



IGNITING THE SPARK: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION YOUTH ENGAGEMENT MODELS

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY
PHILANTHROPY & YOUTH
PHILANTHROPY CONNECT,
A PROGRAM OF THE FRIEDA C. FOX
FAMILY FOUNDATION

LOCATED: Atlanta, Georgia, serving the metropolitan Atlanta region, consisting of 23 counties

WEBSITE: www.cfgreateratlanta.org

MISSION: The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta strengthens our region by providing quality services to donors and innovative leadership on community issues.

Planet Philanthropy at the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

Who's Involved:

- Donors' children and grand children, ages 9-16

History of Youth Engagement:

In 2001, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta launched the Center for Family Philanthropy. The focus of the Center was two-fold: (1) to provide a higher level of services to philanthropists with donor-advised funds of \$250,000 or more, or a planned gift of \$1M or more; and (2) to engage donors with families in philanthropy. There are approximately 200 donor members of the Center. One of the signature initiatives of the Center for Family Philanthropy was *Planet Philanthropy*. Developed as a half-day program for donors' children and grand children between the ages of 9 and 16, the Foundation provided a group of approximately 20 young people with the necessary tools to consider what matters most and to evaluate grant proposals.

Planet Philanthropy featured a curriculum that focuses on:

- Understanding philanthropy and community needs
- Your personal giving plan
- Ways to discover, explore, and connect
- Profiles of young people making a difference in Atlanta



As a group, the young people reviewed proposals from several nonprofit organizations and selected one to receive a grant of \$2,100. Each participant also recommended a grant to a nonprofit organization of his or her choosing with funds obtained from parents and grandparents' donor-advised funds.

The Foundation also encouraged families to include their children in giving of their time, talent, and treasure through their donor advised funds. Several families included their children in family meetings and the development of a family vision and mission statement. Some families also chose to develop grantmaking strategies with their children including site visits and grant application evaluation.

Other families involved their children in philanthropy by setting aside dollars for grantmaking. For example, one father worked with his two daughters to develop four priority areas and conducted research on organizations within each issue area. Annually, they recommend grants to four organizations from each issue area. Each year, their father increased the amount available for grantmaking and the family met to review organizations supported and develop a docket of organizations for new or continued support.

Current Youth Engagement Strategy:

Since 2001, the Foundation has continued to host *Planet Philanthropy* annually, maintaining the two key aspects of individual and collective grantmaking. Each year at least one organization receives a grant of \$5,000. They have also incorporated into Plant Philanthropy a variety of educational activities designed to increase participant knowledge of philanthropy and grantmaking. These are customized each year to include different activities such as:

- **Philanthropy Scavenger Hunt** at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History where participants were given clues and divided into teams to identify philanthropists who supported the Museum over the years.



- **Philanthropy Feud**, a game testing participant's knowledge of key terms and issues in philanthropy.
- **Philanthropy Pitch Session** included six nonprofit organizations giving five-minute pitches to the participants. Nonprofit leaders used Pecha Kucha style presentations to tell their stories and the organization receiving the most votes received a grant.

Also included in each year's program is a service opportunity. Past service experiences have included:

- Sorting food at the Atlanta Community Food Bank
- Mulching with Trees Atlanta
- Writing letters and making care packages for servicemen and women at the Atlanta History Center
- Cleaning pets' cages at the Atlanta Humane Society

The Center continues to work with multi-generational families through grantmaking and volunteering as they have deep knowledge of high-performing organizations throughout the metropolitan Atlanta region. Donor families trust the nonprofits recommended to them for funding as they have been reviewed thoroughly by Foundation staff and, in some cases, have received general operating support grants through the Foundation's unrestricted fund.



Adult Perspective:

We believe that children can participate in family philanthropy when they are very young. We encourage parents to find opportunities to volunteer within their communities with young children. It is all about planting seeds. We focus on the needs of communities in the metropolitan Atlanta region based on our deep knowledge. We provide that value-add to parents and children. What gives me the most joy is when children experience something through Planet Philanthropy—learning about a new nonprofit, or an issue—and then that child goes home and gets the entire family involved!

—Audrey Jacobs, Director, Center for Family Philanthropy



Family Perspective:

The Salwen Family (pictured right) believes that life is more than accumulating; ultimately it's about giving. Their decision in 2008 to sell their Atlanta “dream house,” move to a home half its size, and give away half of the sales price was a statement of that belief. According to Kevin Salwen, this experience and the family's philanthropy in general has been a great tool for the family's connectedness—and his children's growth. *“Once we decided to sell our house, all of the decisions concerning where we would use the funds and how we could make the most difference were made as a family; one person, one vote. Our kids knew that their voices would be heard,”* he says. *“In coming together for something greater than ourselves, we found a collective sense of mission and purpose. We set out to make a difference and ended up transforming our lives.”* Read more about the Salwen's journey in their book: ***The Power of Half: One Family's Decision to Stop Taking and Start Giving Back.***



Resources Available to Share

Copies of the following resources are available through NCFP's Family Philanthropy Online Knowledge Center or by contacting NCFP at ncfp@ncfp.org.

- Planet Philanthropy: A Guide for Your Philanthropic Journey (available for free download at www.cfgreateratlanta.org)