

# Personal Philanthropy

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Taking the responsibility of giving your money to others is a powerful act of caring and sharing.

# Stewardship

2018



2018 can be heart changing and mind expanding for each of us. In today's culture we only consider short-term results far too often. Our long-range outlook can seem clouded by the worry or fear about an unclear personal or family's future. It may be time to stop what you are doing, step back, look at yourself and switch to a more long-term plan. Ask yourself today:

- What will matter at the end?
- What memory of me will I gift to you?
- What do I want to have now that will last for my lifetime?
- What do I do and say each day that makes tomorrow better for others?

Stewardship should be a daily practice. True Stewardship is not just about giving money, or serving on a committee. Stewardship is the humble understanding that all we are and all we possess are gifts that have been given to us. How we use our gifts is our lifelong task and responsibility. Stewards realize God's generosity can not be matched and that true stewardship comes from within. It is a way of life that includes caring for ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. In addition, Stewardship calls us to care for our families, friends and those in our community. Stewardship is a given challenge that can require change of mind and heart or a conversion. If change is needed, it can be difficult process. It is not a one-time event. Let 2018 be the year of transition.

Take your first steps on a new Stewardship path. Take the time to examine your gifts. Create new avenues for sharing your gifts with others. Becoming a true steward requires prayer, meditation, trust and time. It calls us to reassess our priorities and make adjustments in the importance we place on things. It affects every aspect of our family life, work life and spiritual life. This year trust in the grace of God. Know that the benefits of a stewardship lifestyle are endless. Recognize that the greatest benefit of being a steward is knowing that value has been added to the lives of others through actions and words. Small gestures take on great meaning and give great reward when applied with love in the spirit of the Holy Family. Stewardship is more than just managing all that we have. Being a steward is not just something else to do. Along with many other things good people do, it is a total way of life and requires continual thought and effort. A good steward receives God's gifts gratefully, cultivates them responsibly, shares them fairly and lovingly in honor to the Lord. Join me on the journey...I hope to see you on the path.

Wishing you a year of peace and simple well-being.

Michelle

# Building Your Strategy

Understanding and expressing what you hope to achieve with your gifts is the first step to building a personal giving strategy.

## Step 1: Determine Your Giving Goals

### Review Your Giving History

Begin by reflecting on why and how you have given in the past. Understanding your charitable history can give you valuable insights into your own giving patterns and practices. As you assess your history and articulate your goals for the future, you can decide what practices you wish to continue and which, if any, you would like to change.

Some questions to consider:

- How frequently do you give? How much do you typically give? How many organizations do you support in the course of a year?
- Do most of your charitable gifts support specific causes? Are they targeted to your own community or meant to address needs in the larger world?
- Do you give to well-established organizations? Or do you prefer to help newer organizations?
- What spurs you to give? Do you respond to particular types of charitable appeals?
- What did you hope to accomplish by giving? Did you achieve your desired results?

### Identify What Inspires You

Determining what inspires you will help you to be proactive and to implement giving strategies that fulfill your personal vision. Prioritizing and answering the following questions will help you articulate your personal goals for giving: Issues and Causes:

- What issues and causes are most important to you? Where would you really like to make a difference?
- Would you like your impact to be felt at the individual, organizational, community, or policy level?
- Do you prefer to give to organizations serving local, state, national, or global needs?
- Do you wish to remain anonymous? If not, how would you like to be recognized for your gifts?
- How involved do you want to be in the life of the organization? Do you prefer to provide financial support, sit on boards, or have direct involvement in the day-to-day work of the organization?

In contemplating the answers to these questions, you may discover new goals or motivations that go beyond past giving practices to open new opportunities. You may also find that you wish to involve other family members in your giving strategy.

## Step 2: Create a Giving Mission Statement

Organizations create mission statements to focus their operations and to communicate their intentions to the public. A personal "giving mission statement" can provide you with similar benefits while serving as a guidepost for your decision making and a tool to help you assess your progress. Developing a mission statement can be both inspiring and powerful. Typically one to three sentences, this statement articulates your giving goals and the methods that will be used to achieve them. A personal and living document, it may change over time as your goals and motivations evolve. The most effective mission statements are succinct and memorable. They generally consist of three elements:

1. A core vision that guides giving
2. The causes and types of organizations you wish to support
3. Any "methodology" for selecting recipient organizations and measuring success

The simple exercise of creating your personal giving mission statement involves writing out broad answers to the following questions — and then summarizing your answers.

- What are the major areas you want to affect through your giving? Why?
- What types of organizations do you seek to support in these areas?
- Are there specific methods or key criteria that will guide your giving?

### **Step 3: Decide Where to Give**

Your personal mission statement will help you select causes to support. In some cases, this may mean continuing, expanding, or reevaluating relationships with organizations or groups you have supported in the past. Certainly, there are a myriad of nonprofit organizations that provide honorable services — but how can you begin to choose effectively? The following are some helpful ways to locate and evaluate organizations for your giving:

- Researching Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs)
- Nonprofits are considered part of the public trust, they must follow strict operating guidelines. These guidelines make it easy to research, evaluate, and monitor the activities of the nonprofits that interest you.

To get started, you might:

- Review news sources that cover your areas of interest
- Ask family, friends, major donors, and grantmakers with similar charitable interests about the organizations they support
- Talk to people who are active in causes that interest you
- Attend events related to your interests
- Consult with a Nonprofit Management Professional to get advice and possibly research giving opportunities

Once you have identified several organizations, you can request information that will help you learn more about them. For example, you may wish to review organizations' mission statements, annual reports, budgets, and financial statements.

Reference: GuideStar®