

Featuring:



**Stephanie Ellis-Smith**  
Phila Engaged Giving



**Kimberly Dasher Tripp**  
Strategy for Scale  
NCFP Board Chair



**Nicholas Tedesco**  
National Center for Family  
Philanthropy

# Looking Ahead: Opportunities for Family Philanthropy

A *Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy* webinar recorded on  
January 13, 2026.



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**FAMILY PHILANTHROPY**

© 2026 National Center for Family Philanthropy. All rights reserved. This paper may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without the prior written permission of the National Center for Family Philanthropy. The information in this paper should not be taken as qualified legal advice. Please consult your legal advisor for questions about specific legal issues discussed in this paper. The information presented is subject to change, and is not a substitute for expert legal, tax, or other professional advice. This information may not be relied upon for the purposes of avoiding penalties that may be imposed under the Internal Revenue Service.



## **Transcript of the *Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy* Webinar, Looking Ahead: Opportunities for Family Philanthropy, Recorded on January 13, 2026**

### **Nick Tedesco:**

All right, let's get started. Well, welcome again everyone and happy New Year. My name is Nick Tedesco and I'm the president and CEO of the National Center for Family Philanthropy. And thank you for joining us today for our monthly Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy webinar. Today we're going to reflect upon the state of the sector. We're going to explore how we got here, where we might go and what it takes to get us there. We hope the discussion will be thought-provoking and bring forward actions you can embrace to advance your philanthropic commitments with greater effectiveness. Before we begin, let me briefly share about our webinar technology. We're using Zoom's webinar platform and your controls are located at the bottom of your screen. Closed captioning has been enabled and you can turn captions on and off by clicking the caption CC icon. We want this webinar to be interactive, so please submit questions for the panelists.

To ask a question, please use the question box with the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen. When sending in a question, if you wish to remain anonymous, please indicate that by checking the box to submit anonymously. As a reminder, this webinar is being recorded and a replay will be made available to all attendees along with a list of relevant resources. And if you experience any technical issues, please reconnect to the technology or email Jen Crino for assistance. And now before we begin the discussion with our esteemed guests, we're eager to better understand who's with us. So we just launched a poll and we invite you to take a moment to complete the poll on your screen and share with us your role, a couple of words describing how you're feeling about the year ahead and what you hope to learn during today's program. So we'll give you a moment to complete the poll.

Share with us how you're feeling about the year ahead, what you hope to learn about the program, and let us know who you are. Great. We're going to keep the poll open for another minute or two, but we'll move on to the program now. So today our hope is to welcome everyone into a conversation that centers possibilities. As you all are well aware, the social sector is facing unprecedented and existential challenges, ones that continue to test our resolve and leave many of us feeling uncertain about how to respond. And families are contending with threats to their freedom of speech and their freedom to give. And this year, families will take a diversity of paths. And as we look ahead to the coming months and years, we can all expect to be navigating an ever-shifting and often unfamiliar terrain. So what can we expect and what can we do?

Our goal today is to bring some answers to light. Our conversation will be divided into three sections: reflections on the sector, opportunities to advance change, and an exploration of challenges. And there's no one better to join us in our discussion than two of our esteemed board members and experts in philanthropy, Kim Dasher Tripp and Stephanie Ellis-Smith. Welcome Kim and Stephanie.

### **Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Hello.

### **Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Hi, Nick. Thank you.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Hi.

**Nick Tedesco:**

It's so great to have you here. I'm really excited about the conversation. So thank you for joining us, and I thought we might start with some introductions. And Stephanie would love for you to introduce yourself to our audience.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah. Well, thank you. Really good to be here with you. My friends at NCFP and members, Kim, nice to see you. My name is Stephanie Ellis-Smith. I am the CEO and founder of Phila Engaged Giving. It is a national philanthropic advisory firm. We're based in Seattle and Chicago. I am actually in Chicago right now. I should also say I am a Black woman with curly hair wearing brown glasses, striped shirt. I have to look at myself here in my image. Striped shirt and a sweater on top. I come to this group with, I hate to admit, nearly 30 years of experience in the social sector, governance, family wealth, and I'm really looking forward to the conversation. Thanks.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Thanks, Stephanie. Kim.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Thank you so much, Nick, for having me today. First of all, also thank you to NCFP. I am delighted to be the incoming board chair of our esteemed board working with Stephanie and Nick and the rest of the group. I am an independent consultant based here in San Francisco, California, and I do three things in my practice. I work with families and individuals on their giving. In almost 13 years, it's only once not been a brand new donor. So what I say is I am hyper, hyper focused on brand new philanthropists, brand new families, often brand new to wealth. And the second thing I do is research on the sector. I'm super curious, as Nick and Stephanie know about the sector and where it's going. So I like to continually do research. And the third thing I do is sometimes that research necessitates some new innovations. And so I have been part of launching four or five different innovations in the past decade to try to fill gaps that exist in the sector. Thanks again for having us.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Yeah, thank you. Again, I'm really excited for the conversation. And I'm excited to have it with you because as you mentioned, you both are deeply curious about the sector and spend a lot of time, not just with clients, but with the questions themselves. So I want us to get started and really assess where the starting point is. So here we are at the start of a new year facing some familiar and some unfamiliar challenges. So I thought we might start with the state of the sector and just generally this question of where are we? What's the starting point look like in 2026 and what led us here? And I thought, Kim, we might start with you.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Well, Nick knows I love to say, what is the sector, Nick? So maybe I'll start there. In preparing for this, I was thinking about just how much philanthropy has changed in the last 15 years. And I say that for three reasons. One is vehicles. And while it's very boring, I think it is actually critical to understanding the state of the sector. So 15, 20 years ago, it was pretty just much assumed that if you worked in philanthropy, you had a foundation, you had a family board and some sort of professionalized staff. None of those things are true anymore. And we've seen an absolute proliferation of donor-advised funds out here, so many LLCs using your entire capital stack, many movement-based orgs, political efforts, the whole continuum. So on one hand, the state of the sector is confusing, because I really do mean it. What is philanthropy in that context?

And Stephanie, you'll appreciate this. I was working with a client maybe five years ago, a billionaire client. They had two DAFs, a foundation, a political arm, but their staff was embedded in a family office and they referred to the work as their community service. They did not want to use the word philanthropy because that did not resonate with how they were thinking about all these efforts. So what is the sector in that case? The second thing I think a lot about, which is very self-serving, and so I'm here in San Francisco, it's what I think about, but it's the new entrance. We have had so many new couples, philanthropies, families and individuals enter this sector in those past 15 years, and they are making profound changes on how we think about it. All sorts of different entrants. I was asked very recently to talk to a pre-IPO company about philanthropy, that this is an AI company, so that when folks had a wealth event, they knew what they should say to wealth advisors.

That is fundamentally different than we have a foundation, we're focused on a program, et cetera. The last thing that I think a lot about, and it's all connected, and I'm looking at you, Nick, with your JP Morgan history, but if you think about all these trends of the rise of family offices, banks, wealth management firms, really asserting themselves in the philanthropic space, a real trend towards lean, and lean staffed, lean philanthropy, I keep thinking about, okay, but the money still has to move. And so I have been borderline obsessed with collaborative giving in the past 5, 10 years, partly because I think it's more strategic and it allows community and experts to lead. And I think it's fit to purpose with a lean staffing model. And so I'm very bullish on collaboratives being the new asset class in philanthropy. And I think there's great positives around it, which I hope we'll talk about later. But that's what I think about when it's like, "What is philanthropy in that context?" I don't know, Stephanie, what you would add and think. I can't wait to hear.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah. Well, I think that was just a great way to tee up this broader conversation and your question, Nick, too, about what is the state of philanthropy right now? I think you could probably ask all 500 people on here and everyone is going to have different and yet very similar takes on that question. I feel like I'm definitely not an expert on that, but what I will say is that it is a state of massive change, and in many ways not positive change. I would also say it's a state of chaos. The sector is in a state of fear. And to your question, semi-rhetorical question, Kim, about what is the sector, I'll define it for how I'm sort of talking about it right now. It is the beneficiary side, the nonprofit side, because let's be real, this is why we're here. This is what we're doing.

We're here to support the nonprofit sector, the beneficiaries, the organizations who are actually doing the work on the ground. And they are inundated, they are overwhelmed in a state of shock, determined, all of the things. And here we sit in philanthropy, the other side of the sector, the other side of the coin, trying to make sense of how do we handle our own personal business? Kim, we're similar in that we only work with individuals and families. So when I say that, I'm talking about how do we handle our own business behind the scenes so that we can actually move the money to where it actually needs to go. And at the same time there are, and we're going to talk about this, I know later on, but there are all

these other issues, the same fear, overwhelm, shock, determination, all the things, it's happening behind the scenes on the donor side as well.

So we put those two things together. We've got a crazy ball of insanity. And I don't know what else you want to say to deal with. But with all of that said, that also means with this chaos, who was it? Rahm Emanuel who says, "Never let a good crisis go to waste."

This flip side of all of that means that we have an opportunity. It means freedom. In a way, it's freedom to do what you want, fill needs and fill these gaps. So the state of the sector also is, there is some bright lines in there and some opportunities in there. I flip back and forth and I've been on a couple of webinars and I don't know if anyone here has maybe heard me say, and I may contradict myself, because I feel like every month it's something different. So one time I'm saying one thing, another time I'm saying another thing, but it's like we're all responsive trying to handle this in real time. And I think we've all heard the concept, sources from Inside Philanthropy and Chronicle of Philanthropy where they're really pushing the idea, which is very true, that philanthropy cannot replace government funding or solve large systemic problems, even though we have these vast resources of private funds and they're in existence, and that's all very true.

But then I wonder, and I hope that it doesn't dampen any urgency around money actually flowing to critical needs. There's just also, here's another state of the philanthropy. We're holding a lot of tensions and a lot of duality here. So it's like on one hand there's this, yet on the other hand, there is that. So there's the challenge for all of us wherever we sit in the sector is to not get too complacent in our seat and to really be fairly nimble in how we are assessing our role, how we can lean in, how we can address what we're here to do. And just the very last thing that I'll say on this, and it's related to the new entrants, the new folks. And Kim, you really talked compellingly about the new people that you are experiencing to the sector.

And I want to just sort of double down on that. There are people new to wealth that you're talking about, but I also wanted to name the next gen, rising gen, people assuming leadership of family giving, huge, huge new entrants, women. These are significant earners in their own right. Many of them, I know Kim, you work with as well as do I and our team. They may be divorced, widowed, their own earners. They're operating alone many for the first time without any constraints from spouses or family members. And then there are also an increasing number of people of color, Black families of significant wealth that may be operating outside or adjacent to this formal sector. Other folks from India, China, who are from other countries who are coming here making tremendous amount of wealth as well and trying to figure out what is this concept of American philanthropy and how do we get in?

But all of these folks are coming in with new perspectives on our sector, what we're doing, their new perspectives on need, power. They have a different tolerance or unique tolerance maybe for risks and priorities different from previous generations. So I just wanted to name that as well. So there's just a lot going on right now.

**Nick Tedesco:**

There's a lot going on. And I want us to stay on the point that you mentioned that I think is really important for us to interrogate further about navigating times of great uncertainty and that this is a sector that is reimagining itself during a time of great crisis. And I want us to spend a little bit of time to bring forward some of the examples of families that are navigating this shifting policy landscape and the other really challenging circumstances that we are navigating right now. So I'd love to get your reflections, Kim and Stephanie, on how your clients are responding to these times of uncertainty.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah. Kim, you want to-

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Yeah, I think that just going off of what Stephanie said, I'd like to share the two sides that I see. And fortunately or unfortunately, I don't quite know how to relate to it. It depends on the person and their willingness to be brave, if I may. So I would say on the one side, and again, I work with new donors, so there's a reasonableness to this, everything is on fire at the same time that wealth, tax and legal teams are saying, "You don't need to do this now. We can wait and grow it and/or you can do whatever you want." Both of those pieces of advice, they will shut you down. It's too many choices for the human brain, I like to say. And so there's not enough off the table, right? And a lot of it makes you feel like you need to be an expert.

There's a lot of risk in getting it wrong. What if I disappoint someone? So Nick, you know all about the psychological barriers to giving. I would say it is the heartland of those feelings. And I do think, if I may, it's understandable. Because everywhere you turn, something is on fire. And here in California, sometimes literally.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Literally.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

And it's really hard to parse what to do. So there's a paralysis that happens that I have seen a lot of in the last two years. I would love for us to explore later today, because Stephanie and I love to nerd out with Nick about this on how you move through paralysis. So let's put a Post-it note there to talk about it later. The other thing that I actually see when people are activating is two main things. And a lot of this relates to my vehicle comments. There's a lot that you can do with donor-advised funds in a time of political context where you're worried about doxing or blowback on the individual.

Because there is so much state-based work and local work, again, I'm in California, San Francisco, if you think about immigration and energy policy, et cetera, there's a lot you can do with community foundations. There's a lot you can do locally. So there is a sense of, okay, this is morass, but down here we can go get some stuff done. And that is very exciting to me to think about the potential for local or state work. It's often closer to community, it's often closer to policy, it's often closer to tangible change you can see rather quickly. So there's a lot of potential there. Another shout-out for local collaboratives. So I would say it's those two sides that I see most often. I don't know, Stephanie, what are you seeing?

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah, thanks. I think that's really important to call out. And I would just say that the idea of using different tools and approaches when you do have so many choices, I think has been something that we see a lot of. Maybe I'll start by saying a change that I'll share that has been in me, that some of our donors are also leading into. And this is, again, me being nimble and moving with the times here, I've always been not a strong supporter of anonymous giving. In our firm, we spend a lot of time on values. We work really closely with our clients and understanding the purpose behind your giving. Why are you doing this? Because I think it was Peter Karoff, who's from TPI, The Philanthropic Initiative who had this great quote, "Philanthropy is this public expression of your private values." So I'm like, if these are your private values, well, let's stand behind them and you don't have to be anonymous, stand forward.

But I saw that there was a question in the box here about fear. That's real these days. People are afraid about giving to unpopular causes. There are fear of retribution and doxing. It's a very different

environment that we're in. So anonymous giving is an approach, a tool that I am seeing a lot more of. And five years ago, I would've been like, let's see how we can work around. And now it's like, you know what? I get it. I totally get it. If this is something that you feel that you need to do, also to make sure that the funds keep flowing to where they need to go, let's go. Let's do it. So that's one change. And that's also a personal change that I'll admit that I have leaned into, but that's something I'm seeing more than I have in the past. I mentioned that our firm is values-based giving, and that is a way that we like to talk about all of the giving.

Kim, you had mentioned earlier in your opening remarks about you're one of these clients, either a client of yours or someone that you know that didn't really want to call everything that they were doing philanthropy because it didn't incorporate all the things that they were doing. And I have to double down on that so much. And say yes, because values-based giving means that what you do and how you give is tax agnostic. Maybe some things are tax-exempt and that's great. But when you focused on the values and if you value the arts, for example, that may mean not just giving to C3 arts organizations, it may mean writing checks directly to artists, buying artwork. If you're up behind economic empowerment, it means investing directly in women or minority-owned businesses. You can go on and on about all of the different ways that I think folks can lean into values-based giving that has nothing to do with "philanthropy" with a capital P, which typically means tax advantaged giving.

And so that's one area that I would lift up is something that I've seen a lot more of. And to that point, folks using a number of different vehicles, as you said, Kim, to actually achieve that. Because form follows function. What do you want to do and what is going to be the best vehicle to get you there? And that's how we push it. It's not the vehicle that comes first anymore. And then the last thing that I'll say the big shift, and this actually, and my estimation really started during COVID, it's just this greater urgency around incorporating community outside stakeholders, and power-sharing, and whatever that may look like. Sometimes the power-sharing is still maybe internal within a family, bringing on opening up maybe a family board. If you are in a foundation type entity, maybe it's time to start bringing on the married-ends and the in-laws or next generation loosening up the bylaws.

We have rewritten more bylaws. We have closed so many foundations. We have undid them, we have undone them. We've done all sorts of crazy wild things to make that form fit the new functions and a new world of the way people are approaching the problems of today.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Yeah, I really appreciate your responses. And I want to bring in some questions from the audience. Laura asked a question that is a great follow-on to what you just mentioned, Stephanie. I'm curious about whether you believe philanthropy is built for these times, polycrisis, climate collapse, democracy, backsliding, et cetera. How and how not?

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah, I think that's a great question and it goes back to how are you defining philanthropy? Capital P philanthropy, I would say no. If it is writ small philanthropy, the root of philanthropy, this is why our firm is actually named Phila, not after me. It's the love of humanity. Our love of humanity and how we treat each other and how we support each other with our dollars, with our care, with our concern, with all of those things has nothing to do with philanthropy full stop. It has to do with our love of humanity. And if you look at it from philanthropy, from that lens, which we try to do, then yeah, it can be. But you have to lean into that and you have to, I think, use the levers of creativity and the lack of accountability that philanthropy gives you to actually do that.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Yeah, I think it's a great point. And I just want to underscore that this is a sector that's in a time of deep transition out of necessity. And all of the trends that you're pointing to, Stephanie and Kim, the use of multiple vehicles aligning all capital, thinking about different approaches, integrating voices of those most proximate. This is all, in our estimation, a response to a recognition that something has to look different, that the world is requiring something different from those who are stewarding resources, that we have to show up differently.

And quite honestly, I think over the last six years, we all have realized that there's an opportunity here. And a window of opportunity that we need to meet. And it needs to look dramatically different. I want to move into opportunities, and really asking this question of what families can do. And so I'd love to hear from each of you about the opportunities for families to advance meaningful change. And Stephanie, I want to start with you with a very specific question of what do you think the most basic and fundamental thing that families can do might be?

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Super simple. Move the money. Just do it. You pick your three words. Kim, you brought it up. You talked about the paralysis. I call it analysis paralysis. It's not the time to overthink these things. You don't have to let the perfect be the enemy of the good, not in these times. People are suffering. Hell, people are dying right now. This is not the time to be pontificating and wondering. And I guess I mentioned this earlier, there's always this tension, I feel. All the time with everything that I say. And I don't want to say I want to say something and then I want to backtrack. But I am holding these two things all the time because I 100% with my full chest believe that do it, move the money. There's nothing horrible that is going to happen if you accidentally give the wrong amount to the wrong grantee.

Nothing bad's going to happen. Just do it. And at the same time, I still do believe in effective philanthropy, particularly effective family philanthropy. And there's a place for that. I'm not asking people to be wild and reckless, that's different, but I am asking people to embrace more risk, step out more faster, and with the lens for equity. I am asking you to do that. And it's a challenge, but my dad used to tell us growing up, "Well, welcome to the NFL." Here we are. This is the world that we're in. It's not going to be easy. I hope that the more people step out and give more and go deeper, that they will find more joy. And that makes it easier because you are in a community of people who are all trying to make something happen together and you will find joy doing that.

I can completely say this 100%, there is much less joy when you are alone in your boardroom or with one other person in a state of analysis paralysis. That is definitely not fun. You will find more joy in your giving, stepping out into community and taking some bigger risks right now. So that's the basic thing. And I'm going to stop and I'm going to turn it to Kim because I want to hear what she has to say. And then we can also go a little bit more nuanced and the other aspects of that question.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

I think I'm looking at the questions here. There's a question about tech millionaires or billionaires not giving. There's a question about money tied up in DAFs. And I would like to address those questions too, because it's obviously what I think about every day and I think it's connected into this conversation. The first thing that I want to say is just telling people take a risk or it's okay, just pick something, is actually not narrowing their options. And so I spend an enormous amount of time of my time that I get, which is very limited with a lot of these people who are working with small children, taking stuff off the table. Let's just put together a big, bad group of stuff you're going to say no to. And I will help you say no. I write scripts all the time. This is how you lovingly say no.

And that allows for the freedom to be like, these are my proactive choices. So rather than being on your back foot, always reacting, reacting, reacting, and everyone around you want something. And there's a sense of it's all possible in that sense of overwhelm, let's just take some stuff off the table. It's counterintuitive, but it works every time. So a lot of it is boiling down this what are we not doing in order to do the thing. The other thing that I want to talk about in terms of taking risk is I invite folks all the time to think about the rest of their money. And so if you're a VC-backed business or a private equity-backed business or angel invested backed business, somebody said, "Here's a bunch of capital upfront in your bank account all at once. You can use it on hiring people, business development, product development, marketing, HR, whatever you want. And we trust your evaluation of the market and your product market fit." To have that same person who has either received VC money or is giving VC money to then be like, "I need you to prove to me the exact silver bullet that you're doing in the world before I give you a dime." is hypocritical." And so in a lot of ways, it's about saying, "Don't take your day job hat off, keep it on." You earned it. You know a lot about a lot. Lean into that. Let's take some risk. Let's fail forward. I saw that in the chat. Let's move the ball to get the NFL 49ers. Let's go. So I think-

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Or you mean Seahawks?

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Yeah, that's what I meant. I meant 49ers. And so I think that there is a real opportunity there to see people where they are. And instead of judgment around that, let's take it as honestly. You can be extremely wealthy and extremely overwhelmed. That is true. That doesn't mean that you are bad. And I think that if we can come as professionals to the table with that mentality and without that judgment, then we are authentic purveyors of the information. There isn't a right answer. You don't have to be a genius and an absolute 50-year expert in some industry. There's lots of ways forward. The last thing I just want to mention, because there were a lot of questions about collaboratives is this is part of why I'm so bullish about collaboratives. A lot of the very obvious question for my clientele is if you're saying I should just try something, where do I go?

Who do I try it with? There is no better answer to that question than collaboratives. There's an array of collaboratives, so it does matter what issue you're looking at and what your level of comfort with control is. But the beauty of collaborative is if we answer those questions and again, just look at people, honestly, I need more control. Okay, there's a collaborative for you. I need less control. I'm okay with that. Great. There's a collaborative for you. These questions will just activate people. And so I get very, very excited about that. Last thing I'm just going to say super quickly about the role of philanthropy. There is never before ... Or not never before, come on, everything's repeated. But this is a big poly crisis systems changey kind of moment. You can't look at climate without thinking about refugees and economic opportunity.

It's just everything is intertwined. So why should you get a tax benefit for this money? Ultimately, shouldn't there be something to show for that that other kinds of capital can't do? And that is risk. This money can take risks that other money can't do. So whether you're indicating something that the market can take up later or that a local government can use as a proof point, it's a great use of philanthropy. It's just a great use of philanthropy.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah, and that's a great example. And it just really reminds me, it's just an anecdote. When we talk about telling folks to lean in and take more risks, there are ways to do that. Most people who are

working at the level of maybe the folks that we know have an array of advisors. The smartest, most capable people in finance and legal and tax. I just want to share a very short anecdote that I'm happy to go into later with anyone offline, but of a family who is doing exactly what you talked about, Kim, about embracing risk. And when I say, let's go, let's go do this, you do this with, you can work with in collaboratives. But if you're not in a collaborative, the other way that folks are doing this is leaning on these advisors that they have and pushing them, pushing them to be as creative as we know that they are, because you can be creative on the side of accumulation and you can also be creative on the side of distribution.

And this particular family that we've been working with for a long time have pushed the most incredible boundaries of what you could do with an LLC, with a charitable LLC. They've got legal people working overtime. And tax, navigating how they're writing up K1s and all of these different types of things to make sure that they can get at what they want. And that for them is their risk-taking because the types of things that they want to do, they can't. They don't lead single-issue lives, they don't have single-issue funding. So all of their funding is intertwined. So if they want to give to political candidates or initiatives that advance reproductive rights, they're doing it through that. If they want to give through to C3s, C4s, individuals, if they're just supporting a person who needs help finding a doula, they will do that. But there are ways to do it.

And I guess I just want to make sure that people also understand that none of this has to be done alone. All of these things that we're talking about, whether it's just move the money. There are people like me, Kim, a number of advisors that I know who are in this webinar right now who are here who help people do these types of things. It is what we do. I live and breathe for this all day, every day. There are wonderful tax people, brilliant legal minds and financial people that know this system much better than many. And these are the opportunities and these are the people that you lean on to say, "This is what I want to accomplish. Give me some scenarios." And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. So I just wanted to throw that in as a follow-up.

**Nick Tedesco:**

I want us to talk a little bit about what it means to move the money well. And I think your point of getting the money moving is a critical one. The point of embracing risk and not letting a fear of failure really guide your work is all so deeply related to this question of what does it mean to move the resources well? And I'd love for you all to talk about this a little bit more than what you've brought forward. The conversation on trust and listening and proximity has really come into the forefront. So can you talk a little bit about the practices that are in fact serving our partners and maybe those that are not? And maybe Kim, let's start with you.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Oh, go ahead.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

I'm going to throw out there what I call fit to purpose philanthropy, which is, again, I have the benefit of so often working in that startup phase. And so the question is, I think about fit to purpose as the intersection of the donor, the doer, whether that is a single nonprofit, a collaborative or public-private partnership, whoever those players are, and the outcome, the impact. I like to say that the hypotenuse is really only possible when you're doing direct cash transfer. Otherwise you need an intermediary, so you should start valuing them. So when I think about that relationship, I work really hard to get people to say, "What are we working on here? What is fit to purpose?" And I mentioned this before when I was

talking about collaboratives, but it's okay that there is a diversity of donor preferences. Some people, some families do need more control than others.

Some have very big personal brands. At a time like this, that is something you have to take into consideration. I always tell this story, but I had a donor a few years ago, they are American citizens of Indian descent with all of their family in India still, live in San Francisco, work in Mountain View. What is community for those people? So when you say give to your community, they came to me in a state of absolute overwhelm because they were like, "I don't know what my community is. Is it the city where I live? Is it the place where I work? Is it San Jose, which is adjacent to where I work? Is it the state in India where my family is? Is it my children's school? What is my community?" is a harder question to answer than some might think? And so I want to meet them there.

I want to be able to say for that family, fit to purpose needs to be a conversation about, you have lots of communities, so let's talk about the communities that you [inaudible 00:42:10]. We have to meet them there. I love parameters and I really shy away from there's one right answer, there's one silver bullet way to solve poverty. This is not true, but there's lots of patterns. So the second I can see, I don't believe that every donor is unique. I think there is a limited grouping of archetypes. I think, Stephanie, you think the same thing and I-

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

I don't actually.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Oh, you don't? Oh, good.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Nope.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

Let's hear about that. Anyway, the reason I say that is because I love to pattern match. So if people are feeling like they need to have a peer, if we can get a sense of what that fit is, I can easily find a near peer who's similar or actually polar opposite to get that person thinking and moving. So again, it's that fit to purpose plus some peer learning is how I think about it.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Kim, I like your near to peer. That I totally agree with. Maybe I shouldn't, but I do see each family - you meet one family, you've seen one family. I am a little bit of the snowflake metaphor, but that said, you're correct. I would totally agree that there are near peers in putting people together. And then Nick, to get back to your question about what is this effective giving, look, how to move resources well, I do feel that we have seen some really good examples, and the most obvious one is MacKenzie Scott, who has really opened the door, I think, to a lot of folks. You can take so much of what she's doing depending on the lens through which you're looking. I see that there was a question in here someone had asked about this narrative around nonprofit fraud. And do we see that? And the answer is yes, and it drives me bonkers. Because it's so rare, but those times when it does happen is just really exploded and takes up a lot of airtime.

But that's one thing that she has also done is shown that you can give big tranches to small organizations, to organizations that are off people's radar, and it does good things. And it's absolutely

good. I think that is moving resources well. And I think the idea of what is well is similar to what you were saying, Kim, about what is one's particular community? What is well for one of our families is completely different than what's going to be done well for another. When I talk about things like stepping into risk, there is not one pattern of this person is risky and this person is not. No, that I would not say at all. It all is relative to where you are as an individual. I think I love hearing some of your stories, Kim, of some of the folks that you work with and that we're similar in that on the West Coast, we have a lot of the same kind of tech-enabled donors, types of folks who are really thinking out of the box and taking a different kind of risk.

At the same time, there is a family that is, I would say, given the context is probably one of our biggest and boldest risk-taker families, and they are a legacy family. These are G3s who are in their late 70s, and they are a Midwest family, family money is from elsewhere, but they're also farmers and have thousands of acres in the Midwest that have been bought by their family back in the turn of the century. And the guy that I'm working with in this generation, there's nowhere for this farmland to go. They have decided that they are spending down their personal wealth. Their kids say, "Hey, we're done. We have plenty. Figure out what to do with all of this. And by the way, get rid of that farmland. Because if you leave it for us, we're going to sell it. And if you want something special to be done with it, you better do it now."

So here I am on a combine. I haven't been on a combine before, but this is what risk looks like for them. And I think this is a big risk. This is selling off family acreage that they have created an identity around for 80 years. And handing not only land and real estate to a local rural community, but also setting up, what would you call it, basically a CRUT for the people who have worked that land for two generations and giving the whole kit and caboodle. And that takes time. That is effective philanthropy. That is moving the money, but this is not the type of moving the money that happens through a death that can happen tomorrow. This has been a three-year process because this is around identity. This is also around grief.

This is around opportunity, excitement, worry, all of the things. So this idea of when we talk to folks and when you're thinking about risk and what does that mean to me, what is my community? They don't even live in this community anymore. So to your point too, well, what is their community? And they said, for this big type of giving tranche that we're doing, our community is that rural place. Our regular day-to-day giving, our community is where we live. But I think it's an incredible example of what I think effective giving and how to move resources well. Sometimes moving resources well means it takes time and sometimes it means it takes patience, care and love even, love for the people who are receiving it, because it's a lot to receive and it's also a lot to give. So I think it's just a lot to think about.

#### **Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

There's just a lot to think about. The thing that's so interesting, and I'm looking at Yvonne's comments - Hi, Yvonne - is also I think that it's important to lift up the space that I'm certain your team gave to that G4. To be brave enough, talk about taking risk. That's a big risk. To tell their parents, "We don't want to do this anymore." I've heard this story so many times. I'm sure you have too. I'm sure Yvonne has too. And I think to be able to set a table as a consultant, this is what many of us who play these roles need to be called to call those questions and create a safe space where that G4 can tell that G3. And then how privileged that G3 is to be able to do the creative thing that takes time. There's a lot of jujitsu back there, my friend. That was a good job.

#### **Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

It's a lot. Go ahead, Nick.

**Nick Tedesco:**

No, I appreciate Yvonne's comment as well, and I wanted to lift that up because I think that is such a tremendous opportunity for all of us to ask how we can have the conversations that need to be had. And I'm just conscious of time. I want to talk about some of the challenges. And I think this transitions quite well because one of the barriers to doing this work and to doing this work well is not having the conversation, is not dedicating the space and the time to ask the hard questions to reflect, to be vulnerable. So I'd love to hear from each of you about some of the challenges to be mindful of as people are navigating the year ahead. And Stephanie, let's start with you.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Yeah, I think one challenge that is just, I'm thinking a lot about right now, just because of the nature of the universe of where we're sitting and how our ability or inability to speak to each other, it's anticipating and managing conflict. I think conflict is a big barrier and challenge. Conflict is inherent in most families, definitely in family philanthropy. And when there is a bottleneck in communication, and as you were just saying, Kim, about my farmers, if you can open the flow of communication, you can open the flow of funds to community, but it's easier said than done. And I don't want to get too far off into this lane about how we all work, but it just also calls to mind, and this is why it's top of mind. My colleague, maybe you probably know in the Janell Turner just came off of... I was like, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe that you had to sit through this and manage this."

This two-day family meeting that she was leading with three Brothers; this foundation was on the verge of closing because they could not get along, they could not make a decision because they didn't want to talk to each other. One didn't value the other person's life choices. The other was completely not speaking to another. So how are you going to make decisions about how to move money? Because again, philanthropy, giving money is about value. So if you can't value your sibling, how are you going to do this? And I think that this idea of knowing your lane, what can we really do and knowing when you really need help and being able to say, "I can't do this on my own. Because it's more important that we try to get through this so we can live up to the promise that we said that we would do by having this charitable entity."

And Janell brought on a conflict resolution specialist to co-lead with her to break through. And it was a heck of a two days. But this is what the types of things that I think that we need to do. And to be honest, and I think Yvonne said this in your comments about being honest about the type of help that we need, the type of conversations that we need to be able to have. And if you can't have them, and that's the thing to ask yourself, if you can't have these conversations, why not and how do you get past it? Because if you're going to stay there and if you're not going to move the money, if you're not going to honor the commitment that you made to philanthropy, you got to move on, close it, give it out, and you got to move on then.

And those are hard things to say, but this is where we're at. We're at a moment in time where we've got to just cut to the chase and keep things moving. And people are here and your family and advisors, NCFP will hold you and we are there to walk alongside you, but you got to keep walking. You've got to keep putting one foot in front of the other because we've got to move. And how we do that, I think is where the beauty and the magic lies.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Yeah, such brilliant advice. Kim, would love to get your thoughts for 60 seconds here.

**Kimberly Dasher Tripp:**

I'm not sure I'm going to add much just given that time is so scarce. I think Stephanie said a lot there that's really worth it. Maybe the only extra thing that I would say is there's often a lot going on for people under the surface. And I studied conflict resolution before I worked in philanthropy. And so I will leave it with this idea of asking somebody what's going on for you right now is okay. It's also okay to say, I'm over my skis here. I don't know what to do here, whether that's the people helping or the families.

Or maybe I should say the sector has been so oriented towards effectiveness and action that we sometimes forget that just simply saying what's going on for you right now, which might take a minute and feel more here [points to heart] than here [points to head] can actually move us forward. So I think at a time like this, let's remember we're all doing our best and we've probably got a lot going on in our left-hand column that we may need to bring to the table to be able to move forward and appreciate that about others.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Yeah.

**Stephanie Ellis-Smith:**

Absolutely.

**Nick Tedesco:**

Perfect note to end on. And I just want to thank Kim and Stephanie. Thank you for your time and thank you for your leadership in the sector. Just really grateful for the both of you and grateful for all of you that are with us and joined us. We have a few announcements as we depart. First, we'd love to get your feedback. We have another round of polls that we're going to launch right now. And then a couple of resources that we want to direct you to. As you know, we released our Trends in Family Philanthropy report a year ago, and it is available for full download on our website. So please take a look as you reflect on your own practices to see what your peers are doing. So download the Trends report. We also want to remind you about the Family Giving Lifecycle, a suite of resources that will bring you through the decision points in family philanthropy.

We recently relaunched the Family Giving Lifecycle for a lot of updated content and tools and resources that will lead you through reflection. So please take advantage of that. And as we get ready to sign off, want to make sure that you know about our upcoming programs. So on February 10th, we have a conversation on Relationships and Power. On March 10th, we have a conversation on, again, relationships and power from transactions to trust, and April 14th, structures and tools.

Two other notes, we know that funders are searching for community and solidarity right now, and we are proud to have launched the Meet the Moment campaign in partnership with the Trust-based Philanthropy Project and Grant Makers for Effective Organizations. So if you're looking for ways to take action and be in community with other funders, please sign the pledge and leverage the resources of the Trust-Based Philanthropy Project. And in addition to our webinars and other programs, we're pleased to offer a range of peer networks for those interested in connecting with your colleagues. So please join a peer network. You see a list here on your screen. And lastly, again, thank you for joining us. So I hope that this is a healthy year for all, a prosperous year, a year of self-care and community care. And just really appreciate you all being here. So we'll talk to you soon. Take care, everyone.