

Opportunity of a Lifetime: Young Adults in Family Philanthropy

One of the primary reasons that donors choose to establish a family foundation, donor-advised fund, or other family giving vehicle is to involve their children and future generations in the family's philanthropy. This involvement does not always happen in the ways donors expect. Think about the young adults that have a relationship to your family's philanthropy. Are these family members actively engaged in the work of the foundation or fund? Do they enjoy their involvement in the family philanthropy? Is it accessible to them?

Do not despair if the answer to these questions is "not really" or "not yet." There are many ways that young adults can become engaged in family philanthropy, and it may take time and experimentation to determine what works best for your family.

Many of the more than 30,000 family foundations in the United States—and the countless family charitable trusts and advised funds—involve young adults (defined here as those between the ages of 18 and 40) in their giving. Some of the ways young adults participate include:

- Serving as board members who plan and vote alongside other trustees;
- Serving on "next generation boards" with discretion over a subset of grant funds;
- Attending and observing foundation and fund meetings, but not playing a specified role in the grantmaking process;
- Discussing and suggesting proposals and potential funding areas with their parents and other family members that make funding decisions.

A growing number of young adults are themselves individual donors who are developing strategies for contributing money they have earned, raised, or inherited to support the issues they are passionate about.

Much has been written about involving children and youth in philanthropy. Yet, the involvement of young adults is often overlooked. Young adults are sometimes mixed in with the

"next generation"—people of all ages who are becoming involved in family philanthropies and succeeding the previous generation. However, it is useful to view young adults as a distinct group. Young adults bring new perspectives and continuity to the family's philanthropy. At the same time, their involvement helps them to learn and develop as emerging new donors.

This paper provides guidance on how to engage young adults in your family's philanthropy. It addresses barriers that some young adults may face, and suggests strategies for these family members to become more involved.

WHY INVOLVE YOUNG ADULTS IN FAMILY PHILANTHROPY?

Young adults bring experiences and perspectives to philanthropy that can benefit foundations, grantees, and the communities with which they interact. Key reasons for involving young adults include:

To provide young adults with a variety of skills that will help them in other aspects of their lives. A recent report by the Youth Leadership Institute ("The Changing Face of Giving," Spring 2001, http://www.irvine.org/pdfs/Youth_Philanthropy.pdf) surveyed the field of youth philanthropy programs, including foundations, community organizations, and schools that involve youth in grantmaking. Youth board members reported that these programs benefit them in a



“I’m the only member of my generation in a trustee position. People hear my voice differently; see it as fresh, more radical, and valuable. They want younger voices at the table.”

—Oona Coy, 25,
Northampton, Massachusetts

variety of ways, including:

- Helping them learn how to make better decisions;
- Teaching them about issues that peers face in the community;
- Becoming better at planning and facilitating meetings;
- Feeling more comfortable sharing ideas, giving presentations, and serving in leadership roles;
- Becoming more committed to helping their community;
- Developing positive relationships with youth and adults they would otherwise never have met; and
- Helping them become more prepared and interested in higher education.

Young adults may gain similar benefits.

To expand their involvement in contemporary issues.

The leadership of young people and their peers in contemporary issues can inform the family’s philanthropy. Ian Simmons, a young donor in Massachusetts, says that his involvement with other young people between the ages of 18 and 30 in social justice movements has helped him understand how much support is needed in these areas. Families may become better equipped to assess programs that young people are involved in and that benefit them. Young adults may begin to take leading roles as advocates for the issues the family philanthropy supports.

To learn through intergenerational dialogue. Intergenerational discussions encourage all family members to consider both historical information and emerging issues. Young adults can learn how older generations approach specific issues and giving, and the lessons they have learned from their experiences. Older generations benefit from learning how younger people see their communities, which can inform new approaches for the family’s giving. For example, many young adults today have grown up in more ethnically diverse communities than previous generations, and this may influence their awareness of the value of diversity and their recognition of social issues affecting communities of color.

To encourage creativity and fresh thinking among all family members. Many of the young adults interviewed for this issue paper said they are passionate about systemic as well as international issues—for example, strengthening democracy, biodiversity and environmental sustainability, community building and revitalization, and the redistribution of wealth

and political power. This may represent a new approach for some families, especially where clearly delineated program areas have been established. Grappling with these and other such issues can encourage creativity and fresh thinking.

To have access to the experiences, questions, and context that young adults bring to philanthropy. One family foundation trustee in Massachusetts says that his experience as a technology entrepreneur has shaped his views regarding philanthropy. He is particularly interested in providing seed funding for new, more “risky” projects. Another family foundation trustee from New York City was surprised to learn that her family was providing primarily general support to universities, which she considers a highly traditional area, well supported by other funders. She suggested that they decrease their funding in this area to support other issues. Her parents agreed, and have decided to shift their funding next year into other areas in an effort to be more strategic.

Cynthia Ryan, 37-year-old trustee and principal of the Schooner Foundation in Boston, finds that younger generation trustees may be more interested in international issues than older generations. Her focus on these issues has directly affected her family’s foundation giving. Because of her and her sisters’ interests in women’s issues and human rights, the Schooner Foundation has supported organizations working in Afghanistan for several years.

“Young adults may begin to take leading roles as advocates for the issues the family philanthropy supports.”

Sharna Goldseker, a 27-year-old donor in New York City who is also a program officer for several family foundations, finds that young people ask different questions about potential grantees. For instance, Goldseker says, “I always wonder how many young people are on the board and staff of a nonprofit. Is the organization planning or designing programs for the next generation by asking them what they want?”

To encourage young adults to be active and knowledgeable philanthropists throughout their lifetimes. Young adults who get an early start in philanthropy have the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of the issues they support. They can sharpen their skills as givers and educate their colleagues and friends about philanthropy throughout their lives, while gaining the knowledge and confidence to personally give more in their lifetimes.

WHAT DO YOUNG ADULTS WANT FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE IN FAMILY PHILANTHROPY?

“Family philanthropy offers an unparalleled opportunity for meaningful, value-laden work with one’s parents, siblings, and other relatives. It’s about learning about each other’s priorities, the lenses through which we view the world, the role of money, and the impulses driving our charitable acts.”

—Marcella Kanfer, 29, Washington, DC

In addition to supporting issues they care about, young adults have a variety of reasons for becoming involved in their family’s philanthropy.

To bring family together and to honor the donor’s legacy and values. Many young adults look to family philanthropy as a vehicle for family members to get to know each other better. Ian Simmons is a young donor in Massachusetts who gives through his family’s charitable trust. Funding decisions are made primarily by individual family members rather than through a collective process. Simmons would like his philanthropy to be more closely tied to his family. “The kids are now split up doing different things in different parts of the world. I would like to see it as a way to create conversations around money, learn about each other’s interests, and lay the ground-

work for effective philanthropy in the deepest sense—both with each other and with other people.”

For some, honoring donor legacy is important. A 29 year-old family foundation trustee in Massachusetts wants “each of the family foundation grants to represent, to communicate, and to pass on the values and intentions of the original donor.”

To learn and share their knowledge of emerging issues and communities. Many young adults see family philanthropy as a forum for learning about communities, organizations, and social issues. “I want to learn about organizations and movements and make connections,” says Oona Coy, a 25 year-old trustee of two family foundations.

This learning process supports the development of family giving as well as young adults’ community involvement. “I want to take what I have learned from family philanthropy to my own community,” says Ann Maddox Utterback, a 33-year-old trustee from New Mexico. “I have found that the board of this foundation really seems to work well together. I sit on other community boards and I would like to take concrete examples of the way our board works to these other boards.”

Others want to share the giving process with people outside their families. One young adult in North Carolina created an advisory board of community members who are knowledgeable about community needs to guide her family’s grantmaking process.

Young adults may want to experiment and try new methods and models of giving. Marcella Kanfer, a 29-year old foundation trustee residing in Washington, DC says, “As a member of my family’s foundation board, I aim to create a safe ‘practice field’ for my own charitable decisionmaking. I want to be both taught how my grandfather and father have operated, and empowered to try my own approaches.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES SEEKING TO INVOLVE YOUNG ADULTS

- **Determine why you want the next generation to get involved.** Explain your reasons, and ask what their own reasons are for wanting to become involved.
- **Discuss your philanthropic finances openly.** Give young adults a full picture of the scale of giving they are becoming involved in today and over time.
- **Make sure young adults have the information they need to stay current with philanthropic activities.**
- **Be clear about the roles that they can play.** Give young adults clear structures that they can fit into.
- **Allow young adults the opportunity to become trustees when they are young.** Don’t wait until they are 35 or 40 years old.
- **Consider allocating discretionary funds.** Discretionary funds can offer the opportunity for young adults to connect grantmaking to their communities and interests.
- **Encourage them to contribute personally, either through the family giving vehicle or on their own.**
- **Create a network of other family philanthropists for support and guidance.** Connect young family members with other young adults involved in philanthropy.
- **Listen and respond to their ideas.** Do not discount young adults because of age or if they don’t contribute financially to the foundation. Ask questions of them, and encourage them to ask questions of you. Trust them to make good decisions.
- **Create a youth-friendly organization. If you are hiring staff, hire people that can relate well to young adults.** Try to hold meetings at times and locations that are accessible to them.
- **Pay attention to generational succession.** Welcome and orient new trustees. Talk about generational differences and commonalities.
- **Make philanthropy accessible to young adults.** Make philanthropy fun, rewarding, and relevant to their lives.
- **Clarify decisionmaking processes.** Provide mediation tools and training. Consider the use of non-family facilitators.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG ADULTS?

“My parents are both on very much the same page with each other in terms of giving strategies and philosophies. My brother and I, on the other hand, tend to go in sort of opposite directions from our parents and I can see there being significant tension in the future as we try to resolve our differences. I brought that up, and asked that we address it at a future meeting and come up with some sort of resolution tool or governance structure, which they agreed with.”

*—Family foundation trustee, 26,
New York, New York*

Young adults face a number of obstacles—some subtle and some more obvious—to their participation in philanthropy.

Young adults can feel isolated and uncomfortable with wealth and their role as philanthropists. Families and young adults often face enormous pressure to be secretive about family wealth and philanthropy. This may be the case for young adults who are surrounded by friends living on loans and tight budgets, and by those who perceive that if they are open about their family’s wealth or the scale of the family’s giving that people will treat them differently.

Some young adults who participate in family philanthropy do not have individual wealth. This can raise another set of barriers—both psychological and practical—to their active participation.

Parents often tell their children not to talk about money with anyone outside the family. As a result, young adults may intentionally hide aspects of their lives that intersect with their family’s philanthropy. If they work or volunteer at nonprofit organizations, young adults may feel uneasy with the idea that they or their family could be major contributors. They may become conflicted about how their time and skills are valued if they don’t need to receive a paycheck.

The worlds that young privileged adults inhabit may feel divided—one shared with friends and colleagues as just another student or young professional, and another shared with family, financial advisors and lawyers in which they are making important decisions about the allocation of significant resources. It can be difficult to feel worthy of the opportunities of family and personal philanthropy if there are no reference points for what this means in daily life.

Young adults may bring divergent interests and conflicting points of view to the family’s grants decisionmaking process. Family foundations that focus on a particular geographic area or on issues that were important to the founder may find that the younger generations have no familiarity or connection with these issues or regions. Kanfer says that her family’s foundation gives a significant percentage of its annual allocation to local causes and organizations in Akron, Ohio, the city in which it is based. “I live on the East Coast and find it hard to keep up on the needs of a community I am no longer directly and actively involved with now that I’m an adult. The less I know about the dynamics and considerations of a situation and an organization that’s dealing with it, the less able I am to make my own informed, confident decisions.”

At times, a foundation’s mission may reflect points of view that conflict with a young adult’s perspective and values. A new family foundation trustee in New York assumes, “My father would probably really object, for instance, to my supporting a group that’s overtly anti-globalization or if I were to give to a gay-rights group. I think they’re open to political differences to a point, but would object to the money being used to support something they actively disagreed with—which I guess I can understand. In any case, it’s a conversation we need to have.”

There is both a healthy tension—and a potential for conflict—any time the younger generation is invited into a position where they can reshape what has come before. Young adults and older family members may have different views, interests, and political perspectives in giving. It is important for families to talk about and understand these differences. This allows family philanthropy to adapt and grow over time, and to include the perspectives of both those who have come before, as well as those who are being asked to carry the family’s philanthropy forward.

Young adults may lack time and flexibility in their current stage of life. Family foundation board meetings may be difficult to attend for the young person in college who lives across the country. Young adults generally have less control over their schedules than older trustees, whether they are students, beginning their careers, or starting new families. Conducting grants research while balancing a new job, college schedule, or family responsibilities may be a low priority. If the foundation does not pay for travel expenses many young adults cannot afford to attend regular meetings. And, if there are foundation staff, the staff may find it easier to take on these responsibilities rather than work around young people’s schedules to get things done.

“I learn an immense amount from my participation on these boards, but my involvement is sporadic,” says Coy. “We meet three times a year for board meetings and have a few short conference calls. It’s volunteer work outside of my work life. If I choose to participate more, it involves significant travel and working alone—something I don’t want.”

Young adults have few training opportunities available for learning about philanthropy. If an individual is in school or works full-time, it can be difficult to attend outside training

opportunities that typically take place during the workday, or at lengthy and expensive conferences. This makes training opportunities provided by the family—site visits, presentations at board meetings by community leaders and issue experts, and family meetings about important issues—all the more important. Finding effective ways to do this is a challenging task for any family. (See the Resources section on page 8 for a partial listing of conferences).

Young adults may experience significant culture shock when first becoming involved in their family's philanthropy. The culture of foundation boards and philanthropic sector organizations can be alienating to young adults who have never served on a board before and are unfamiliar with specific protocol. Philanthropy is full of technical jargon and acronyms

that can make it difficult for newcomers to catch up to speed. New grantmakers may lose confidence in their ideas and suggestions if they perceive that they do not have adequate knowledge to make grants or if they don't feel understood.

Young adults may be overwhelmed by family dynamics and relationships. Family dynamics affect family members of all ages. The assumptions and communications styles of families can be a challenge for family grantmaking. There may be an unspoken understanding that older family members have more ownership of the family's philanthropy than younger family members, especially if they have been involved for a long time or earned the money. In these circumstances young peoples' roles and decisionmaking authority may not be clear, which can influence the amount

TWO FAMILIES PROVIDE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The following case examples illustrate the strategies that two family foundations have used to include young people. Strategies mentioned include matching grants, discretionary grants, associate programs, and other training and orientation opportunities.

Involving young people in family philanthropy is by no means a one-size-fits-all proposition. "There is no one structure or profile for how a family foundation should operate," says Sharna Goldseker. "This is the toughest but best lesson. Every family is different, so every expression of philanthropy needs to be different. If you give yourself the space it can be a rich experience." These strategies require a commitment on the part of all family members involved to experiment, remain flexible, and—most importantly—to involve young people in planning.

ROY A. HUNT FOUNDATION

"We want our kids to be involved in the communities where they live, serve on boards in their communities, and volunteer for these organizations."

—*Tod Hunt, President,
Roy A. Hunt Foundation*

For the first time last year, the Roy A. Hunt Foundation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania allocated \$55,000 to its Next Generation Fund for distribution by the

foundation's three young adult trustees. Because the family has 21 young people in the "next generation," the trustees set up a separate budget to provide a mechanism for young family members to learn about grantmaking. The young members, who become trustees at the age of 21, will decide how they want to allocate the funds and will be given the opportunity to experiment and design their own process.

The Hunt Foundation has a separate office area for young family member interns who volunteer at the foundation. The next generation is educated about the foundation's investments, invited to attend site visits, and encouraged to go to the Council on Foundations' Family Foundations Conference. In addition, the foundation makes a commitment to pay for young trustees' airfare so they are encouraged to participate.

EMILY HALL TREMAINE FOUNDATION

Stewart Hudson, President of the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation in Meriden, Connecticut says the foundation has hosted annual retreats for the third generation, who are in their teens, twenties and thirties. They participate in workshops to learn about the foundation's work, listen to speakers discuss issues the foundation supports, go on site visits, and participate in committee conference calls.

The Tremaine Foundation has tried a number of strategies over the years, including an Associates Program that Hudson says is a 10-15 year effort to prepare a core group for potential trusteeship. The Associates were allocated \$35,000 for grantmaking. They elected a chair, created a committee, worked with staff, and came up with criteria for making a grant. Last year, the Associates distributed the grant to a school in an underserved section of Bridgeport. Hudson says one question that arose was how and whether to restrict the areas the Associates could support, given the Foundation's focus on arts, environment, and learning disabilities. The board did not want to be too strict because the program is intended as a vehicle for young people to learn about grantmaking and "to understand the appropriate role of a board member with respect to the foundation's grantees."

At one point the Board had set a target for bringing a certain number of Associates onto the Board. There has been a shift in thinking as time has gone on. Now, the goal is to increase the general level of connection by Associates to the Foundation—to find ways for them to feel connected to the Foundation in a way that fits. "One of the most important things is matching up the interests of people at the stage they are at in their lives with the requirements of a foundation," says Hudson.

of energy and time they will commit to philanthropy. “Until recently, the board basically rubber-stamped the allocation decisions my grandpa and dad made after-the-fact,” says Kanfer. “There was neither a stated giving strategy nor evaluations to know if our support was effective.”

It can be hard for trustees of any age to prepare for family philanthropy meetings if what is on the table is family relations, rather than funding decisions. Family members may slip into patterns of behavior with one another that make it hard to hold a meeting, especially if meetings include discussions of other family business. Family dynamics can grow more complicated as the relationships between family members become more distant with successive generations, or when spouses and partners are included in family grantmaking.

For young adults who work for a family foundation, additional family business relationships need to be worked out. “There are issues working for my father,” says Ryan. “I am probably not taken as seriously as I might be otherwise, and the job is not as formalized as it could be. Sometimes this works to your advantage, and sometimes not. Because it is a family foundation, it is more flexible—but it is *your* family’s foundation.”

PREPARING YOUNG ADULTS FOR INVOLVEMENT

There are a number of strategies for teaching young adults about family philanthropy, and preparing them to become involved. Here are several suggestions:

- **Review the nuts and bolts.** Hold a workshop to review the foundation’s mission, history, bylaws, and investments. Provide a board booklet with reference materials.
- **Visit a range of programs to learn about issues.** Bring young adults to meetings and on site visits to organizations that range in scale and approach. Debrief afterwards.

- **Teach about philanthropy.** Invite philanthropic educators to share information about the history of American philanthropy, philanthropy in different cultures around the world, and giving philosophies (i.e. engaged, social change, strategic, and venture philanthropy).
- **Talk about legacy.** Invite speakers who can talk about the donor’s life and the foundation’s history. Discuss the history of the foundation’s money, and what that means for its legacy.
- **Introduce young adults to peers.** Visit other family foundations, go to conferences and introduce young people to other young trustees and professional staff.
- **Define young adults’ roles.** Educate young adults about being a trustee (or other position they hold) and the scope of their responsibilities and decisionmaking authority.
- **Provide technical information.** Teach young adults how to read nonprofit financial statements and about the other technical information they will encounter.
- **Help young adults to explore and articulate their individual philanthropic interests.** Invite young adults to write personal philanthropic mission statements to explore and articulate their values, experiences, and giving goals, and share your own. Generate lists of activities they are interested in becoming involved in during the coming year. Ask them to prioritize and work with them to take next steps.
- **Encourage mentoring.** Encourage mentoring relationships outside of and within the family.
- **Provide opportunities to learn.** Invite young adults to attend philanthropy conferences, regional gatherings, nonprofit events, and other educational forums. Offer subscriptions to philanthropy and issue-based journals. Share and discuss resource materials and books.
- **Create opportunities to develop foundation materials or programs.** Identify materials or programs the foundation needs and invite young people to put them together.

CONNECTING WITH PEERS

Young people are developing a growing number of peer networks to support each other as they explore the many ways that access to philanthropic and financial resources shapes their lives. For many young adults, getting beyond the barriers of isolation and identity issues requires spending time connecting with peers and exploring who they are, how money fits in to their lives, and its relationship to the issues they want to address through philanthropy.

Resource Generation, through my participation on the Board and as a constituent, has helped me to grow as an individual donor and see my involvement in family foundations as one piece of how I work with my wealth and privilege responsibly,” says Oona Coy, a 25-year old trustee of two family foundations. “I’m also gaining skills that I can bring back to my family foundations, as well as a more in-depth understanding of how nonprofits function and survive.”

One example is Resource Generation, a national alliance for individuals under 35 exploring issues in the context of ‘social change.’ “Getting more involved with

PEER NETWORKS AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

- Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP), www.foundationsforchange.org/epip.htm, Rusty Stahl, 212-573-4766

www.foundationsforchange.org, Alison Goldberg, 617-225-0614

- Resource Generation, www.resource-generation.org, Hez Norton, 617-441-5567

- Social Venture Partners. SVPs are networks of young donors pooling philanthropic funds in cities across the country. To view a list of existing SVPs, go to: www.svpseattle.org/resources/Resources_Other_SVPs.htm

- Youth on Board, www.youthonboard.org, Karen Young, 617-623-9900

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS LOOKING TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED

Here are suggestions and advice from other young adults about how to prepare for becoming involved in family philanthropy:

- **Learn about your position in your family's philanthropy.** Understand what your responsibilities are and will be over time.
- **Determine why family philanthropy is something you want to invest time and emotional energy in and articulate this to your family.** Determine the expectations your family has for your involvement, and address any gaps between these expectations and your perspective.
- **Have patience.** It can take many years to work out your philanthropic focus and family trustee relationships. These are complicated issues.
- **Be assertive, speak up, and ask questions.** Know that you can have a very positive impact through family philan-

thropy without years of experience. At the same time, recognize and respect that those with this experience can also help you to think through your own ideas and strategies.

- **Focus on the commonalities of your family, especially the issues that are meaningful to all of you.** Understand where your family members are coming from and avoid knee-jerk reactions.
- **If you identify a problem, bring an array of potential solutions to your family.** Bring well-articulated proposals, issues, or questions to meetings.
- **Get personally involved with the issues you care about.** Build partnerships, conduct research, volunteer, fundraise, and advocate on behalf of organizations.
- **Learn about the philanthropic sector and resources that are available to help you be more effective in your giving.** Participate in meetings and con-

ferences and read resource materials. Find older trustees to show you the ropes. Intern at a foundation or with a philanthropic advisor.

- **Emphasize learning and experimentation.** It is okay to question assumptions. Learn who else, besides your family, may have good ideas about how to support and direct funding to the issues you care about.
- **Develop a philanthropic agenda apart from the family's philanthropy.** This demonstrates your commitment and provides the opportunity for individual contributions apart from your shared family commitment.
- **Create a network of other young givers and use it!** There are many other people in your situation in this country. Find them and share experiences and strategies.

WHAT DO FAMILIES EXPECT OF YOUNG ADULTS?

Young adults bear much of the responsibility for becoming more engaged in their family's philanthropy. Here are a few suggestions for what might be asked of younger family members seeking to become involved in the family philanthropy:

Take responsibility for learning about philanthropy, and about your family's current and past philanthropic efforts. Young adults can prepare for their involvement in family philanthropy in a variety of ways. Accessing key information about the family's giving—such as financial information, policy statements, bylaws, and guidelines—will help young adults learn more about the specific context. Going on site visits, seeking out mentors and allies (both within and outside of the family), speaking with admired grantmakers, conducting research projects, developing foundation materials, going to conferences, working as an intern at a foundation, and reading articles—all are ways that young people can learn about philanthropy. (See Sidebar for additional suggestions).

"I've gone on many site visits with the staff from the Merck Family Fund and on my own," says Coy. "These have helped me feel more engaged and connected to the decisions we are making. I've also built relationships with the staff at Merck Family Fund. They've become great teachers for me."

Clarify your personal philanthropic interests and give as an individual. Some young adults go through the process of creating value, mission or "legacy" statements—a strategy often recommended to older family members who wish to articulate their philanthropic values for successive generations—in order to clarify their goals and ideas about giving. What approaches and issues do you want your giving to promote? What approaches and issues do you not want your giving to promote? This can be a tool for helping young adults discuss their interests with their families, and a way of encouraging the family to develop a shared statement that can be adapted over time.

Many young adults may choose to explore issues that don't fall under their families' funding guidelines. By giving their own money and time to these causes, young adults can learn from their own experience. They can develop strategic giving plans for their own funds. Or, as several groups of young people have done, they can create a giving circle—a group of people who pool money and come up with a distribution strategy together. Convening with a peer group in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors is a valuable way to learn about issues and funding strategies. Young adults can then bring their own experiences as funders back to their families.

Volunteer and work with nonprofits in issue areas that are important to you. Becoming engaged in the work of one or

more nonprofits can be a rewarding experience for young adults, and shows a lasting commitment to the causes or issues they support. This may mean serving on boards or committees or helping the nonprofit to make connections with other potential partners in their work. “I like to really get to know the organizations we fund, to develop a partnership,” says Ryan. “For me it is far more satisfying. The grantees say they get the most out of my relationship with them—networking on their behalf, and providing them with access they don’t have, such as access to political leaders.”

CONCLUSION

Family foundations, donor-advised funds, and other family giving vehicles can all benefit from the involvement of young adults in their governance and grantmaking. Families seeking to create a lasting culture of both individual and family philanthropy should place a high priority on training and engaging young adults. Young adults who wish to become more involved in their family’s philanthropy must show that they are interested in—and knowledgeable about—the causes and issues they seek to support.

Young adults are coming together in a variety of forums to support and challenge each other to learn more about many aspects of philanthropy, and to become philanthropists with their personal resources. By connecting with peers, mentors, and nonprofit leaders, young adults can take responsibility for their own philanthropic education. Families can take additional steps to support young adults in these efforts. Involving young adults provides added perspectives and new ideas to a family’s philanthropy. For young adults the enormous opportunity of giving is one that can build and evolve throughout their lifetimes.

RESOURCES

Below is a partial list of publications, organizations and networks. See www.foundationsforchange.org for more extensive resource lists.

PUBLICATIONS

- Gary, Tracy and Melissa Kohner. 1998. *Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan, A Workbook*. Berkeley: Chardon Press.
- Goldseker, Sharna. 2001. *Being the Next Generation*. Sh’ma. Jewish Funders Network
- Hewat, Tracy and Lynn Gerber (Eds.) *Money Talks. So Can We. Resources for People in their 20’s*. Cambridge: The Comfort Zone.
- May, Michael. Spring 1999. *Are We Ready? Social change philanthropy and the coming \$10 trillion transfer of wealth*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- Family Foundation Conference, Council on Foundations. This annual conference is for people affiliated with family foundations. Contact: Council on Foundations, 202-466-6512
- Making Money Make Change Gathering. This annual conference is for people 35 years of age and under engaging with the personal, technical, political and philanthropic issues related to having wealth. The conference is designed and led by young adults. Contact: Third Wave Foundation, 212-388-1898
- Foundations for Change Giving Plan Workshop. This intensive workshop for young donors and trustees interested in social change giving currently runs in Massachusetts, and will expand to other areas. Contact: Foundations for Change, 617-225-0614
- The Philanthropy Workshop. This yearlong workshop educates donors about strategic and international philanthropy. Contact: The Rockefeller Foundation, 212-869-8500 or The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation (sponsor of The Philanthropy Workshop West), at 650-349-1070.

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Does your family involve young adults in family philanthropy? Tell us about it! Contact: jason@ncfp.org

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS

The National Center for Family Philanthropy, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, encourages families and individuals to create and sustain their philanthropic missions. In doing so, we are guided by a set of values and principles that reflect our own understanding of the importance, opportunity, and genius of family philanthropy. These values include:

- We value the participation of individuals and families in private, organized philanthropy.
- We value the donor’s right and ability to direct charitable assets through the philanthropic vehicles and to programs of choice.
- We value the personal—and sometimes anonymous—acts of generosity that inspire private philanthropy.
- We value the pursuit of excellence in philanthropy.
- We value the role that philanthropy and philanthropic citizenship plays in a civil society.
- We value the participation of new voices in our field
- We value collaboration and respect our colleagues in this work.

A full statement of these values and guiding principles is available on our web-site at www.ncfp.org.