; (2) as part of its governing board of directors (through 2016) and investor council, with regular oversight of operations; and (3) as a presence in day-to-day operations and decision making, and as the supervisor of the original executive directors. The first two partnership directors reported to the foundation's executive, having a voice in the work's design and operations but without perceived final authority or autonomy. The quasi-supervisory relationship inhibited honest communication, another important ingredient in building a large-scale, innovative, and risky model together. The result of this triple influence was that the foundation inadvertently developed a relationship with the partnership that resulted in its receiving incomplete and biased information sharing.

The unbalanced relationship carried over into the foundation's interactions with the six partner agencies who were part of the partnership collaborative. A top-down operation arose, where these grantees deferred to Robins in spite of the stated desire on the part of the foundation for an active, bottom-up partnership with continuous learning and information sharing. Ultimately, structure trumped intent. As one person observed, "no one in the room misunderstood where the decisions were made"; partners and nonprofit executives did not want to be seen as anything less than fully cooperating with the Robins Foundation's vision.

This situation might also have been mitigated by effective nonprofit management practices that prioritized open and consistent communication and mutual respect, identified as essential for strong funder-nonprofit relationships (Chandler, 2018; Exponent Philanthropy, 2018). However, this article focuses on the philanthropic perspective and scope of influence. Funders can take the lead in operationalizing and structuring equitable, open, and accountable partnerships regardless of the preparedness of their nonprofit partners.

Ultimately, structure trumped intent.

The Assessment

This time around, the foundation adopted a much more participatory and egalitarian structure in how we collectively managed the evaluation. We modeled an explicit change in the partnership structure through our design. Situating both parties as partners in the assessment with shared responsibility for its success or failure opened up communication and creativity and reversed old funder-grantee assumptions and patterns. The shift has continued to inform the way the foundation engages with all of its grantees and how the Robins team is facilitating the next phase of its work with the Partnership for Families.

Through this process, we confirmed how achieving a positive donor legacy requires sharing control and having regular opportunities to talk candidly about power and governing relationships. As the new leaders of the partnership and the foundation prepared to review the evaluation results with their respective boards of directors during the course of the evaluation, both acknowledged that going forward, the partnership would design its own destiny and the foundation would assess any proposed recalibration of the model on its merits.

The Practice Change

For the Robins Foundation, the process of the evaluation affirmed the benefits of having intentional and regular communication with grantees as peers. (See Figure 2.) In the particular case of the Partnership for Families, the current foundation and partnership executives have operated as equals in planning for the next phase. They invited others into the conversation to build upon assessment findings. They are working in tandem to share the results of the study, which provided two recommended options for strengthening the existing model, and a profile of families with young children in the Northside neighborhood. The foundation is stepping back as the partnership leadership and team reimagine

FIGURE 2 Guiding Questions to Develop an Equitable Partner Relationship

Questions to Develop an Equitable Partner Relationship

Through our experience as participants in this process, we recommend donors consider these questions when partnering with a nonprofit for a large-scale signature investment.

- (1) Are authentic channels for honest exchange between the donor and recipient organization(s) built into the design?
- (2) Can the nonprofit share negative results without risk?
- (3) Are roles and expectations between the donor and the recipient organization(s) defined, with a division of responsibilities that is clear and adhered to?

Even when a philanthropy can answer affirmatively to these questions, Robins' experience suggests that the whole concept of foundations "initiating change" is often the wrong way to go in seeding local transformational investments. Philanthropic leaders may assume they have a more global perspective than those agencies in their communities, which may see only part of the story. Yet, when it comes to program creation and design, this may not be the case.

In retrospect, the Robins leadership would **advise a "bottom up" approach**, where ideas are generated by those in the community closest to the needs, and the foundation assesses where and how it might have a partnership role. They would suggest **avoiding the lead donor role for greater sustainability** and **relinquishing control over a vision of the intended impact or reputation**. Finally, when entering into agreements, funders and grantees can **co-create communication and decision-making agreements** that anticipate power dynamics and spell out protocols for responsibility and action.

and restructure their approach. Both executives are communicating jointly to community stakeholders. The foundation's board is assessing the emerging model on its merits and asking for the kind of detail it would ask from all its grantee partners prior to making an investment.

Engage in Continuous Mutual Learning

Guidance

Effective learning is key to informing program design and delivery. At times, critical sources of information are overlooked or are not updated. For example, professional and academic experts helped the partnership design an effective program in the early years, yet this source of expertise was not consistently balanced against other more informal forms of information. Overreliance on those with formal expertise, with limited ongoing integration of community voices, can be a pitfall (Celep, Brenner, & Mosher-Williams, 2016). This is particularly true

for philanthropies, which sometimes neglect to consult their intended beneficiaries (or to ask their grantees to do so), even though the beneficiaries know better than external authorities what they need and how they will utilize services. Beneficiaries' involvement in program design — both scope and delivery — is particularly important when initiatives seek to change family behavior or community culture. As a set of foundation leaders and advisers expressed it,

In bypassing the beneficiary as a source of information and experience, we deprive ourselves of insights into how we might do better — insights that are uniquely grounded in the day-to-day experiences of the very people the programs are created for. (Twersky, Buchanan, & Threlfall, 2013, p. 41)

Evaluation Learning

During our evaluation, we found that the assumptions and expertise informing the partnership's early years — regarding community

needs and early childhood best practices — had not changed much since the project's launch. Professional and academic experts helped the partnership design an effective program in the early years, but this source of expertise was not consistently balanced with on-the-ground experience. And while the partnership staff was actively reaching out to families as clients, their engagement did not extend to inviting families to provide guidance into services needed, to shape the program, or inform the selection and delivery of services. We found no record of another phase of deep engagement with the families identified as the market for the partnership some 10 years later, or a recalibration of the approach based on changing needs and perspectives.

Without firm grounding in real-time community context and intended impact, the partnership model grew in an ad hoc way, responding to the diverse needs of families and the service providers seeking to reach them while nominally adhering to the partnership's original intent. The building itself, anticipated as a resolution to many of the needs in the community, was not consistently used for the original purpose of a comprehensive and coordinated place-based intervention. Over time, the model became less singularly targeted toward school-readiness of children ages 0–5, and the partnership used its resources to meet more broadly the needs of Northside families, not all of whom had young children. Not surprisingly, when the target population broadened, it became harder to define the partnership's intent and capture the impact of the collaborative intervention. It also became less clear what the partnership and its building stood for.

The Assessment

The evaluation team knew two things in thinking about how to advise the Partnership for Families and the Robins Foundation in moving forward: (1) the Northside of Richmond was different today from the neighborhood the foundation studied and identified as its pilot location 15 years ago, and (2) the true beneficiaries of the model had not been consulted in a meaningful way initially or over the period evaluated. These pieces of missing information seemed to our

Not surprisingly, when the target population broadened, it became harder to define the partnership's intent and capture the impact of the collaborative intervention. It also became less clear what the partnership and its building stood for.

committee to put the intended legacy of the project, as currently structured, at risk.

We decided to revisit the current-time needs of the community the partnership serves during the evaluation process to inform the forthcoming recommendations. We collectively agreed to ground the future recommendations in families' needs and assets. To facilitate this, the foundation supported the creation of a study and the publication of *Portrait of Vulnerable Families and Community Needs in Richmond's Northside* (Cox, McGinty, & Baker, 2017). We wanted the post-evaluation partnership model to be grounded in the needs and perceptions of its neighborhood.

Our findings raised questions about the current model as we learned that families were socially isolated and overwhelmed with basic needs, and — because of safety concerns — unlikely to connect with area human services. Families affirmed the value of supporting their young children's healthy development and growth and wanted to do more for them. At the same time, historic distrust of institutions and a belief that there was little they could do to influence community conditions meant that how the program was delivered was at least as important as what it offered to neighborhood families.

We worked with trusted neighborhood organizations and individuals to gather information

FIGURE 3 Guiding Questions to Consider for Mutual Learning

Questions to Consider for Mutual Learning

Through our experience as participants in this process, we recommend donors consider these questions when initiating a large-scale participatory investment.

- (1) Is the idea for the investment reflective of community needs and priorities, or the principles, theories, or values of the donor?
- (2) Does the nonprofit recipient have a built-in capacity to regularly engage those it serves in decision making, planning, and assessment?

In retrospect, inasmuch as a philanthropy wants to be a co-equal and trust its nonprofit partner to read the needs and assets of the community, without **structures that invite community members to lead and design**, the nonprofit — as well as the foundation — may receive an incomplete picture. The Robins Foundation received diluted and secondary information from its nonprofit partner. Had the foundation set a priority on **listening to community needs itself regularly** or requesting that its nonprofit partner include families in the design and implementation of the model, the philanthropic legacy would likely not have been the building they ultimately created for vulnerable families but something **more directly responsive to families'** concern about isolation, their children's readiness for school, and their own desire for security and economic resources to support their children.

Philanthropies can encourage their grantees to **engage their constituencies as leaders** and participants in program design and implementation, support **more frequent market studies or profiles** of changing neighborhoods, and get out of the office to **visit, learn, and engage** with hometown communities.

and facilitate conversations on family life, and uncovered interest in safe places for children of all ages as families' foremost desire for their children — something that had not been part of the original model. Our outreach to families also uncovered residents' heightened sense of isolation within the community — a significant factor to consider when formulating a program and philanthropic investment.

The assessment confirmed that consistent two-way communication between the donor and grantee partner, mutual learning, and research are important throughout the life of a partnership. (See Figure 3.) A trusting relationship informed by data helps a donor to retrospectively check the impact of an investment, better understand the community context in which a social change investment is being made, and revisit assumptions regularly as circumstances change.

The Practice Change

Putting the family voice first seems obvious. Prioritizing residents' voices allowed the Robins Foundation the flexibility to address the other key findings and lessons from evaluation of the donor's flagship investment. Family voices now seemed foundational in setting up the study, moving forward, and bringing about real improvements in children's readiness for school. The foundation addressed its commitment to the neighborhood and staff capacity for deep oversight, evaluation, and engagement.

With the board's guidance, foundation staff have outlined a strategy to move forward serving families. The results of this shift include repurposing square footage in the building to house like-minded community partners who serve children and families as well as updating the agreements with those in the building to ensure

more vulnerable children and families from the neighborhood are engaged. The foundation also assigned its top executives specific roles in nurturing the foundation's relationships with the partnership and other organizations in the neighborhood.

Next, the foundation used the data from the *Portrait of Vulnerable Families* (Cox et al., 2017) study to reinsert the family voice as its “north star” to amplify what families said they needed and wanted in their community. This re-centering will increase the impact of both the partnership and the foundation by providing parameters for services and funding. The foundation's accountability to the partnership and other partners, the community, and to families with young children is now more clear and transparent.

Evaluate to Match Intent

Guidance

Small and mid-size local foundations often collect data from grantees without sufficient time or capacity to interpret their meaning, missing the opportunity to celebrate wins or identify need for recalibration. The Center for Effective Philanthropy notes that less than 25 percent of foundations regularly evaluate their own initiatives and even fewer evaluate their grantees' work (Buteau & Coffman, 2016).

Evaluation is most effective as an early and ongoing element of a program's design. Incorporating an evaluation framework allows for early opportunities to take stock, assess progress, and redefine the direction based on the results for young children and their families. It also means that, when completed, a more traditional evaluation of program impact should not be a surprise. If data are considered along the way — and reflect the steps that need to occur to create change — an evaluation of impact will likely “reflect back” the data that are already known. When funding levels do not allow for large-scale impact evaluations, organizations can still take time to ensure they have a highly clarified, step-by-step logic model of how change is expected to occur. This reflection and alignment will help ensure that organizations focus on the right pieces of

Evaluation is most effective as an early and ongoing element of a program's design.

the work and resulting data are informative and linked to the idea of impact.

Evaluation Learning

The Robins Foundation board and leadership made a choice in the beginning of their major investment that many small to mid-size foundations find themselves making: they put money into additional programming instead of evaluation. They were moved by the number of children needing assistance and their ability to make an immediate impact in the neighborhood more than by the costly endeavor of setting up an outside evaluation or investing in the infrastructure of a growing initiative. As an alternative, they asked the grantee to complete logic models and report on outcomes each quarter.

Our study of the foundation found that although it requested logic models, the outcome reports it was given did not directly map on to the original intent of the model, or speak to the connection between community needs and services. A missing thread was how all the partners worked together on behalf of the children in the neighborhood and data on whether their coordinated effort made a significant difference other than what each might have achieved on its own. Measuring program outcomes can work well when a program intervention is straightforward and the inputs and intended result are clear, but an outcome reporting system is less useful for this type of complex collaborative or network model (BoardSource, 2017; Network Impact & the Center for Evaluation Innovation, 2014). In addition, it wasn't clear that partners were using the logic models as a management tool to set goals and continuously improve upon their work collectively.

The absence of objective evaluation did not prevent the foundation's board from expecting and

FIGURE 4 Guiding Questions to Consider for Intentional Evaluation

Questions to Consider for Intentional Evaluation

Through our experience as participants in this process, we recommend donors consider these questions when initiating a large-scale participatory investment.

- (1) Is the organization tracking meaningful data, and how is the data being evaluated?
- (2) Does your foundation have the capacity to collect and analyze the data you receive?
- (3) What mechanisms are in place for reflecting on learning from data and experience in partnership with grantees, and recalibrating when necessary?

In the case of the Robins Foundation, many of the elements we identified in our assessment would have turned up years before had it **commissioned a quality outside evaluator** earlier in the process. The foundation might have known whether the building was meeting residents' needs, whether to build the center in the first place, and the extent to which vulnerable families were making meaningful progress over time. **Setting up parameters for ongoing measurement** in partnership with the nonprofit grantee, encouraging and/or **funding rigorous evaluation** every few years, and being willing to **reflect and learn** from the findings in a nonpunitive partnership with your grantees are necessities for effective large-scale transformation.

requesting regular measurements of success or continuing to invest in an initiative it believed was impactful. But it meant that the foundation never had a complete picture of how the initiative was evolving or the direct impact of the collaborative wrap-around model. Board members did receive partnership reports about children their partner agencies had served — capturing, for instance, an increase in well-baby checkups for families with home visitors, literacy gains for children in summer camp, and an increase in the employability skills of parents. These reports indicated that within each of the six partner programs, work was taking place for families in Northside. But it was not clear that the innovative strand of the design — the comprehensive coordination — was taking place as intended, nor that the building erected for this purpose was facilitating this work.

A comprehensive outside evaluation earlier in the process might have shined light on how or whether the collective intervention worked over time to help a particular group of children be ready for school, or whether the kindergarten

readiness rates were improved for children enrolled in the programs as a result of the intervention. The value added of the foundation's significant investment — its intended legacy at the neighborhood and building level — was difficult to assess, even with the data it had.

The continuity and availability of good data and reporting was further complicated by divergence from the fidelity of the original model by the Partnership for Families due to budgetary decisions, administrative transitions, and shifting priorities among the program's leadership and partners. For example, over time, the intent to place children at the core and provide these same children and their families with wrap-around services became diffuse. The partnership grew to serve families more generally, seeking to improve resident self-sufficiency and well-being through separate partner interventions. The optics of this expansion were good — the building was full and the partners were busy helping children and their parents — but the impact was increasingly unclear, as was the extent to which they were truly addressing community needs.

The Assessment

One of the first steps the evaluation team took to track progress was to map the donor's intended impact of the original neighborhood change, and the resulting program design of the Partnership for Families some 13 years later. We then compared it with what was actually taking place on the ground and being measured. In addition to finding gaps in the data, the team saw that the original model was not followed consistently, and the data submitted reflected this disconnect. It took stepping back and reviewing the alignment to see the dissonance over time. (See Figure 4.)

Our assessment found that what was taking place on the ground was not always aligned with the partnership's submitted reports or the donor's intent. As a result, there were high expectations and limited information about the impact of the collaborative nature of the partnership model. The foundation had funded a coordinating entity and multiple partners to create a holistic web of support around children, and it was given data by the partnership suggesting that lots of activity was taking place in the building to that end. The foundation assumed that the model was working from the sum of the reports received, but we were unable to verify this assumption in our review.

The Practice Change

The current foundation leadership and staff are committed to learning. Using the data from the assessment and evaluation of the partnership's process and programs, it has reconsidered its approach to engaging with its community grantee partners and incorporated several revisions to its methods. Starting with its board of directors, the foundation now more frequently reviews challenges and opportunities for both its partners and itself. Having the board's expertise and input on the initiative's history and next steps keeps children and families at the forefront.

The foundation changed its approach to managing other large grants as it reflected on the results of the evaluation and assessment of the partnership. As the assessment process was winding down, foundation staff presented the board with

A donor's ability to leave a successful legacy within a community lies in honest communication, delineating clear and equitable relationships with grantees, and a deep and thorough understanding of the home community.

the option and recommendation to pause for a deep-dive assessment into its other trademark grant program — the Community Innovation Grant (CIG). The CIG is a three-year-old program designed to encourage new innovative solutions to intractable community challenges with an unrestricted funding grant. The board and staff agree that taking the time and resources to listen, measure, and adjust is exactly the right course for the organization. At the same time, the foundation is creating its own theory of change, which emphasizes a high degree of community engagement and greater attention to research and evaluation.

Conclusion

A donor's ability to leave a successful legacy within a community lies in honest communication, delineating clear and equitable relationships with grantees, and a deep and thorough understanding of the home community. It requires leaving room for a change of course as data and experience suggest a different direction. It means being explicit about power dynamics early on and developing agreements that spell out roles and decision making. It means going beyond traditional expertise and engaging those who will use the services — in our case, the families in Northside — in the formulation of the design and ongoing implementation.

There is a balance to strike between protecting and defending the right of philanthropy to give with its own agenda and the recipient's flexibility to fully interpret and design the approach.

While we acknowledge that many funders understand these principles intellectually, we found that recognition is not sufficient. It is necessary to operationalize and make explicit these principles — building equitable partnerships, supporting mutual learning, and evaluating with intent — throughout the course of a partnership with grantees. This involves giving up some control in order to create a trusting space where mutual learning is encouraged and supported.

As Ditkoff and Grindle (2017) observed, donors experiencing setbacks to their large-scale efforts and legacy can “reexamine their goals and approaches, including how they engage the communities they aspire to help in the decision-making process”; this is what the “best philanthropies” do (p. 110). Alternatively, the comfortable route is to “retreat to seemingly safer donations ... while others withdraw from public giving altogether” (p. 110).

We offer these approaches in hopes that local foundations will not retreat. Our experience leads us to believe that community change at the local level is achievable with them in mind. There is a balance to strike between protecting and defending the right of philanthropy to give with its own agenda and the recipient's flexibility to fully interpret and design the approach. Proactive giving needs to be countered with a more conscious and deliberate acknowledgment of the impact that the giving relationship and the funders' understanding of need has on the work. Preservation of a positive donor legacy requires it.

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A Visionary Organization: From Donor Intent to New Horizons of Race and Gender Equity

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Keywords: Organizational transition, donor intent, gender, race, intersectionality

Introduction

The Leeway Foundation is a unique American philanthropic organization focused on funding women and trans artists working for social justice in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the surrounding five counties. The organization began as a family foundation some 25 years ago, when the founder and donor used her sizable inheritance to establish a fund to support women artists in the Philadelphia area. What is particularly notable about Leeway is the way the foundation has changed and transitioned along with — and in some cases, ahead of — mainstream understandings of gender and racial equity.

While it is a tautology to say that mission-driven organizations are shaped by the founder's perception of the mission, it's also a fact. Founder and donor intent, along with founder's syndrome, often shape organizations in ways that can impede or limit positive change and growth, raising the following set of questions: How do mission-driven organizations adapt to changing social and political circumstances? How does the founder's original vision shape the organization in years to come, particularly after the founder exits decision-making capacity? We address these questions in this article using the Leeway Foundation as a case study.

After addressing the concepts of diversity and inclusion, particularly as they pertain to the field of philanthropy, we establish a framework for how organizations grow and change past the founding phase, considering questions of donor intent. This is particularly relevant in the case of Leeway, because the founder and donor are

Key Points

- This article documents the unique trajectory of the Leeway Foundation and its transition from sole-director family foundation to an independent foundation. Over 25 years, Leeway shifted in structure and grantmaking, yet has remained in line with its founder's original mission: to fund women artists in the Philadelphia region.
- This article focuses on the shift from the founder's initial intentions to what is now an organization informed by models of racial and gender equity, funding women, trans, and gender nonconforming artists working for social change. Leeway thus serves as a case study for examining transformational shifts in mission, vision, and constituency with leadership after an initial donation.
- Through analysis of qualitative data, this article addresses donor intent and (unintentional) legacy in changing social and political circumstances. We consider how the organization's development was enabled but not constrained by the circumstances of its founding and identify strategies and best practices for other foundations in transition, whether in terms of population served or organizational structure.

the same person, Linda Lee Alter. By walking away from her substantial inheritance and decision-making power regarding these funds, Alter allowed Leeway to grow and change in new and previously unforeseen directions beyond her original vision, which was to fund woman-identified artists in Philadelphia. After establishing

our use of terms like “diversity” and “inclusion,” we document these changes based on archival documents and in-depth interviews. Finally, we present our findings on what other foundations and philanthropic organizations can learn from this unique case study, particularly with regard to gender and racial equity in changing times.

Diversity and Inclusion: Messy Processes

To understand the Leeway story in the context of donor intent and founder vision, we address the concepts of diversity and inclusion. As contemporary foundations rightly focus on diversity and inclusion among board members, staff, and populations served, there is a very real danger of tokenism and other trivial changes that do not serve the larger goal of funding social change, which in the United States inheres around race, class, and gender, as well as ability and sexuality. Much research argues that inclusion is a more useful goal than diversity, although including those outside mainstream power structures (read: white and class privileged) can too easily replicate the status quo with some key demographic differences. Fredette, Bradshaw, and Krause (2016) address the importance of inclusion over diversity in their recent work on board composition. As they argue, individual experiences in organizations are not simply a matter of functional inclusion, but part of a larger project of social and relational inclusion. Tokenism has long been seen as a danger of functional inclusion without addressing larger social and relational dynamics; as Kanter (1977) argued decades ago, the use of token representation hinders growth and change by suggesting that institutional change can happen solely on an individual basis. That is to say, individuals can easily be discounted, seen to either speak for an entire group, or be marginalized. As Fredette et al. argue, “people simply do not experience diversity in a one-dimensional fashion, whether from the functionalist perspective of a stakeholder or the relational one of a group member” (p. 47).

So, then, the continued challenges of diversity are practices more than principles, although clearly frameworks matter. Fredette et al.

We argue inclusion is a bumpy, ongoing, and often iterative and recursive practice. It is also necessary.

(2016) argue that a framework of inclusion is much more useful to boards of directors than one of “diversity,” because of the tension, not to mention short-sightedness, of attending to optics rather than social patterns and contexts. Inclusion and organizational transformation are rife with tension and contradiction. Perhaps these cannot be avoided and must be embraced or at least consciously acknowledged and managed as best possible. The question of inclusive feminisms and what they might look like in practice is an ongoing one, with a history fraught with the challenges of difference (Freeman, 1972–1973, Young, 1986, Joseph, 2002). Young, Freeman, and Joseph all argue in different ways for the importance of dissent, of what we call “messiness,” and against utopian visions of harmony and cohesion.

We argue inclusion is a bumpy, ongoing, and often iterative and recursive practice. It is also necessary. In analyzing the Leeway story, or the story of a visionary organization that moved from an original charge to fund women artists in the Philadelphia region to one focused on racial and gender justice through socially conscious artmaking, we see the importance of intersectional identity and the messiness of making progressive change.

Past, Present, Future: A Three-Phase Overview of the Leeway Foundation

This article addresses Leeway’s 25-year history in three main phases: foundations, a move towards racial justice, and trans affirmation. By “racial justice” and “trans affirmation,” we mean a conscious attempt to address racial and gender-based inequality in society at large and within the organization, particularly for people who identify as trans, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and

other identities outside of cis man/cis woman.¹ Explicit focus on race and contemporary understanding of gender beyond a binary medically assigned at birth was not a conscious or intentional trajectory for the foundation, at least at the beginning. Leeway has evolved in ways that are in keeping with Alter's original vision for the organization. Leeway is a unique case study, but one that has much to teach other organizations by example: how to radically restructure a non-profit organization so it remains vital past the founding phase; how to explicitly center gender and racial justice and develop trans-affirming policies and practices; and how to evolve as a philanthropic organization ahead of mainstream notions of art, gender equity, and racial equity, thereby advancing a more radical understanding of philanthropic practice.

Throughout the three phases of the foundation, the founder's original vision and intent remain consistent, although the original mandate to fund women artists in the Philadelphia region looks very different in 2018 than it did in the early 1990s. From the intent to fund women artists to the current mission to fund "women and trans artists working for social change," the foundation itself has grown in size, scope, staff, and grantees in ways that Alter could not have imagined. Leeway is currently a leader in trans-affirming philanthropy that addresses gender and racial equity. In other words, Leeway currently works according to principles of intersectionality, a black feminist framework initially established for service organizations to build programming that recognizes how different forms of power and identity intersect and/or work in tandem (Crenshaw, 1991). Programs and grantees, quite literally, look different than early Leeway grantees, who were almost exclusively cis white women working in visual art. Alter now emphasizes that her original vision

of "women" was always trans-affirming, but at the time of establishment, second-wave feminist models that she drew upon were, with the exception of early black feminist voices, rarely explicitly concerned with gender or racial diversity in their conceptions of "womanhood" (Lorde, 1984). So on one hand, Leeway remains true to the original donor's intent: a foundation that addresses gender inequality in funding Philadelphia-area artists. On the other hand, Leeway is one of the few organizations to successfully transition from funding women to embracing a trans-affirming and nuanced understanding of gender oppression. In what follows, we employ a three-phase model of the Leeway Foundation to describe how this transition happened and what other organizations can learn from this shift, which is also a conceptual move from second-wave feminism to race-critical² and intersectional feminism.

In using this three-phase model to describe the history and transitions of the foundation, we not only address what changes happened, but also how. How did this transition happen, particularly as it was ahead of mainstream awareness of the centrality of trans issues for social justice funding? Through a process of building relationships with artist communities, leadership learned more about race, which led to new learning about gender. Organizational change followed openness to new ways of understanding the world. This change was driven by cis people looking to be allies and change makers, to be certain, but it also emerged in the midst of other organizational conflicts over power.

In the next sections, we address the foundation's origin story and 25-year history in more depth to document the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality for philanthropic organizations concerned with social change. We

¹ "Cis" as used here is short for "cisgender," which denotes gender identity and presentation that align with biological sex (i.e., not transgender or gender nonconforming). Someone who identifies as "trans" has a gender identity (or identities) that differs from the gender medically assigned at birth (generally "male" or "female," based on external genitalia). A cis woman, then, would be someone assigned female at birth who continues to identify as a girl or woman.

² We use the phrase "race critical" to recognize how Leeway's feminist approaches were, at this point, critical of the predominantly white second-wave feminist approaches, but not yet fully cognizant of the "intersectional" approaches (that is, approaches that see race/gender/class as co-constitutive). "Race-critical feminism," then, refers to a step in the longer process of working toward racial and gender equity, broadly speaking, in the organization.

argue that organizations can retain their original charge even as what that looks like, philosophically and programmatically, changes along with the larger social context and in response to community needs. This change process, however, is often necessarily messy, and demands a particular kind of visionary leadership and organization to move forward rather than implode. Major organizational changes, furthermore, often trigger other unseen changes, particularly in the case of demographic shifts and attention to social justice, where intersectional approaches to feminism remind us that race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, among other relevant categories, are co-constitutive in critical ways that cannot be ignored. In our findings, we return to arguments about vision, change, messiness, and the urgency of recognizing intersectionality in philanthropy, as well as the need for visionary leadership.

Phase 1: Foundations

We begin the story of the Leeway Foundation with Phase 1: Foundations, which focuses on the work of founder Linda Lee Alter, an artist and philanthropist in the Philadelphia area. This phase might best be understood as a charismatic, do-it-yourself organization focused on finding its way in the world of philanthropy, funding mostly middle-class white cisgender women artists, mostly painters. (See Table 1.) During this phase, Alter and her collaborators — who she continues to emphasize as vital to organizational processes at every phase — laid the foundation for a uniquely mission-driven organization to grow and change while remaining true to its call to fund artists historically excluded from funding. The organizing principle of this phase, then, came largely from Alter's second-wave feminist politics, committed to centering the experiences of women. While Alter maintains that her vision of women artists always referred to "anyone who identified as a woman," there were limited conversations happening publicly in art and philanthropy circles about possibilities for gender diversity. In retrospect, we find the original charge of the foundation to have intersectional intentions, although at the time, class-privileged white cis women like Alter were rarely conscious of notions of racial and gender equity beyond binary terms.

We argue that organizations can retain their original charge even as what that looks like, philosophically and programmatically, changes along with the larger social context and in response to community needs.

According to Alter's personal website and interviews with her and her daughter (who later became president of the Leeway's board of directors), Alter came from a middle-class Jewish family in Philadelphia who raised her to think actively about giving as well as about mobilizing her resources and privileges for social good. As an artist herself, Alter quickly noticed inequities in the art world, specifically along gendered lines. After first establishing herself as a collector of women's art, she decided to use her family inheritance in the early 1990s to establish the Leeway Foundation, which would provide funds to women artists. In an interview, Alter recalled, "One morning in 1990, while eating my breakfast oatmeal, light dawned!" She had been involved in local nonprofit arts groups and had served as a board member for other arts-based organizations, but these actions "did not feel like enough." She said, "I thought, 'I am an artist. I know, firsthand, that women artists don't have equal opportunities to male artists. I'll create a foundation to recognize, encourage, and help support local women's artists!'" From this initial vision, Alter established Leeway.

Of note in this first phase for the foundation are two key components. The first is Alter's understanding of "women." Alter was clear at the time, and continues to be clear today, that she was most knowledgeable about her own "first-hand" experience, which was thus prioritized in the foundation's earliest years. Put another way, though her vision was in theory inclusive

TABLE 1 The Three Phases of the Leeway Foundation, 1993–Present

Phase	Approximate Years	Leadership Structure	Key Change Agent	Overarching Mission	Philosophical Model
Foundations	1993–1999	Founder Linda Lee Alter, with informal support of friends and family	Founder	Support, encourage, fund women artists in Philadelphia	Second-wave feminism
Racial Justice	1999–2005	Sara Becker Milly, Denise Brown (move towards formal structure with executive director, board of directors, and staff)	Staff, consultants, executive director	Fund women artists at the intersection of art and social change	Social justice, race-critical feminism
Trans Affirmation	2005–present	Denise Brown (executive director); board of directors; expanded staff, including program director, communications director, administrative assistant, various staff, and interns	Executive director, staff, grantees	Support women, trans-identified artists, cultural producers who work at the nexus of art and social change	Trans inclusion, trans affirmation, intersectional feminism

of anyone who identified as a “woman,” the foundation catered primarily to Alter’s personal connections and communities. The vision of the organization thus was consistent with what can now be described as second-wave feminism, i.e., attending to “women” as a category describing to a singularly oppressed group (e.g. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* or Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*). This vision of “woman,” as scholars have noted (hooks, 1984; Crenshaw, 1991), often did not encapsulate the realities for women also marginalized by sexuality, race, and class. Alter’s vision, expansive in theory but narrow in practice, is closely connected to the second notable component of the foundation’s first phase: Alter’s continued attribution of organizational work to community members. Alter lists numerous community members, friends, and peers in the art and philanthropy

worlds who helped her in the organization’s initial phases, including founders, directors, and staff at other organizations; a close lawyer friend who helped to incorporate the foundation; and, perhaps most importantly, Alter’s daughter, Sara Becker Milly. Through multiple conversations about gender, class, race, and power, organizational leadership went on to challenge the assumptions inherent (though perhaps not intended) in such an approach.

Phase 2: Racial Justice

Phase 2: Racial Justice, marks Leeway’s transition towards a more formal organizational structure, particularly through such structural changes as moving oversight and decision-making responsibilities to Milly and a board of directors, and expanding the organizational structure

to include a staff of two. As Alter entrusted her daughter with board leadership and the two continued to bolster existing connections and make new ones with local artists, activists, and community philanthropists, the initial vision and intent for the foundation started to undergo important shifts. These structural changes went along with more intentional funding goals, including supporting emerging artists and those doing less conventional forms of artwork, a new decision-making model for grants, and new awards. During this stage of transition, consultants and staff also pushed the organization to center social justice in its grantmaking and internal policies. These processes and a redefined organizational mission led to a philanthropy with over \$20 million in assets that distributes approximately \$350,000 in direct grants to artists each year, with an explicit focus on funding women and trans artists working for social justice within a larger framework of racial and gender equity.

In a recent interview, Milly described how, while she initially understood the foundation as “this thing” her mom was doing, she started to connect with Philadelphia organizations like Spiral Q Puppet Theater and Bread & Roses Community Fund. Both organizations had and have an explicit focus on social justice, and working with leaders of these organizations helped Milly to shift her ways of thinking about the possibilities for art, philanthropy, and, ultimately, social change. Through strategic planning and conversations across different organizations, Milly said, she understood how, at the heart of both her and her mother’s interests, “injustice around gender and the desire for inclusion really mattered to my mother and me.” With this acknowledgment as a scaffold, board president Milly, along with some of the family’s good friends, newly hired Leeway staff, and select local advocates and artists embarked upon an organizational transition that involved messiness, change, and difficulty.

The result of these organizational transition processes was a newly developed organizational mission: at this point, in the early 2000s, Leeway would now fund women-identified

artists who worked at the intersection of art and social change. The shift away from simply funding “women artists” as a category and toward requiring artists to present larger visions for social change came from the arduous process of reflection and training, led and influenced by community advocates including numerous women of color and LGBTQ-identified people. Most remarkably, it was in this transition that Alter and Milly made the decision to walk away from overseeing their family endowment, leaving the control of the money in the hands of organizational staff, who Alter and her daughter imagined might be able to speak more directly to and about the communities they hoped to benefit and serve.

Reflecting on the rare decision to walk away from a \$20 million endowment, Milly said, “conceptually, it wasn’t hard.” She contextualized the ways this decision made sense to her by describing how becoming board president was “an extremely unusual situation to begin with.” She recalled,

I didn’t really have leadership skills, and I didn’t make the money, so I didn’t have money-making skills at all, so I was just this person from a family with money who found themselves president of the foundation. That was weird — and fortunate in a way, because I never wanted to hold onto any power. I always felt I was the wrong person to have it.

By this point in the leadership transition process, Milly had been part of the community funding board at the Bread & Roses Community Fund, a community-based foundation supporting grassroots organizing in the Philadelphia area. Through this experience, Milly met Denise Brown, who then was associate director for Bread & Roses and now serves as executive director for the Leeway Foundation. Milly says now, “If I hadn’t been connected to Bread & Roses ..., I wouldn’t even have known how to remotely think about, let alone how to articulate, that work.” The power of serendipity, or accidental change, is crucial to the Leeway story. Organizational leadership has been uniquely able to take stock of new ideas and concepts and

[T]his willingness to experiment, change, and grow are crucial lessons for other foundations.

apply them to the foundation; this willingness to experiment, change, and grow are crucial lessons for other foundations.

Milly was committed, even if mostly theoretically, to the notion of community transformation, and, feeling the pressures of leadership unfairly thrust upon her, she wanted to pass the endowment — and with it, decision-making power — on to those she could trust to remain committed to the work at the intersection of art, social change, and community transformation. While the decision to give up the control of the endowment was not difficult for Milly and her mother and family friends, the trainings, unlearning biases and prejudices, and conversations that came along with these processes were quite challenging. In reflecting upon the process, Denise Brown, who served as an advisor to the transition at the time, recalled:

I kept saying, you know, you gotta be really clear if you want to do this; this is really going to shift this organization in a lot of different ways, and if you're not really serious about it, you shouldn't engage it! Because at that point the conversation was really about marginalized communities, and given that the mission was explicitly about women at that point, it was more about the inclusion of people of color or people who claim certain ethnic identities.

Anti-racism trainings, conversations with community organizations, and challenges from the newly hired staff, who were committed to expanding Leeway's scope through lenses of racial and gender justice, often landed uncomfortably for white, class-privileged people like Milly and her family. If Brown hadn't been there to counsel her through difficult conversations and challenges to her leadership and privilege, she says, "everything might have completely fallen apart." Thus, while the story of leadership

shift for Leeway appears at surface level to be an often-romanticized account of (in Milly's words) a "straight, rich, white lady" giving up power, the reality was much messier and more challenging.

Milly reflected on some of the difficulties in the process of organizational transition and transformation:

It was really just a question of, like, how do you make the transition to having the people who Leeway is designed to benefit be the same people who lead? And then, you know, even if you do have that clear intention, there's the question of "are you guys really sincere?" And then beyond that, there was still a lot buried history: Even if you're completely sincere, there's the foundational beliefs and structures of power that the foundation grew out of, so even if it's moving there's still this history.

Milly, Brown, and many of the other key players in the process — including former staff members who pushed for organizational change — were keenly aware of the power dynamics underlying these organizational shifts. Regardless of intention, or how "sincere" she and her mother were, Milly knew that she had to make decisions in the face of a great deal of "buried history." As Brown often describes in relationship to her leadership role for Leeway, "somebody had to get out of a chair in order for me to be in it." In this case, the organization went through a complete transformation of leadership, from the organization's founding family to a seasoned nonprofit leader. This shift brought with it the creation of dedicated staff positions and more reliance on consultants and a growing board of directors. Messy as it might have been, the transition was necessary for Leeway to begin to make a range of important changes and shifts in internal politics and practices that impacted funding, programs, and ongoing relationships.

Phase 3: Trans Affirmation

Soon after, and at times coinciding with, the Phase 2 changes, staff began to push the board on questions of what it meant for the organization to be concerned with discrimination on the basis of "gender." These questions guide the current Phase 3: Trans Affirmation, which addresses

Leeway's internal and external processes for rethinking and redefining "gender," as well as supporting trans and gender nonconforming artists and their work. These conversations began soon after the organization shifted to fund artists who work at the intersection of art and social change. Former staff member Kavita Rajanna described how, while working as program director for the foundation during Phase 2 transitions, she found it unfair that her nonbinary and gender nonconforming friends were unable to apply for Leeway grants, since the foundation had an explicitly feminist and gender justice-focused vision that did not use trans-inclusive or affirming language. Brown added that the decision to include trans and gender-nonconforming applicants as part of the organizational mission was a move that made sense following the previous organizational transition. With the assistance of a board of directors made up primarily of community members (as opposed to family members and friends, which was previously the case), the foundation made the decision to expand its grantmaking beyond the category "woman" to include transgender and gender-nonconforming applicants.

The first out trans-identified applicants were encouraged to apply for grants in 2006, just a few years following the previous transitions for the organization. Also in 2006, Leeway staff spearheaded an externally facilitated set of trans inclusion trainings for board and staff members; 2006 was also the first year that Leeway fiscally sponsored the Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, the largest trans-focused conference in the world. This sponsorship marked the beginning of an ongoing relationship among the conference, local trans advocates, and Leeway, in keeping with the organization's value of establishing long-term relationships with various constituent communities.

Once staff made the decision to expand the organization's constituency, the question of intentionality yet again came to the fore. Brown describes how, after having expanded grantmaking and consequently changing applications and personnel policies to be more trans inclusive, she began to gauge what this question looked like

[S]taff began to push the board on questions of what it meant for the organization to be concerned with discrimination on the basis of "gender."

internally. "So, now you have an organization that's made this decision and this commitment to this constituency, that hasn't really trained or educated itself to engage that [community]," Brown reflected. She and other cis-identified staff have continued to ask the question, in many ways mirroring Milly's question about leadership and community engagement: "How do we not marginalize folks? It had to be more than, 'we're saying that this constituency can apply for a grant,' but 'how do we create the same organization for everyone?'" Brown said. Committing to expanding the organizational mission and focus in this way, then, required the intentional engagement of staff, board, grantees, and applicants, to shifting their mindset to a broader understanding of "gender."

Making Space: Formal Processes Around Inclusion and Access

In the process of becoming more trans-inclusive and -affirming, Leeway Foundation staff and board underwent further trainings as well as targeted outreach to bring in more trans and gender-nonconforming staff, board members, and applicants. Leeway brought the first openly out, trans-identified panelist to serve on the panel for one of the annual small-project grants, the Art and Change Grant, in 2007. Following this, the organization hired its first trans-identified staff member in 2008, and, in 2009, Gabriel Foster (former Leeway staff member and now co-founder and executive director of the Trans Justice Funding Project) conducted community focus groups and produced a Trans Inclusion Report that helped the organization to bolster its trans-focused outreach, training, and programming. Brown described this phase of organizational transition as a cultural shift: "From

FIGURE 1 Conceptual Processes Driving Organizational Change

the very beginning I think part of the culture, once this change had occurred, was really about having the responsibility to find the people who wouldn't normally think of themselves as having access to a resource like this." Access, part of Alter's original vision for the foundation, remained a key organizing principle and institutional value, even as the people to whom access was extended changed in terms of self-definition and organization.

Access to resources and prefigurative politics (creating the structures and relationships within Leeway's ongoing work that the organization hoped to see extend to the larger world) also remained a constant value and organizing principle in this third transition. Paying LGBTQ community leaders, such as Foster, Chris Bartlett (longtime activist and director of the William Way LGBTQ Community Center in Philadelphia), and David Acosta (Latino and gay-identified activist who founded local Philadelphia LGBTQ organization GALAEI) to help with organizational outreach to trans and gender-nonconforming communities was one way that Leeway staff responded to their "responsibility" to this new, key "constituency."

As with the anti-racist trainings and shift toward a mission focused on community transformation, staff and board engaged in difficult conversations and received some pushback from community members; all the while, the organization has since remained committed to its vision of trans inclusion and affirmation. As Brown put it, someone has to get out of the chair for someone else to get in it. In order to include a full range of women and trans artists working for social justice, as the current mission stipulates, Leeway must employ, consult with, and reach out to a full range of women and trans community leaders across race, class, and other axes of identity. (See Figure 1).

Today, more than 10 years after the organization expanded to include trans and gender-nonconforming applicants, communities throughout the city of Philadelphia and beyond look to the Leeway Foundation for guidance: whether it is organizations looking to undergo transitions to becoming more trans-inclusive and -affirming, or trans-identified artists looking for support and resources in their work. At the same time, however, organizational staff refuse to remain complacent with this progress. In a forthcoming

guide the organization is publishing for peer organizations (foundations and cultural, feminist, and LGBTQ organizations) on steps toward trans-affirmation, Leeway asserts, “We recognize that this guide and associated opinions, suggestions, and comments come from our own (often imperfect) experiences.” Particularly as an organization that does not claim to be a trans-focused organization, this imperfection is often the starting place for ongoing discussions about gender justice and diversity. Additionally, in a number of interviews, current staff and board members emphasized the need for increased trans and gender-nonconforming representation. Current Program Director Sara Zia Ebrahimi describes the staffing issue as “one area where we fall short,” and all of the staff members mentioned the need to continue to include trans and gender-nonconforming voices in all levels of decision making.

While the process of trans inclusion and affirmation at the Leeway Foundation can no longer be considered part of its “future” vision, given the organization’s ongoing work around training and education as well as documenting the process, as an example this process demonstrates just one manifestation of the work of Alter and Milly’s intentions as donors. When asked about her desired future for the organization, Milly replied that she could never have imagined the kinds of decisions, leadership, and work that the foundation does now. “I’m just thrilled to think about the people who are here now, asking those questions,” she said. “Fifteen years ago, I just had the foggiest vision [of these communities].”

Currently, she said, there is a general “intention to continue to cultivate inclusiveness and justice and art — you know, art in the sense of broadly defined expressions of creativity and humanity.” This intention is constantly “evolving and deepening and expanding, not in the sense of getting focused, but as it is lived and as people who are currently holding that charge.” The work of donor intent (and, by extension, legacy) here is represented in this notion of change as a constant for the Leeway Foundation. Milly described that while she may not have been able to imagine where the organization has gotten today,

The work of donor intent (and, by extension, legacy) here is represented in this notion of change as a constant for the Leeway Foundation.

she feels secure and content in her decision to walk away from the foundation’s endowment. “I had a feeling that something was possible,” she reflected. “But I had no idea how to do it, and I knew we were not the people to do it — so it was like, ‘Let’s just aim ourselves in this direction, and see what happens.’” Such an aim has quite clearly continued to have powerful ripple effects on women, trans, and gender-nonconforming artists and advocates in Philadelphia.

Findings: Messiness and Vision

The Leeway story is one of organizational transition. This particular case study hinges on a process of change that recognizes the interconnectedness of gender and racial equity, rather than a focus on equality or equal representation. This distinction is an important one. A popular cartoon image frequently circulated via social media and organizational trainings illustrates the difference between “equality” and “equity” by showing three people of different heights trying to see over a fence. At first, only the tallest one can see. The equality model gives everyone a wooden box to stand on, which helps the tallest and next-tallest see, although the shortest person still cannot see. The equity model gives each person what they need to see, foregrounding the notion that justice does not necessarily mean everyone getting the same thing, but rather, each person, each community, receiving what they specifically need in order to participate in a just society.

Following that notion, of creating gender and racial equity, we define gender and racial equity as a part of gender and racial justice. That includes “work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes

FIGURE 2 Emerging Concerns Driving Organizational Change: From Race to Gender

elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them” (MP Associates and Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2013). In other words, gender and racial justice might be defined as “the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all” (Applied Research Center and Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, 2009). In shifting its own understanding of gender inequality quite substantially from the original vision of (presumably white, cis) women as an oppressed class, Leeway is the rare case of a women’s organization successfully making the change to one focused on gender justice, trans affirmation, and gender equity. While Alter maintains she always understood “women” to include trans women and perhaps those on the transfeminine spectrum, nonbinary and queer notions of gender were not part of discussions of gender in mainstream philanthropy at the time Leeway was established. While Alter’s original vision is perhaps unchanged in Leeway’s current iteration, certainly explicitly addressing racial and gender equity was necessary in order to see the organizational mission as consistent. In addressing

Leeway’s history and the larger question of the role of founder and donor intent, we argue inclusion is a bumpy, ongoing, and often iterative and recursive practice. It is also necessary.

In this story, peer foundations and leaders move throughout the three phases of Leeway. As Milly noted, radical grassroots peer organizations like Bread & Roses and Spiral Q helped illustrate the possibility of visionary organizations along with the notion of organizational transition. Outside consultants and facilitators, including Executive Director Denise Brown, were also critical in helping this small organization grow from a staff of one to its current structure. For Leeway, hard conversations, open conflict, and other challenging processes led to new understanding about racial equity, which also brought awareness of the need to explicitly work for gender equity. The changes from what might be deemed second-wave feminism, funding mostly white, cis women artists, to today’s trans-affirming/ intersectional feminism model, funding women and trans artists working for social justice, could not have happened without serious interventions and organizational resources as well as a willingness to change and grow. (See Figure 2.)

Milly said, “15 years ago, I just had the foggiest vision” of what Leeway could become. Now there’s a new vision and a way to see. Leeway grew and developed in keeping with the founder’s original vision, although the trans-affirming notion of gender equity and focus on art for social justice certainly may look different from the original Leeway grantees: presumably cis women, mostly white, visual artists. Alter does hold that her notion of “women” always included trans women, although at the time of establishing the foundation, these terms and concepts were extremely marginal in mainstream philanthropy.

What is most unusual here may be the founder and family’s willingness to step aside and let the organization grow and change, and trust that original values would continue to guide organization, albeit in very different forms. The question, then, is how to create a culture where staff and board are trusted and trust one another to work through differences, not to silence them. In the Leeway story, we see that trust is built not only through the founder and original donor’s initial culture and vision, but through mess and struggle and a willingness to let the organization itself transition. Leeway employed an unintentional ripple model, and used the realities of change and struggle within the organization and broader social change movements to guide the focus and process of its own growth and development.

Currently, other organizations look to Leeway as a model of trans-affirming philanthropy, intersectional feminist praxis, or racial and gender equity. Lessons learned from the Leeway case study, like lessons learned directly from current staff, focus on the ways that organizations can remain true to donor intent and founding vision while growing, changing, and pushing boundaries for the benefit of constituents and the larger culture. In Leeway’s case, some of the most productive changes around gender equity and trans affirmation came out of an initial focus on racial equity. While none of the board or staff at the time identified as trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, agender, or other identities outside of what we now call cis, staff members engaged in racial justice movements were able to see and advocate for those marginalized and excluded by traditional

The question, then, is how to create a culture where staff and board are trusted and trust one another to work through differences, not to silence them.

power structures, including philanthropy. Through powerful (and often painful) discussions and group processes among board and staff at the time, the foundation as a whole was able to clarify Alter’s original vision: to fund those marginalized or excluded because of their gender. This new vision, which found form in the charge to fund women and trans artists working for social change, certainly marked a shift from the grants and programs of Phase 1 — yet also remained consistent in vision, if not embodiment.

For organizations looking to shift internal culture and external grantmaking, programs, and community connections to a model of intersectional feminism, racial and gender equity, and an overall focus on funding social justice, the pitfalls of what Young (1986) called “the ideals of community” must be overcome. That is to say, a focus on unity can stifle not only dissent, but disallow inclusion beyond tokenism. We argue that messiness, a willingness to consider overlapping conversations happening outside philanthropy, and an ability to keep the founder’s vision at the front of radical restructuring are all ways that can help organizations grow and change.

Lessons Learned

What can other organizations learn from the Leeway case presented here? First, that organizational identity is also intersectional. When one aspect of an organization’s identity, brand, or focus changes, other aspects are also likely to change. Conscious change in one arena may lead to unintended or unexpected changes in other arenas. While interpersonal conflict and coincidence within an organization may well foment change, as was the case for Leeway, there are

Conscious change in one arena may lead to unintended or unexpected changes in other arenas.

also distinct phases of organizational transition. In the case of Leeway, the phases move from the early foundations of a feminist organization to:

- Explicit focus on social justice, which changed the grant focus from women artists to artists working for social change. This shift led to:
- Explicit focus on race, anti-racist practices, and racial equity; hiring and funding people of color. This shift led to:
- Explicit focus on gender exclusion, oppression, and equity; hiring and funding trans and gender nonconforming people.

At the same time that conceptual changes impacted the organization's mission and policies, the role of board and staff connections to new communities cannot be overlooked. If an organization chooses a radically new focus to programs or communities served, leadership must also nurture relationships and expand to include new voices or philanthropy turns to missionary work. One the more challenging aspects of affirming new people and communities within an organization is in the area of policies, specifically pay and benefits. Are people from marginalized communities asked to provide free labor, or to share ideas without acknowledgement or other compensation? What kinds of financial and other needs might people helping to shift organizational focus have, and are these needs that a human resources department can directly address? Money matters. Leadership matters. Organizational change brings with it a need to create new pipelines for leadership.

Radical restructuring, and even moderate growth and change, cannot happen without

trust. Board and staff must be able to trust one another, even when they disagree. This is where consultants and new voices can be most helpful — not to impose a new agenda, but to help staff and board distill the vision of the organization while finding new ways to accomplish that vision more inclusively. There is no one path, but a willingness to not only consider but include those outside the organization can make for messy, scary, painful, and often powerful growth and change.

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Bringing Legacy to Life: How Video Storytelling Inspires Multigenerational Involvement in Family Philanthropy

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Introduction

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” Many of us are familiar with the expression. For family foundations, old photo albums are a rich resource for helping staff, grantees, and community stakeholders understand their history. But what if we were to take that a bit further? A 2014 study by Forrester Research found that one minute of video is worth 1.8 million words (Marketwired, 2014). Video, then, can help these foundations capture the story of their donor intent and legacy and use it to inspire involvement in their mission.

This article presents how a donor legacy video can help inspire multigenerational participation in the governance of a family foundation. The experience of the Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, a family foundation founded in 1977, serves as the backdrop for this examination. We explore the power of video in preserving family stories, the goals and outcomes of the Knott Foundation’s video project, and some practical suggestions for other grantmakers who wish to share their legacy in this way.

The Power of Video Storytelling

Most foundations go through some sort of process to define donor intent and formalize their values, whether at the beginning of their life span or after their founders’ passing. Video is a powerful tool in that process, vividly bringing stories to life for both older and younger family members. This section discusses why capturing family stories is so important to a family and

Key Points

- Most family foundations go through some sort of process to define donor intent and formalize their values, whether at the beginning of their life span or after their founders’ passing. Video is a powerful tool in that process, vividly bringing stories to life for family members, older and younger alike. So how can video help foundations capture the important story of their donor intent and legacy, and use it to inspire future involvement in their mission?
- With the experience of the Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation serving as the backdrop, this article examines how a donor legacy video can not only help inspire multigenerational participation in the governance of a family foundation, but also extend multiple direct benefits to grant applicants and grantees.
- Grounded in research and reflective practice, this article details the power of video in preserving family stories, the goals and outcomes of the Knott Foundation’s successful video project, and some practical suggestions for other family foundations.
- Key findings show that video storytelling can inspire new board member participation, enhance everyone’s understanding of the founders’ legacy, and benefit a foundation’s wider grantee community.

their philanthropic legacy. We also examine the benefits of using video as one component of a strategic communications plan to document and share the donor intent of a family foundation.

Three Reasons to Capture Family Stories

Capturing family stories through a donor legacy video, or through other legacy projects, is an important part of the evolution of a foundation as well as the evolution of a family. In fact, the stories that underpin the legacy of a family foundation's original donor often overlap with the stories that bind a family together. These stories can also help inform nonfamily members who serve the foundation by creating a shared sense of donor intent. Here are three clear reasons why capturing family stories is important to any family philanthropy.

Stories keep families together. It is important for families to understand where they come from, how they have withstood adversity over time, and what their family values are. In fact, that understanding — transmitted through stories passed on from generation to generation — may be more important than you think. In his essay “The Stories That Bind Us,” New York Times columnist Bruce Feiler (2013) argued that a family's storyline is the most valuable element to making a family effective, resilient, and happy: “The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative” (para. 11). Family foundations have a meaningful role to play in this narrative, and creating a donor legacy video is one way to preserve some of the family stories that illustrate the values and resilience of previous generations.

Stories provide moral guidance. “For centuries and centuries, stories have been the best means of explaining and passing on the moral values a family or people wishes to retain” (Pellowski, 1987, p. 1). The ability to pass on values and provide moral guidance from generation to generation is an important benefit to capturing family stories, and a particularly important element for family foundations in the business of engaging the family in giving back to the community. As Sharna Goldseker and Michael Moody (2017) acknowledged in *Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors Are Revolutionizing Giving*, “The transmission of philanthropic values within families is often closely connected to the most significant family stories” (p. 178).

Most foundations go through some sort of process to define donor intent and formalize their values, whether at the beginning of their life span or after their founders' passing. Video is a powerful tool in that process[.]

Indeed, family stories inform the values that support a family's charity and provide a platform for each generation to shape how their descendants see themselves in the world. For example, in the Knott Foundation's donor legacy video, there is a story about how the School Sisters of Notre Dame helped raise founder Henry J. Knott's mother after her parents passed away when she was quite young. He never forgot the kindness shown to his mother by the nuns, and it became a major motivating factor of his philanthropic support for the Catholic activities sector.

Stories engage the next generation. Family foundations often want to know how their work is going to remain relevant and appeal to young people who have competing priorities. In their blog post “What the Next Gen Really Wants,” Moody and Goldseker (2018) identify the primary tool in engaging the next generation:

Tell the family story. ... The next generation want[s] to be good stewards of family legacy, but to do so they need to know the family story. They need to be able to find their place in the family's narrative. This can be incredibly empowering to them as well, as it helps them connect their philanthropic identity to something bigger. (para. 14)

Clearly, foundations have the opportunity through storytelling to engage future generations in their work. After viewing the Knott Foundation's donor legacy video, a Knott

[S]tories not only help illustrate the motivations for a family's philanthropy, they also help build family unity, provide moral stability, and involve future generations more meaningfully in the family's work.

grandson who serves as a trustee of the foundation commented,

One story that stood out to me was when a woman came back to my grandfather after she graduated nursing school to set up a repayment plan [for the tuition money he had loaned her] and he responded, "Just be a good nurse." I think this epitomizes his generosity. He wanted to help others who needed assistance, but didn't ask anything in return.

In short, family stories are an integral part of a donor's legacy. The added benefit, of course, is that these stories not only help illustrate the motivations for a family's philanthropy, they also help build family unity, provide moral stability, and involve future generations more meaningfully in the family's work.

Why Video?

There are many benefits to using video to capture a donor's legacy, and some avenues where video outperforms other media, such as the written word, scrapbooks, family archives, or online curation tools. (See Figure 1.)

First and foremost, video has a strong emotional appeal. Manning (2016) argues that while text is often most effective on an intellectual level, video engages the viewer more viscerally: "Video satisfies our physical need for visual stimuli while allowing us to connect more deeply with the subject matter" (para. 2). For many of the same reasons that in-person communication is often preferable to email or text, video aids in

understanding speakers' body language, witnessing their facial expressions, and hearing vocal nuances in their telling of a story. All of these can be important elements when documenting the story of a donor or family, where an emotional connection can establish stronger ties to the mission of the foundation.

Video is also a strong learning tool. Two learning theories — the "learning pyramid," developed by National Training Laboratories (n.d.), and the "cone of experience," developed by Edgar Dale (1969) — argue that a person's retention of information is impacted by the way that information is presented. Dale's model demonstrates that people remember only 10 percent of what they read, but 50 percent of what they see and hear. Combine this finding with the statistic that 65 percent of people are visual learners (Gillet, 2014), and video becomes a powerful tool for learning.

Perhaps equally as important to family foundations, however, is that video provides a time capsule of sorts for this learning to take place over time. Video preserves voices and faces and brings old photos and memorabilia to life, thereby becoming a helpful tool for current and future trustees, as well as the general public, to learn about and embrace the mission, history, and soul of a foundation.

From a pragmatic perspective, video is an efficient way of sharing a message. It relays material faster than the written word — research has shown that the brain processes visual data 60,000 times faster than text (Boatman, 2017). In addition, video is easily shareable online via multiple platforms, such as websites and social media, so it can reach a wider audience. There is also an opportunity to repurpose video to benefit multiple parties. For example, by sectioning out small segments of a larger story and providing those segments to others for their own communications, a video about a single foundation can end up being useful to several organizations. The many practical applications of video make it an effective medium for nonprofit foundations seeking more value for their money.

FIGURE 1 Benefits of Video as a Tool to Document Donor Legacy

Emotional Connection	Learning Tool	Historical Preservation	Efficient Messaging	Unified Story
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages viewers on a more visceral level Aids in understanding the body language of speakers Picks up on vocal nuances of speakers telling a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a visual and auditory learning experience Supports retention of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserves voices and faces over time Brings old photos and memorabilia to life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relays material faster than the written word Easily shareable online via multiple platforms Repurposes material to benefit multiple parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weaves together information from multiple sources into one cohesive story Creates a centralized collection of family memories

Finally, video has the power to weave together an abundance of information from multiple sources into one cohesive story. Families collect memories in many ways: photo albums or scrapbooks of family history; blogs, Facebook groups, or other online platforms; file cabinets and basement storage boxes. A well-produced video puts the most important items from these collections into one place and, in the process, transforms many pieces of discrete information into a single and richer body of work. This ability to create a unifying message that all can experience is a strong selling point for video, especially for family foundations where historical records may be in the hands of family members across multiple states or countries.

In short, video is a medium of choice for families seeking to document and share donor legacy because of its capacity to capture emotion and nuance, to engage the viewer in more active learning, to be shared widely across multiple platforms, and to create a unifying storyline for the foundation and family.

The Knott Foundation Video Project

The Knott Foundation produced a donor legacy video in 2016 as the capstone project in a multiyear effort to further define donor intent and bring to life the vision and values of the founders.

Legacy is a powerful word. It is especially significant in the context of a foundation designed to exist into perpetuity, like Knott, where it will undoubtedly be up to future generations to read into the donors' motivations and intent, and to have some degree of confidence that their original wishes are being carried out.

Goals of the Donor Legacy Video

The purpose of the Knott Foundation's donor legacy video project was to tell the story of its founders, what motivated their philanthropy, how multiple generations of the Knott family are involved in the foundation's work today, and how the founders' vision and legacy continue to strengthen the community in and around Baltimore. As part of this purpose, it is important to note that while the founders died more than

[I]t became important to give every generation a way to understand and relate to the founders, and to hear about the life experiences that shaped their giving philosophy and resulted in the establishment of the foundation over 40 years ago.

a decade ago, a continued emphasis has been placed on keeping the spirit of Marion and Henry Knott deeply rooted in the work of their foundation and its all-family board of trustees.

In telling this story through a documentary-style video, the board had many goals:

- **Bridge generations within the family.** There are three generations on the Knott board. Naturally, people of different ages had different relationships with the founders. Some trustees joining the foundation today, for example, had no relationship with the founders because they only recently married into the family. Therefore, it became important to give every generation a way to understand and relate to the founders, and to hear about the life experiences that shaped their giving philosophy and resulted in the establishment of the foundation over 40 years ago.
- **Create a shared understanding of donor intent.** With 30 family members serving as Knott trustees, there are multiple perspectives in the boardroom. The donor legacy video was an effort to marry those voices into one, unified storyline about the founders and the foundation and, in doing so, allow all trustees — no matter their generation or whether they were descendants of the founders or those descendants' spouses

— to feel part of the spirit of the Knotts and confident that the direction of the foundation was in line with their intent.

- **Inspire participation in the work of the foundation.** A hallmark of the Knott Foundation is the family's active participation in its work. Trustees not only serve as the governing body of the organization, they also take on the role of volunteer program officers, investigating more than 50 grant requests each year, conducting in-person site visits for each request, and preparing formal reports and making funding recommendations to their fellow trustees each grant cycle. As such, the foundation benefits from an army of family members who provide the human capital necessary to conduct its charitable work. A goal of the video, therefore, was to inspire more family members to join the foundation and take part in this meaningful way to connect to the community and volunteer their time and talent.
- **Celebrate a milestone.** In 2017, the Knott Foundation marked 40 years of giving. This anniversary provided a welcome chance to pause and reflect on the foundation's history, accomplishments, and future aspirations. A goal of the video was to help celebrate this milestone with trustees, the Knott family, and the community at large by sharing the foundation's mission and story with them in a more engaging way. Specifically, the video was presented at an event designed to expose family members to the work of the board, and it was shared electronically with grantees, other funders, and interested constituents through the foundation's online newsletter and website.

Tools for Sharing the Legacy

Video storytelling wove together multiple media that had been collected and curated over time. This included one-on-one interviews of the children of the founders, conducted in 2013, and the resulting donor-intent values framework that encapsulated the Knotts' motivations for their giving to the community. Biographical research

FIGURE 2 Participation in the Knott Foundation's Trustee Training Program, By Year

commissioned by the Knott Scholars Fund, a separate organization with the same founders, was also used in the video, and a large archive of photographs and newspaper articles about the founders and their philanthropic gifts was available to inform the video's storyline.

The process of creating the video started with a board-level conversation about the value of such an effort. The executive committee of the board oversaw the project. The committee and staff mapped the story they wanted to tell and the desired deliverables. After issuing an RFP to several production firms, a producer was selected, a budget was put in place, and the foundation embarked on pre-production planning meetings, scheduled filming days, and went through a post-production editing process where the executive committee and staff could comment on the video's evolution. The final work product included a long documentary (35 minutes), a short promotional film (six minutes), and three brief features about Knott grantees (two to three minutes each).

Outcomes of the Legacy Project

The Knott Foundation's donor legacy video project met its goals and, in fact, exceeded expectations in many respects. The outcomes were most significant in inspiring board participation, enhancing the understanding of the founders' legacy, and benefiting the wider Baltimore community.

In terms of participation, the foundation gained seven new board candidates after showing the video to prospective trustees. (See Figure 2.) One of those candidates has completed the yearlong orientation program and become a full voting member of the board; the others are still in the training process. Notably, they are all between the ages of 25 and 35 and bring a "next gen" perspective to the board. Their participation has also added representation from a family branch that had not been active in the foundation for some time. The donor legacy video was the catalyst for these members, who now had a shared experience of learning about their

[T]hese stories from nonprofits featured in the video were meaningful to both the family and the community, and helped inform and inspire multiple stakeholders about the impact of each organization as well as the foundation's giving.

great-grandparents, to commit to involvement in the work of the family foundation.

The trustees' understanding of the Knotts' legacy was also enhanced. In responses to a survey, trustees and trustee candidates remarked:

- "The video allowed me to really understand my great-grandparents' beliefs, which in turn explained why and to whom our founders decided to give their money Their deep faith and roots in Baltimore inspired a lot of their giving."
- "Being an in-law in the third generation, the video helped humanize the founders of the foundation a bit more as I never met them. It served as a good reminder of the fact that we are stewards of the founders' gift to both the foundation and the community, and that there should be a sense of obligation to the founders to do the best possible job as a trustee."
- "I think the biggest takeaway that I had from the donor legacy video was learning about my great-grandparents' upbringings [and] humble beginnings, and hearing their children and grandchildren speak of them. Being very young when my great-grandparents passed away, I never truly had the opportunity to develop a type of relationship with them that a family member of an older generation may have."

- "While having not been able to experience my great-grandparents on the same level as a second- or third-generation relative, hearing the remarks and stories in the video really helped me develop an understanding of the type of people my great-grandparents were."
- "The part of the video that inspired me most was hearing the testimonials of those who benefitted from the generosity of the foundation."

Finally, the community benefitted from the project. Three nonprofits were featured in the video, their stories were woven into the long and short documentaries, and their stories were separated into three smaller segments that the nonprofits could use in their own communications. The head of a neighborhood community center featured in the video later commented,

It was exciting to share the center's work accomplished through Knott Foundation's longtime support and partnership. Through the video, we gained more visibility and credibility as a small community nonprofit that is growing. It aided us in receiving more support and recognition for our successes!

A representative from a local Catholic school reflected on participation in the video:

We were able to show potential and current funders the value of our organization and the positive impact we are making in the lives of our students. We value the history of the Knott Foundation, whose values and mission mirrors ours; having the video afforded us added credibility and spotlighted our symbiotic relationship.

Clearly, these stories from nonprofits featured in the video were meaningful to both the family and the community, and helped inform and inspire multiple stakeholders about the impact of each organization as well as the foundation's giving.

Meanwhile, the presence of the video on the foundation website's homepage has led to a richer understanding of the Knott Foundation's legacy among grant applicants. The foundation's grants manager recently commented that since

the enhancement of the video was added to the website, “many of the LOI’s [letters of intent] we receive do a better job of linking the mission, vision and values of Mr. and Mrs. Knott in a more realistic and thoughtful fashion.”

Practical Suggestions for Other Grantmakers

Video storytelling affords a multitude of benefits to foundations wishing to share their vision, values, and sense of community with key stakeholders. Here are some practical suggestions for maximizing the impact of a donor legacy video (Brodsky, 2017; Medinger, 2017):

1. **Build excitement on your board.** A legacy video project provides an opportunity for an entire board to get involved as a group. In this planning phase, working together to establish a vision, set goals, and consider the possible angles builds excitement for the project. Is the aim to create a centerpiece for a milestone family event? To explain the founders’ vision to potential grantees? To share grantee stories? Choose the desired outcomes for the video: Is it to encourage new members to join the board, or to clarify donor intent? Each board member — and, potentially, each family member — might make a list of things they have always wanted to know about elder or deceased family members. The more everyone is involved in discussions and decisions, the greater the participation and enthusiasm for the project.
2. **Tell a story, but not necessarily the whole story.** When family foundations start to think about telling a story, especially a family story, it can feel overwhelming. Where do you begin? How much do you tell? How much do you share when not every story is a positive one? Keep in mind that the purpose of a legacy video is not to recount every detail. Print is wonderful for sharing dates, facts, and figures; a website might be a great place for a timeline. Video shines in sharing emotions and feelings that will have a lasting impact — elements that cannot be conveyed on a static page. Video is all about sharing stories about evolution, identifying the turning points for the main “characters” in the story that led to decisions that created change and, ultimately, success. Sometimes those stories will be encouraging and joyful; other times they may be dark and depressing. The key is to include what feels both comfortable to the family and relevant to the story. It is in those emotional stories that wisdom and insight are gained.
3. **Focus on the elements of what makes a good story.** Just as we learned in middle school English, you need a few specific elements to ensure a great story: one or more strong characters, an obstacle or series of challenges, a climax or turning point, and a resolution or transformation. In a family foundation, there are already strong characters — people who not only challenged themselves to build great wealth, but who also decided to give back to the community. Think of first-generation family members as potential main characters, list the obstacles they faced, and then find the turning points that resulted in their success. Hearing about challenges that led to something bigger or better, either firsthand or from someone who knew them well, helps to bring out what a family truly values and allows future generations to gain life lessons and wisdom from those stories of triumph.
4. **Know whom to talk to and what they will add to the story.** Even if all the stories and main characters are not directly accessible, there are many other ways to proceed. Maybe the founders are no longer living

Stories need not be told only one way or by one person; multiple angles and a variety of perspectives will make a story that much richer.

[T]he simple act of being interviewed can make subjects feel that they have been heard and that their stories matter.

but the eldest children know their stories well. If the founders created a large business from the ground up, perhaps a longtime employee can offer perspective on how the boss was a leader in their industry. Maybe a friend who knew the founder for years could share personal reflections and anecdotes. In a discussion of a foundation's evolution, younger board members can share their insights. Stories need not be told only one way or by one person; multiple angles and a variety of perspectives will make a story that much richer.

5. **Take time to plan and get the right team on board.** There are three phases of video production; if done well, the most important phase is pre-production. It is not enough to simply know what stories to tell and whom to interview. The right team must be on board to help guide the process — typically, a video production company that understands how to interview family members and navigate complex and sometimes painful stories. The producers conducting the interviews will need time for research and to potentially talk to interviewees ahead of taping, so they are confident they have crafted specific questions to ensure the stories are told well. The company will typically share an outline of its process — also called a “film treatment” — so everyone is on the same page prior to taping. The most successful projects are those that spend this critical time planning in pre-production.
6. **Budget enough time and money to do it right.** A quality legacy video requires time and money. Scheduling interviews and location shooting takes time. Taping might take just a day if there are only a

few interviewees and visuals are largely drawn from archival images. But multiple interviews in various locations or plans to capture scenic footage or action shots of the board or a grantee will require multiple days of taping and even more time for editing. Identifying family photos or gathering archival images also takes significant time and may add to costs. Be realistic about the budget, how much can be accomplished within that budget, and the deadline for the project.

7. **Understand that the benefits of interviewing go both ways.** It can seem that interviewing someone on camera or listening to his or her story on a finished video is of benefit only to the viewer, who is the receiver of the shared wisdom. But much research has shown that interviewees themselves often benefit as well. Dr. Karl Pillemer, a gerontologist at Cornell University, has said that “narrating life stories can help older people resolve internal conflicts, overcome self-criticism, and improve their sense of self-worth” (Gonzalez, 2015, para. 3). In other words, the simple act of being interviewed can make subjects feel that they have been heard and that their stories matter. The interviewee feels validated and at peace — a benefit that cannot be measured (Garland, 2016; Mager & Stevens, 2015).
8. **Film once, then use the footage five times.** During the planning period, consider all the places the video can be used and schedule the editing accordingly to get the most value for the money. For the Knott Foundation, this meant creating five separate videos from one project. The initial video, an extended documentary, was shown at a foundation event and is now an integral part of educating new trustees about their family history. But in the planning phase it became clear that it would be helpful for potential grantees who visit Knott's website to have an easy way to learn about the foundation, so a six-minute version of the documentary was created to post on the homepage. The full documentary

featured three nonprofit grantees to show the type of work the foundation supports and the impact it makes; these three mini-stories were edited in a way that made it easy to extract them from the longer video and share them, so each of the grantees could post their video story on their own website — one video used five ways. (It could even be taken a step further, creating 30-second videos from the main project to be used on social media. The possibilities are endless.)

9. **Create a shared experience to engage old and young alike.** Through the use of cellphones and social media, we are more connected today than ever — but we are connecting in a way that is also separate and apart. We are not as often communicating face-to-face or enjoying shared experiences. Research shows that these shared experiences are “an opportunity to understand and connect with the world” and that “watching more documentaries is important, but talking about them together in person is equally important” (One, 2016, para. 3). This is one reason why Broadway shows remain so popular, why people are willing to spend hundreds of dollars to see a favorite music artist in live performance, or why we still go to the movie theater instead of watching films only at home on Netflix. A documentary about a family foundation creates a reason to bring people together in one place and the opportunity for discussion to happen afterward. These conversations can inspire closeness and lead to positive change.
10. **Start today.** The concept of a legacy video is easy to get excited about, but getting started can be more challenging. Not knowing where to begin or feeling overwhelmed at the task can lead a family foundation to put off such a project. But each day that passes is another chance that a story will be lost. We recommend taking small steps each day toward getting it done. Create a deadline for a finished product, maybe around a milestone birthday or foundation

The concept of a legacy video is easy to get excited about, but getting started can be more challenging.

anniversary, and work backward from there. Start a brainstorming conversation with board members about the stories that need to be told. Find a production company with experience in family legacy videos and allow them to help get things moving. Incremental, day-to-day progress will not only help build momentum around the project, it will also ultimately result in a well-thought-out product.

Conclusion

A video storytelling project can be an important avenue for a foundation to share its mission while also preserving the history and values of the organization. It can become an important learning tool for trustees, grantees, and other stakeholders to better understand the historical roots and present-day impact of a foundation. Moreover, by illustrating the donor intent and motivational values of the founders, it can inspire future generations to identify with the philanthropic mission and story of the foundation — and ultimately, as in the case of the Knott Foundation, volunteer their time and talent to participate in the foundation in a meaningful way.

A documentary video can become a significant piece in a family's narrative, contributing to the resilience and unity of generations to come. It can inspire, inform, and improve multigenerational engagement on an ongoing basis. In the words of one Knott trustee, “the video made the argument for me that being a member of the Knott Foundation is a legacy worth living.”

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Splendid Legacy 2: Creating and Re-Creating Your Family Foundation

Reviewed by Ashley Blanchard

It has been 20 years since the National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP) was founded, and 15 years since it published *Splendid Legacy: The Guide to Creating Your Family Foundation*. To mark these milestones, NCFP has published a new edition: *Splendid Legacy 2: Creating and Re-Creating Your Family Foundation*.

Like the first edition, *Splendid Legacy 2* is intended to be the definitive resource on creating a family foundation — everything you need to know to start and operate your family philanthropy. That's an incredibly ambitious goal, but one that *Splendid Legacy 2* pulls off remarkably well. It covers a range of topics: from broad concepts, like ethics, family dynamics, and values, to tactical matters, like where to house the office and how long a board meeting should run. And while this toggling between macro and micro can at times create whiplash, it also reflects the reality of family philanthropy, where seeming minutiae — like the length of a board meeting — are enmeshed in complex family dynamics. As *Splendid Legacy 2* makes clear time and again, every decision in a family's philanthropy reflects that family's values and mission, and the book consistently grounds its extensive coverage of the practical business of family philanthropy in these broader concerns.

Splendid Legacy 2 manages to succeed at its ambitious agenda precisely because it doesn't try to be a "how to" for family philanthropy — it is not by accident, I believe, that the second edition has dropped "guide" from its subtitle. Despite all the

practical guidance, what *Splendid Legacy 2* makes clear is that there are rarely "right" answers in family philanthropy, and that the solutions for each family foundation are as different as one family is from another. This may

Splendid Legacy 2: Creating and Re-Creating Your Family Foundation by Virginia M. Esposito, ed. National Center for Family Philanthropy, 2017. ISBN: 0692792546, 9780692792544

frustrate new philanthropists looking for definitive "best practices," but it certainly reflects my experience as a consultant to family foundations and as a family foundation trustee.

Instead of a step-by-step guide, *Splendid Legacy 2* presents a framework for ordering and prioritizing the many decisions family philanthropists must make and outlines the pros and cons of the various options. It is organized into five sections, each of which contains a collection of essays and articles by various authors. Some of these pieces have been kept pretty much intact from the first edition and others have been updated; still others are totally new.

Section I, "Creating Your Family Foundation," addresses the fundamental questions of values and ethics. NCFP President Virginia Esposito's article on "Goals and Mission" establishes one of the book's main themes: that the myriad choices facing a family during the creation of a foundation require clarity of purpose. But it is the

brilliant new essay by Russell Family Foundation trustee Sarah Cavanaugh about the importance of clarifying values that really brings this point home. In what has been wisely placed as the book's lead essay, Cavanaugh shares her own family foundation's experience with articulating its values, layering in practical guidance ("Five Ways to Get Started," "Bringing Values to Life") with a deeply personal story of the many conversations with her siblings and parents that resulted in a values statement. This is where *Splendid Legacy 2* is at its best: marrying the personal and the practical. It is loaded with stories — from an extensive interview with Bill Gates Sr. to vignettes that illustrate examples of how family foundations have addressed various issues. By sharing the unique experience of the Russell family, Cavanaugh makes a compelling case for the universal importance of defining your family's values. And if there is any one "best practice" in *Splendid Legacy 2*, it is just that: Successful family foundations — those that manage to engage in high-impact philanthropy and involve the family over generations — are rooted in a clear sense of their purpose and values. The best way for founders to ensure the success of their philanthropic legacies is to take time at the outset to articulate their reasons for starting a foundation, identify their core values, and engage other family members in those discussions.

Section II, "Creating Your Framework," covers the legal, financial, governance, and management issues associated with family philanthropy. It is the most tactical of the sections, loaded with practical tips and pro-con lists for weighing options. Some of these articles will no doubt be treated as reference material by most readers: skimmed over at first pass, then dug into with fervor when the issue presents. For example, the six pages dedicated to the question of where to house the family foundation may be overkill for most readers, but those readers will be very happy to have it when this issue arises (because it will arise).

While the first edition was full of sample documents and examples, for this version many of those have been moved to its associated website, *Splendid Legacy Online*. There, readers can

access dozens of sample policies and statements and find more in-depth articles on specific topics. By moving some of this out of the book, *Splendid Legacy 2* frees up space to include more real-world examples and streamline its layout, making it more readable this time around.

In Section III, "Creating Your Processes," NCFP addresses the grantmaking and communications aspects of family philanthropy. In her essay on "Grantmaking," Susan Crites Price does a commendable job covering the entire business of grantmaking in 30 pages, discussing elements that range from finding a strategic focus to structuring a grant agreement. It's a survey course, to be sure; there are dozens of training programs, books, and associations dedicated to the business of making grants, and she can't possibly cover it all here. But Price hits on the questions most pertinent to family philanthropists, such as how to think about a geographic focus when the family is increasingly dispersed or whether to have discretionary grants. As in other sections of this book, she raises the issues, identifies the salient questions, helps readers think through the pros and cons, and shares additional resources.

Similarly, in their essay on communications, Nina Sachdev Hoffman and Vincent Stehle find a compelling balance between the theoretical and practical. They begin by discussing the ethics of transparency and stewardship, making a persuasive case for the need for open communication in a field that is often attention-wary. They then drill down into matters like the basic contents of a press release and the use of social media. Their final segment, on "Supporting Media That Matters," feels a bit out of place. Here, the authors make the case for philanthropic support of media in the public interest — which makes sense, since Stehle and Hoffman are staff at Media Impact Funders, a membership organization of funders who support media and communications in the public interest. While I found this section informative and balanced, it was the only part of the book that looked at — and advocated for — a particular funding strategy. I wondered why it was included, or why there weren't equivalent sections on areas like funding policy advocacy or capacity building.

One critique of *Splendid Legacy 2* is that its organization can at times be confusing; there is occasional duplication. Articles by Esposito and by John Sare, for example, both address creating a mission statement; and while Sare writes from a legal perspective and Esposito takes a broader view, I found myself flipping between the two, trying to reconcile their approaches. Duplications can also be found in the book's coverage of mission-related investments (in the finance and the grantmaking chapters), reflection and renewal (in the governance and the re-creating and revitalizing chapters), and social media and technology (in the management and the communications chapters). This redundancy is not surprising, given that *Splendid Legacy 2* is a collection of pieces by different authors with different perspectives. And it reflects the messy reality of family philanthropy, where there is no one right way to draft a mission statement and where investments are both programmatic and financial decisions. Still, some cross-referencing would have helped keep me oriented.

Section IV, "Re-Creating and Revitalizing," is new to this edition and reflects the addition to its subtitle, referencing the fact that the focus is not only on the creation of new foundations, but on guiding philanthropists through the many transitions that family foundations constantly face and that force the revisiting of the fundamental questions and concepts raised in this book. It emphasizes that family philanthropy is a moving target, and that thriving family foundations are those that continue to adapt and change as their internal and external environments shift.

While the intended audience of *Splendid Legacy 2* may be a founder just beginning a journey into organized family philanthropy, its questions and concepts are equally relevant for foundations transitioning to new generations of leadership, grappling with an influx of assets, or rethinking their commitment to a particular community or issue. It is often more challenging for established foundations to confront these choices, balancing a desire to honor original donor intent with a desire to respond to new voices and circumstances. One of the most important messages of *Splendid Legacy 2* is to encourage patience: While

[W]hat Splendid Legacy 2 makes clear is that there are rarely "right" answers in family philanthropy, and that the solutions for each family foundation are as different as one family is from another.

a founder may want to quickly and neatly resolve all issues in order to cement a legacy, the reality is that many of the most fundamental decisions in family philanthropy require discussion, learning, and broad input. None of those happen quickly, and their necessity will continue to arise over the life of a foundation.

Section V, "Commencement," contains two essays that lift readers out of the "how" and into the "why" of family philanthropy. David Dodson's essay on governance is a wonderful addition to *Splendid Legacy 2*. He stresses that trusteeship is, at its core, about trust: holding it, building it, fulfilling it. His closing "Trustee Prayer," which warns against complacency and hubris, is a wonderful segue into the final essay of the book, Paul Ylvisaker's "The Spirit of Philanthropy and the Soul of Those Who Manage It." That piece, which appeared in the first edition and was originally presented at a Council on Foundations conference in 1987, may be even more relevant today than it was then. In an era of increasing professionalization and a growing emphasis on strategic philanthropy, Ylvisaker emphasizes that philanthropy is, at its core, about the people who do it. He challenges those involved in philanthropy to guard their humanity against the very real pull of "arrogance, insensitivity, insecurity, or shield of impersonality" (p. 293). The essay echoes a central theme of this book: that family philanthropy requires both head and heart, and that the joy and challenge of this work comes in balancing the two. For me to summarize further would do a disservice to Ylvisaker and the eloquence and

power of his message. Suffice it to say that his essay provides a moral compass for philanthropists and should be required reading for anyone engaged with a family foundation — or any other form of organized philanthropy.

Splendid Legacy 2 is a fine resource for anyone involved in family philanthropy. For so many donors, the impulses that inspire them to create a family foundation — the desire to be part of something greater than themselves, to give back to their communities, to foster a philanthropic spirit in their families, to build a philanthropic family legacy — can also be paralyzing. How are they to figure out what they want to do? And, then, how should they involve others in that process? *Splendid Legacy 2* doesn't purport to have all the answers, but it does provide a comprehensive look at the many decisions facing family foundations, a framework for thinking about those decisions, and resources for going deeper. While it may be overwhelming for new family philanthropists to see the questions and to-dos laid out in these 325 pages, it also conveys a path forward. Family philanthropy can be an isolating experience; most family philanthropists' only engagement in the sector is with their own family's philanthropy. One of the greatest contributions of this book is the reassurance that others have successfully gone before them. *Splendid Legacy 2* shares the wisdom — in the form of practical tips, examples, and analysis — that NCFP has gleaned through its 20 years of data collection. I have seen family foundation trustees sigh with relief when I directed them to the first edition. *Splendid Legacy 2* is sure to have the same effect.

Ashley Blanchard, M.P.P., is a strategy consultant to family foundations at Blanchard Consulting.

Executive Summaries

Reflective Practice

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From Charitable Giving to Strategic Impact: The Fremont Area Community Foundation

Carla A. Roberts, M.F.A., Fremont Area Community Foundation

In 2011, the Fremont Area Community Foundation launched a community investment strategy, focused on education, poverty, and economic development, that shaped corresponding aspirational goals aimed at improving the quality of life for residents of rural Newaygo County, Mich. While there had been significant community involvement and input into foundation planning for a number of years, the announcement of these strategic goals and their implementation created some apprehension among the local nonprofits. As the foundation moves ahead with its second five-year strategic plan, it is being guided through a continued process of change by research and learning, community feedback, results from key grantee surveys, and evidence of where the work has contributed to positive outcomes for the population it serves.

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Sector

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Leading With Values: Grants Management and the Case for More Consistent, Effective Grantmaking Practices

Elizabeth Myrick, M.A., Elizabeth Myrick Consulting LLC; Nikki Powell, B.A., PEAK Grantmaking; and Tonia Bain, B.Ph., Tonia Bain Consulting

This article identifies and explores a set of philanthropic priorities and aspirations that are widely shared by grantmakers today, and examines how the notion of shared values might inspire a fieldwide pursuit of more consistent, effective, values-driven grantmaking practices. To study the relationship between grantmaker values and grantmaking practices, a survey of more than 300 organization members of PEAK Grantmaking, a national association of specialists in grants management, asked how the respondent foundations' values influence their work. The research led to four recommendations for grantmakers: articulate organization values; find common ground with others around shared values; identify the most effective values-driven grantmaking practices; and pursue those practices to the benefit of grantmakers and grant seekers alike.

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Executive Summaries (continued)

Special Section: Donor Intent and Legacy

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Unplanned Donor Legacies: How to Avoid Them, and How One Family Foundation Corrected Course with an Evaluation

Saphira Maude Baker, M.P.A., and Casey Cox, B.A., Communitas Consulting; Kelly Chopus, B.A., Robins Foundation; and Anita McGinty, Ph.D., University of Virginia

Based on an evaluation of a place-based initiative of the Robins Foundation in Richmond, Virginia, the authors delineate the ways in which the foundation's relationship, influence, and expectations around a collaborative community-based partnership shape its legacy. They show how the experience of developing and completing a comprehensive evaluation — which involved a look outward at impact and a look inside the relationship network of the partnership — ended with a family foundation modifying its approach to grantmaking and community partnerships. The authors provide three principles for donors to consider in their own reflections of their funder-grantee partnerships: (1) create an equitable working partnership, (2) engage in continuous mutual learning, and (3) evaluate to match implementation with intent.

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A Visionary Organization: From Donor Intent to New Horizons of Race and Gender Equity

Carolyn Chernoff, Ph.D., Moore College of Art and Design; V Varun Chaudhry, M.A., Northwestern University

This article documents the unique trajectory of the Leeway Foundation as it, over 25 years, shifted in structure and grantmaking, yet remained in line with its founder's original mission: to fund women artists in the Philadelphia region. Through analysis of qualitative data, the authors analyze a 3-stage transition from the founder's initial intentions to what is now an organization informed by models of racial and gender equity, funding women, trans, and gender non-conforming artists working for social change. This analysis identifies strategies and best practices for other foundations in transition, revealing ways that organizations can remain true to donor intent and founding vision while growing, changing, and pushing boundaries for the benefit of constituents and the larger culture.

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Bringing Legacy to Life: How Video Storytelling Inspires Multigenerational Involvement in Family Philanthropy

Kelly C. Medinger, M.N.A., Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation; Debbie M. Brodsky, B.S., DMB Pictures

Most foundations go through some sort of process to define donor intent and formalize their values, whether at the beginning of their lifespan or after their founders' passing. Video is a powerful tool in that process, vividly bringing stories to life for family members, both older and younger alike. This article examines how a donor legacy video can help inspire multigenerational participation in the governance of a family foundation. Grounded in research and reflective practice, this article details the power of video in preserving family stories, the goals and outcomes of the Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation's video project, and some practical suggestions for other grantmakers who wish to share their legacy in this way.

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Book Review – *Splendid Legacy 2: Creating and Re-Creating Your Family Foundation*

Reviewed by Ashley Blanchard, M.P.P., strategy consultant to family foundations at Blanchard Consulting

Splendid Legacy 2 comes 15 years after the publication of its predecessor, which has long been considered a definitive resource on creating a family foundation. This updated version offers refined practical tips, examples, and analysis on the range of topics and choices facing families. The reviewer finds this new edition to be a fine resource for anyone involved in family philanthropy, even if it doesn't purport to have all the answers.

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Call for Papers

FOR VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

Abstracts of up to 250 words are being solicited for Vol. 11, Issue 4 of *The Foundation Review*. This issue will be an open (unthemed) issue. Papers on any topic relevant to organized philanthropy are invited.

Submit abstracts to submissions@foundationreview.org by March 15, 2019. If a full paper is invited, it will be due June 28, 2019 for consideration for publication in December 2019.

Abstracts are solicited in four categories:

- **Results.** Papers in this category generally report on findings from evaluations of foundation-funded work. Papers should include a description of the theory of change (logic model, program theory), a description of the grant-making strategy, the evaluation methodology, the results, and discussion. The discussion should focus on what has been learned both about the programmatic content and about grantmaking and other foundation roles (convening, etc.).
- **Tools.** Papers in this category should describe tools useful for foundation staff or boards. By “tool” we mean a systematic, replicable method intended for a specific purpose. For example, a protocol to assess community readiness and standardized facilitation methods would be considered tools. The actual tool should be included in the article where practical. The paper should describe the rationale for the tool, how it was developed, and available evidence of its usefulness.
- **Sector.** Papers in this category address issues that confront the philanthropic sector as whole, such as diversity, accountability, etc. These are typically empirically based; literature reviews are also considered.
- **Reflective Practice.** The reflective practice articles rely on the knowledge and experience of the authors, rather than on formal evaluation methods or designs. In these cases, it is because of their perspective about broader issues, rather than specific initiatives, that the article is valuable.

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