

GS DAF

Families and Philanthropy

An Overview for Donors

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Introduction



We know that America today – in its most admirable accomplishments, its most cherished creative achievements, its most stunning and useful scientific discoveries, and its most durable civic institutions – is unimaginable without the contributions of its philanthropic families.”

Virginia M. Esposito, Senior Advisor & Founding President, National Center for Family Philanthropy

Over the past 100 years, families in the United States have engaged in philanthropy, making significant contributions to the well-being and improvement of the lives of those in this country and around the world. In recent years, the number of donor families has grown significantly, as evidenced by the proliferation of family foundations and donor advised funds.

At the same time, the landscape for family philanthropy has become more complex. As Betsy Erickson, senior director and head of Family and Individual Practice at Arabella Advisors states, “not only are there increasing numbers of nonprofit partners to choose from and learning groups to join, but the societal landscape is more complex with heightened awareness around race, wealth, inequality, and polarization – all these can put extra pressure on families trying to work together in philanthropy.”

The diversity of vehicles through which families can give has also increased. Michael Moody, Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy at the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy describes how “the family foundation used to be the primary vehicle for family giving. Now there are many different vehicles in the family garage.” Donors are giving through personal donor-advised funds, community foundation donor-advised funds, impact investments, in addition to a family foundation, which raises new challenges for creating a coherent family giving strategy.

The internal dynamics for family philanthropy are also increasing in complexity. Some family philanthropies span four generations, and each generation brings very different perspectives, passions, and skillsets to the table. Erickson adds that among the next generations, “many next gen family members are often further away from the wealth creation and as beneficiaries can feel guilt and pressure.”

According to Moody, millennials are not primarily thinking about achieving social change through charitable contributions to nonprofit organizations. They are instead focusing on joining movements, engaging in political activism, being socially and environmentally conscious consumers, aligning their employment with their values, and using hybrid vehicles such as charitable LLCs and B corporations to further social good before considering philanthropy as a lever for change.

For those embarking on the philanthropic journey together as a family, whether engaging the older or next generation in philanthropy, it can be challenging to know where to begin given all this complexity.

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This publication is designed to help donors think through the key questions related to whether and how to engage your family members in your philanthropy:

1. Why should you engage your family in philanthropy?
2. Who should be involved in your family philanthropy?
3. What values are core to your family philanthropy?
4. How do you want to involve your family members in philanthropy?
5. Which decision rules should you use in your family philanthropy?
6. When should you start talking with your family about philanthropy?
7. How can you engage your spouse/life partner in philanthropy?
8. How can you engage your preschool- and elementary-age children in philanthropy?
9. How can you engage your middle school- and high school-age children in philanthropy?
10. How can you engage young adults in philanthropy?

Each family and family dynamic is unique and families change over time. How you decide to engage your family in philanthropy may also evolve depending on your circumstances and the abilities and availability of your family members. While being mindful of the increasingly complex external and internal landscape, many donors have found that engaging their families in philanthropy can be a powerful experience and one that brings their family closer together as they employ their family resources in pursuit of a shared mission.

We hope this publication is helpful in clarifying your thought process in engaging your family in philanthropy.

Why should you engage your family in philanthropy?



Giving money together can bring families together in powerful ways. They can connect about their values and priorities, do something meaningful together, and be involved in something bigger than themselves – all while forging a bond that will strengthen family relationships and enrich the family in ways that are far greater than whatever money they give away.”

Phil Buchanan, President, Center for Effective Philanthropy and author, “Giving Done Right”

There are many positive reasons to engage your family members in philanthropy, as well as several less than positive reasons. But before you think about the benefits and potential drawbacks of involving your family in your philanthropy, Nick Tedesco, president and CEO of the National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP) recommends that donors reflect on their motivations for involving family to better understand how a collective giving effort might align with the donor’s goals and expectations. “If family engagement is an important consideration, then a donor must look beyond their individual effort. However, if a donor is committed to their individual focus and approach and has limited desire for flexibility and collaboration, the donor will be better served to pursue their social impact strategies independently,” says Tedesco.

In the article “How Do I Work with My Family to Achieve High-Impact Philanthropy?” advisors at The Bridgespan Group observe that the goals people have for engaging their family members in philanthropy generally fall into two main categories: 1) Serve the family—create a forum for togetherness, share experiences, perform public service; and 2) Serve society—do all you can to create results with your family philanthropy.¹

These goals are not mutually exclusive, observes Susan Wolf Ditzkoff, partner at The Bridgespan Group and leader of their philanthropy practice. But it is important to

identify your main objective versus your secondary objective. Several professionals such as Jennifer Davis, executive vice president of The Philanthropy Workshop and Erinn Andrews, director of Philanthropy Research and Education at Stanford PACS suggest that one way for families to achieve greater social change and impact within a community is to take a community-centric approach as opposed to a donor-centric one. Sharna Goldseker, founder and president of 21/64 believes there is a significant shift taking place in families from a focus on engaging in philanthropy to pass down a legacy to a focus on engaging in philanthropy to make an impact.

Once you have decided on your primary goal, it will make decision-making in your family philanthropy much clearer. Some donors may also choose to employ a portfolio approach to their giving and apportion some giving to primarily serve the family and other giving to primarily focus on results.

1. “How Do I Work with My Family to Achieve High-Impact Philanthropy?” www.bridgespan.org.

According to research conducted by NCFP², there are six major reasons why families find engaging in philanthropy together a valuable experience for family members including:

1. **Early experience and discovery:** Young adults can gain specific skills and experiences such as the demands of governance; and learn more about themselves
2. **Lifelong learning:** Families can learn about needs and issues from the nonprofits they fund
3. **Family discovery:** Families have the opportunity to experience each other in a whole new context
4. **Generational ties:** Younger family members can learn from older generations and vice versa
5. **A view “outside the airport”:** Philanthropy can expose family members to social needs and solutions and a more balanced view of the world
6. **Family bonds:** Making time for philanthropy can keep the family connected in a chaotic world

There are also several reasons why donors should *not* involve their family members in their philanthropy. These include using philanthropy to compensate for disagreements between family members or mediate “fairness”; hoping the family will provide rubber stamp approval for philanthropic decisions; and pressuring people into being involved when they don’t have the time, interest or ability. Professionals caution that “some families view philanthropy as a way to bind everyone together and teach family members a sense of responsibility. Usually, parents and grandparents have this vision. While philanthropy can be a uniting force, it is no silver bullet.”³

2. The National Center for Family Philanthropy. “The Power to Produce Wonders: The Value of Family in Philanthropy.” 2010. pp. 14–15.

3. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. “Next Gen Philanthropy.”

Who should be involved in your family philanthropy?



In this age of blended and nontraditional family units, just defining who participates in...family philanthropy can be challenging.”

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

As you consider who should be involved in your family philanthropy, one basic but not easy question to answer is: “What do I mean by ‘family?’” Another important question to consider is “how do I find the right talent/people to help me with my family philanthropy?”

In today’s world, families come in all different sizes and permutations, including spouses and life partners; biological children, adopted children, and stepchildren; children’s spouses and ex-spouses and life partners; grandparents; grandchildren; aunts, uncles, cousins; the list goes on. Melissa Berman, president & CEO of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) has found that the definition of family in many ways relates to the family’s size, traditions, culture, and goals for philanthropy. In her work, she has seen many successful family philanthropies include cousins and second cousins and in-laws as family members, whereas others include just the nuclear family.

Tedesco encourages donors to consider: “What constitutes family? What are the eligibility criteria? What are the expectations of participation? What are the implications of engagement? Who makes the decisions – now and in the future?” In addition to thinking carefully about who is “family” and which family members might participate in the philanthropy, donors ought to *first* consider what skills they need for a successful structure, and then deliberate whether eligible family members can play a role that serves the goals of the philanthropy.

Katherina Rosqueta, executive director of the Center for High Impact Philanthropy talks about four common pitfalls donors can fall into when considering who should be involved in their philanthropy including:

1. The power dynamic of “the donor is always right.”
2. The belief that hiring staff is unnecessary.
3. The assumption that “I can rely on my family and my personal network.
4. The perspective that philanthropy is a personal pursuit, not work.⁴

While it is natural to rely on a trusted network of friends and family to help with your family philanthropy, several professionals caution against only turning to this small and likely least diverse pool of talent. Tedesco emphasizes how important it is that families look beyond the family unit, saying: “decisions ultimately need to be informed by those who are proximate to the issues the funder seeks to influence. And ideally decisions are made in *partnership* with those who are proximate and who have the experience that goes beyond that of the family.”

Rosqueta notes that “many donors are seeking to serve communities they don’t live in and solve problems they don’t personally have.” She also cautions donors: “By relying primarily on people more like them and not seeking the perspective of people and communities they hope they help, donors risk reinforcing socioeconomic and racial segregation.” Stephanie Fuerstner Gillis of the Raikes Foundation and Andrews both suggest donors seek community members to participate as a possible way to address inequities.

4. Center for High Impact Philanthropy. “[Talent for Giving: Building the Team to Help You Do Good. A guide for high-net-worth donors](#)”. October 20, 2021.

Regardless of which family members you choose to engage in your philanthropy, many professionals urge donors to encourage their families to pursue philanthropy or volunteerism outside the collective vehicle. Every family member should be encouraged to participate in his/her own giving and volunteering separate and apart from the family philanthropy to get more proximate to people and communities, learn more about the systems and structures they seek to change with their philanthropy, and cultivate individual philanthropic interests and skills.

What values are core to your family philanthropy?



Over time, family members change and program priorities change; what holds the family and its philanthropy together is the legacy of its values.”

— Bruce Sievers, “Living the Legacy: The Values of a Family’s Philanthropy Across Generations”

Many philanthropy professionals agree it is important to establish and articulate family values to guide philanthropic decision-making across the generations. One of the first questions you should answer before you begin any philanthropic activity is “What motivates you to give?” At the core of this question is the articulation of your values and beliefs about yourself, the world, and the way in which positive change happens.

In its primer on philanthropic purpose⁵, NCFP emphasizes that families should spend time considering their motivations for giving, both individually and collectively: “What motivates me to be generous? Why do I care?” The primer helps families work through their *why* (motivations and values), their *what* (priorities), and their *how* (giving style) to determine and articulate their philanthropic purpose and lay the groundwork for a clear north star that they can revisit and refine over time. GS DAF publications “[Getting Started with Your Philanthropy](#)” and “[Crafting Your Charitable Mission Statement](#)” can also be helpful resources to help you define your family’s values.

21/64, a nonprofit consulting practice specializing in next generation and multi-generational strategic philanthropy recommends using motivational values cards⁶ to help family members identify and discuss their values. Some examples of these values include:

- Justice
- Equity
- Integrity
- Leadership

- Compassion
- Personal growth
- Power
- Innovation

Goldseker, one of the country’s leading professionals on next generation philanthropy, tells a story about a grandfather who funded scholarships in his local community and his granddaughter who wanted to fund rebuilding efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. On the surface, they seemed to have different funding interests. However, through discussion, they discovered that at the root they both valued justice and opportunity and were motivated to give back. In fact, the granddaughter said she learned these values from her grandfather.⁷ This example illustrates what Tedesco describes as the power of philanthropy “to leverage your shared values in the best possible ways.”

There may be situations, however, where personal motivations diverge in significant ways, especially when engaging next generations in the family philanthropy. In those cases, several professionals suggest families create discretionary funds or other outlets for family members to fund issues they are personally passionate about outside of the collective giving vehicle. This not only allows individuals to pursue their personal philanthropic interests, but also ensures the family foundation remains focused on its stated mission and objectives.

5. [National Center for Family Philanthropy: Philanthropic Purposes Primer](#)

6. <https://2164.net/motivational-values/>

7. Goldseker, Sharna. “Motivations for Giving.” Investments & Wealth Monitor. 2011.

How do you want to involve your family members in philanthropy?



“When fielding a team for any sport, managers don’t look for players who have been playing the longest. They look for the best people to play different positions. In philanthropy, Baby Boomers may have the most years of experience...Generation Xers may have financial expertise...Generation Yers may have suggestions about using technology...”

Sharna Goldseker, Family Giving News⁸

Donors can engage family members in philanthropy through multiple vehicles. In addition to volunteering for nonprofit organizations together, other philanthropic vehicles include check-writing, donor advised funds, charitable gift funds, charitable lead trusts, giving circles, family business giving, private foundations, family foundations, and community foundations.⁹ Many donors use a combination of these vehicles to achieve their philanthropic goals with their families. Any decision about selecting a vehicle for giving should involve your legal or tax advisor(s).

Karey Dye, president of GS DAF, suggests that “regardless of the vehicle, you can get your family involved in philanthropy.” Family members can be involved in philanthropy in a multitude of ways by bringing specific expertise to the family effort. Possible roles include serving as an informal or formal advisor, a board member/trustee, or an employee of a foundation. Beyond these specific roles, family members can also be involved in a variety of content areas as follows¹⁰:

- **Governance:** Establishing mission, guidelines, policies, strategic direction, and decision-making processes; preparing trustees and succession planning
- **Research:** Conducting needs assessments by geography and/or issue; identifying best practices and model programs in an issue area

- **Grantmaking:** Generating grant ideas, screening applications, conducting due diligence including site visits and writing site reports, preparing grant dockets and gift options
- **Assessment:** Monitoring grantees, working with grantees on self-assessment and third-party evaluations
- **Administration and Systems:** Communicating among family members, communicating with grant applicants and grantees, organizing files, preparing financial statements/accounting, managing social media
- **Investments:** Developing investment strategy, selecting financial managers/funds, monitoring investments

For each of the possible ways family members can engage in philanthropy, it is essential to be clear about the roles and expectations for each person and to establish rules for how decision-making will happen within the family philanthropy. The following section discusses some important decision-rules to help govern your family’s involvement in philanthropy.

8. Goldseker, Sharna. “What Will Really Engage the Next Generation?” E-newsletter lead article, August 2009. Family Giving News. The National Center for Family Philanthropy

9. The Philanthropic Initiative. “Giving Together: A Primer for Family Philanthropy.” p.4 and The National Center for Family Philanthropy. “The Power to Produce Wonders: The Value of Family in Philanthropy.” p.11.

10. Adapted from The Philanthropic Initiative’s publication “Giving Together: A Primer for Family Philanthropy.” p.11.

Which decision rules should you use in your family philanthropy?



You cannot... perpetually please every family member and, at the same time, make the tough trade-offs inherent in pursuing an effective strategy.”

Susan Wolf Dittkoff, The Bridgespan Group

As you prepare to engage your family in philanthropy, it is important to think through the basic ground rules for your family’s involvement in order to limit future misunderstandings and conflict. You should assume that each family member will come with his/her own ideas about how they want to be engaged in philanthropy. In order to help your family philanthropy work as smoothly as possible, we recommend you reach agreement on certain decision rules.

These rules fall into two major categories: governance and grantmaking. Berman suggests “there’s not one right or wrong answer to how families make decisions about their philanthropy; achieving clarity and consistency is what’s key.” She adds that “many families are now actively evaluating whether they want their philanthropy to endure in perpetuity or to have a defined endpoint. Again, this is not a right/wrong decision but deciding on a strategic time horizon can inspire deep thinking about the family’s purpose and goals in philanthropy.”

Governance

It is important to establish criteria for voting in family philanthropy decisions. Berman has observed how families grant voting or decision-making authority to family members: 1) by privilege—family members need to demonstrate they are interested, willing and able to participate in philanthropic decision-making; 2) by right—family members are automatically given decision-making authority and can opt-in by their own choosing; 3) by obligation—family members are required to participate in philanthropic decision-making and cannot opt out.

Berman highly recommends granting philanthropic decision-making authority by privilege as the other options often result in more passive participation in philanthropy.

Once the family has agreed on who holds decision-making authority, the family will need to discuss how decisions will be made. Will consensus be required? Or will majority rule? Does anyone have the final say or does anyone’s opinion have more weight than others? How will decision-making evolve over time, especially as the next generation takes over? Andrews notes from her experience that “it is sometimes better for the family or marriage to not have consensus-based grantmaking.” Achieving clarity and communicating the answers to all these questions is essential.

Grantmaking

There are many questions families should consider in establishing decision rules for grantmaking beyond the “where/what/how do you want to give” topics covered in GS DAF publication “Getting Started with Your Philanthropy.” These questions include:

- Can family members use the family philanthropy to make personal philanthropy gifts (e.g., alma maters, children’s schools, reciprocal social giving)?
- How will you handle funding requests from organizations for which family members serve on the board of directors? Will that family member recuse him/herself from discussion and decision-making?
- Will individual family members have an allocation for grantmaking and if so, what amount?

Families may want to engage facilitation professionals to help work through family dynamics as needed as they discuss these various decision rules. Professionals note that “the family philanthropy can sometimes become a place for airing old resentments and, without thoughtful guidance, it can split open existing fissure points in the family.”¹¹

Tedesco urges families to have clear decision-making processes and adopt policies such as one around conflicts of interest. He says: “More than the decision itself, strife often comes from a lack of communication about the decision-making process and who has authority to make particular decisions. Be explicit about process so all family members are informed about their role in a decision.” In addition, it is helpful for families to write down their decision rules and review them every few years to make sure they are operating as intended.

11. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. “Next Gen Philanthropy.”

When should you start talking with your family about philanthropy?



What we do know is that putting off the discussion generally makes it harder.”

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Ideally, family members have been raised since childhood with an open understanding of philanthropy and its role in the family. However, we realize the ideal isn’t always possible and therefore the remainder of this publication will focus on how to engage various family members in philanthropy, including spouses/life partners and children of all ages.

In their publication “Talking to Your Family about Philanthropy,” Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors highlights a few opportune times to talk with your family about philanthropy, including when a decision creates a need to inform or reflects a plan to inspire¹²:

When a decision creates a need to inform.

There are several examples of this type of situation:

- A donor decides philanthropy, rather than heirs, will receive the majority of his/her wealth
- A donor wants to sell a long-held asset to which the family members have grown attached such as a vacation home or art collection
- A donor takes on a controversial issue that will potentially expose the family to greater public scrutiny and criticism
- A donor dramatically changes his/her giving plan
- A donor decides one or more family members, but perhaps not others, will play special roles in his/her philanthropic giving
- A donor wants family members to be clear about his/her wishes for philanthropy for the future

When a decision reflects a plan to inspire.

There are several times when donors may want to explicitly encourage others—whether family members or the general public—to give:

- A donor decides to be involved in his/her philanthropy on a full-time basis
- A donor makes a significant donation with a naming opportunity so that the family name will be prominently attached to a well-known organization or place
- A donor wants to raise awareness about a specific issue and has become a highly visible advocate for the cause
- A donor creates philanthropic resources for family members to allocate individually

Each of these critical junctures provides donors with an opportunity to engage family members in talking about philanthropy. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind what the Bridgespan Group calls “Family Philanthropy Watch-Outs¹³” as you begin to engage family members in your philanthropy. In particular, donors should avoid these following situations:

- Donors alienate family members by not considering their input.
- Parents want to involve their kids in their philanthropy, but don’t give them any decision-making rights.
- Family members are engaged in roles that are not suited to their skills, expertise and/or interests.
- Family members try to honor too many different philanthropic passions and consequently spread resources thinly.

12. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. “[Talking to Your Family about Philanthropy](#),” pp. 7, 9.

13. The Bridgespan Group “[How Do I Work with My Family to Achieve High-Impact Philanthropy?](#)”

- Donors don't think through how much personal time they want to spend on their philanthropy, which can result in an over or under-staffed foundation (where staff roles are undeveloped or overwhelming, or sometimes both).

Conversations about money and giving can be very challenging and fraught with emotion and conflict. As Buchanan observes, “money so often tears families apart – fights over who gets what can lead to terrible rifts in families.” Several professionals recommend donors engage outside help when necessary to plan and facilitate these conversations, as even the healthiest, most loving, and charitable families can get stuck.

How can you engage your spouse/life partner in philanthropy?



Some spouses like to blaze their own trails; others very much want to engage in their philanthropy together. The spectrum of involvement with spouses is very wide.”

Paul Shoemaker, Founding President, Social Venture Partners International

There are significant pros and cons associated with involving your spouse or life partner in your philanthropy. One benefit is that couples can partner in a new way and pursue shared interests through their joint philanthropy. A considerable challenge is that unhealthy relational dynamics, miscommunication patterns, and existing power dynamics can limit the effectiveness of a couple’s combined philanthropy.

Professionals in philanthropy such as Paul Shoemaker, founding president of Social Venture Partners International, observe that “money is an ‘amplifier.’ Whatever dynamics or patterns exist in a relationship will be accentuated by having or giving away money.” If, after weighing the various pros and cons, you choose to involve your spouse/life partner in your philanthropy, there are a few fundamental questions you should answer together before engaging in grantmaking.

Based on over twenty years of working with donor couples, Shoemaker believes the basic “blocking and tackling” questions couples must answer first include:

- How much do you want to save?
- How do you want to invest your money?
- How much do you want to give to your kids?
- How much do you want to give to philanthropy?
- What kind of vehicle, if any, do you want to create for giving (versus just using the checkbook)?

Once these basic questions are answered, couples who decide to engage in philanthropy together should figure out how to divide their joint philanthropic work to maximize their effectiveness. Each individual will have a different level of availability and interest in philanthropy as well as different skills and abilities to invest in philanthropic efforts. Clear communication about each person’s role and responsibilities and expectations is essential to avoid creating resentments about uneven workloads and miscommunications with grantees. A couple’s successful division of labor and delegation of authority will result in greater enjoyment in their giving.

Overall, there is no single right or wrong answer to how couples should engage in their philanthropy together. In their publication, “Giving as a Couple,” RPA recommends couples find clarity around workload and roles and then “schedule regular reviews of this understanding to allow for the inevitable changes in circumstances, finances and giving preferences.”

How can you engage your preschool- and elementary-age children in philanthropy?



For little kids, the most important way to teach them about philanthropy is to connect philanthropy with the family legacy, family values, and family stories.”

Betsy Erickson, Senior Director, Arabella Advisors

Young children spend a lot of their early years imitating their caregivers. Philanthropy professionals suggest the best way for you to engage your preschool and elementary age children in philanthropy is to get involved yourself and invite them into age-appropriate volunteer and learning opportunities. “Giving little kids the opportunity to use their time, talent, and treasure to help someone else gives them the positive feeling that they can be a change maker,” says Erickson.

When introducing young children to philanthropy and voluntarism, the most important factor to keep in mind is whether the activity fits the child’s personality and interests. Some children enjoy more hands-on experiences whereas others prefer to be more removed from direct involvement. Some families find volunteering with other families with children of the same age makes philanthropy more social, fun and memorable for all involved.

The following are possible activities to engage your young children in philanthropy:

- Read to your children about philanthropy: both giving and sharing
- See and talk about volunteerism in action
- Help your children make art for a gift for elderly shut-ins or children at the local hospital
- Practice philanthropy in your religion
- Participate in family volunteer activities together such as serving a meal at a homeless shelter

- Engage your children in helping at home
- Plan a fundraiser such as a lemonade stand or participate in a walk-a-thon to raise money for a specific cause or organization
- Talk with your children about why your family gives, for example, “We donate coats to the shelter because we want others to be warm during the winter;” or “We give money to support the museum because we love art;” or “Our family believes in taking care of the environment and that’s why we reuse and recycle”

Shoemaker encourages parents to get their children involved in volunteering and philanthropy at an early age saying: “People don’t realize how much they’ll get out of getting their kids involved. The sooner they expose their kids to philanthropy and the more that they engage their kids in voluntarism the better. All of these activities teach children powerful lessons about philanthropy at an early life stage.” Buchanan urges parents to “imbue children with the ethic of giving and build awareness of the challenges that exist in our society and the potential each individual has to make a difference.” He adds, “it’s easier to form children’s habits and ways of thinking when they are young – and normalize that part of living is giving back.”

For more ideas about how to engage your preschool and elementary children in philanthropy, please reference the extensive list of resources at the end of this publication.

How can you engage your middle school- and high school-age children in philanthropy?



“It isn’t rocket science. What’s really important to teenagers is their peer group. Almost everything we do at Social Venture Partners gets them engaged with each other. If you give them a little structure, a framework for philanthropy, they will learn more from each other...They are way smarter than we think they are.”

Paul Shoemaker, Founding President, Social Venture Partners International

Whereas preschool and elementary age children are primarily influenced by their caregivers, middle school and high school age children are primarily influenced by their peers. That said there are still ways you as a parent can engage your teenager in philanthropy. In addition to talking about your philanthropy and volunteering by example, you can introduce your children to a wide variety of issues to help them learn about different ways people get involved and help them find their own passion. You can also start to involve your children in making decisions about your family philanthropy.

Tedesco says, “It’s so important to introduce the concept of philanthropy at a young age – to orient your children to values that take them outside of themselves and develop a healthy relationship with money. I recommend that children engage in philanthropy by beginning the tradition of giving as soon as they start receiving.”

In addition to the activities suggested for younger children, the following are some activities to engage your teenage children in your philanthropy:

- Talk with your children about how much your family gives by issue area; perhaps using pie charts to illustrate
- Involve your children with your decision-making in philanthropy
- Expose your children to a range of issues by volunteering together for a variety of organizations such as food banks and animal shelters and hospitals. Participate in trail cleanups, fundraising lunches, political rallies, and marches; take them to hear

speakers on a diverse spectrum of topics

- Talk about your family estate plans when your children are in high school or college
- Encourage your children to participate in service-learning opportunities with peers
- Encourage your children to participate in or start-up a local youth grantmaking group

Shoemaker believes this last suggestion of engaging your teenager in a peer grantmaking group may be one of the highest impact methods of helping your child own his/her own philanthropy. He notes, “At this age, kids don’t listen well, especially to adults. And experiential peer learning is far more effective with teens than learning out of a book.”

Since 2000, Social Venture Partners (SVP) Seattle has run a program called Social Venture Kids (SVK).¹⁴ The SVK members must be in high school to participate and most have parents who are SVP Partners. An adult provides guidance to the group of 8 – 15 teenagers but according to Shoemaker, the teens really own the program. Each year the group selects a community issue they would like to address. They raise funds, research the issue they’ve selected, solicit and evaluate grant applications, and make annual grants totaling \$10,000 or more. The SVK model is consistent with Tedesco’s recommendation to have children engage in philanthropy through giving away their own money.

For more ideas about how to engage your teenage children in philanthropy, please reference the extensive list of resources at the end of this publication.

14. <https://svpseattle.org/>.

How can you engage young adults in philanthropy?



“We are living in one of the most significant eras for family philanthropy in history. A new generation of eager donors with unprecedented resources are bursting on the scene. Innovation is happening at a torrid pace, and fundamental critiques of philanthropy have never been so widely debated.”

Michael Moody, Ph.D., Frey Foundation Chair for Family Philanthropy and Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

According to a 2020 study of U.S. family foundations, approximately 70% of foundations are actively involving their children or younger relatives in charitable decisions such as a next-gen board of directors or other governance structure or participating in board discussions and decision-making. This represents an increase from 56% of family foundations reporting this in 2015.¹⁵

There are many ways for families to effectively engage their young adults in family philanthropy. In their book, *“Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors are Revolutionizing Giving,”* Goldseker and Moody describe eight best practices for families including¹⁶:

- Start early. Give your next gen opportunities to give, and to observe the family’s giving, from a young age.
- Move your next gen from the “kid” table” sooner, not later. Embrace the multigenerational family team.
- Listen to your next gen’s ideas, especially about strategy and innovation.
- Help your next gen give their time and talent to a cause or organization. When possible, give yours alongside them.

In addition to the activities mentioned in the previous two sections, you can also give your child his/her own money to give away. However, this approach should be thought through carefully. Dye suggests donors keep the dollar

amounts in perspective, saying: “Providing an 18-year-old with \$10,000 to give away may not seem like a large sum to the donor parent. But to a young person who has not yet earned a salary in a full-time job, this represents a lot of money and responsibility.”

Tedesco recommends parents introduce philanthropy to their young adult children in a practical manner: invite them to board meetings, accompany them on a site visit, encourage them to volunteer with a nonprofit organization. Several family philanthropies create structured learning opportunities for young adult children, including next generation boards, family retreats, and learning agendas.

Erickson emphasizes the importance of being specific in how young adults are invited to participate in the family philanthropy. She says, “This is the biggest failing I see, people dive into this without designing something that is objective oriented, where form follows function.” For example, if the objective is to build strong intergenerational relationships, sending young adults on service-learning trips and failing to discuss and debrief those trips with the family will not meet that objective.

15. National Center for Family Philanthropy. [“Trends 2020: Family Dynamics and Next Generation Development.”](#)

16. Goldseker, Sharna and Michael Moody. *“Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors Are Revolutionizing Giving.”* Updated and Expanded Edition. Hoboken: Wiley, 2021, pp. 329-371.

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“If there isn’t a clear understanding about how everyone involved hopes next gen engagement will look and feel with a detailed plan to get there, families run the risk of misunderstandings and frustrations that could actually work against their goals of impact and family cohesion,” warns Erickson. In addition, parents and grandparents need to be clear about their expectations for the next generation, manage their own reactions and emotions to the process, and take the long view.

To learn more, please reference the GS DAF publication [“Engaging the Next Generation in Your Philanthropy.”](#) This publication discusses questions such as how the next generations think about their philanthropy, how to encourage the next generation in their philanthropy, and how to manage different philanthropic preferences between generations, among other topics. For more ideas about how to engage your young adult children in philanthropy, please reference the extensive list of resources at the end of this publication.

Conclusion

“ Family philanthropy has a dual purpose: family engagement or cohesion and social impact. Historically, many families have focused on internal unity and family engagement as the primary purpose of their family philanthropy. What we are seeing now is a shift in family philanthropy prompted by the critiques of wealth and its connection to racial injustice, the challenges to democracy, and the global pandemic, to a focus on social impact as an important motivation to do this work .”

Nick Tedesco, President & CEO, National Center for Family Philanthropy

A lot of families have more wealth than they've ever had before and are challenged to give that money away in the best ways possible to achieve the greatest impact, while also using philanthropy as the glue to bind the family together over the years. Multiple generations are grappling with how to engage with communities in need and tackle systemic issues, while managing generational differences in terms of passion, experience, and expertise.

Despite these challenges, Tedesco believes that family can enhance philanthropy, saying “with clear motivations, and decision-making structures, philanthropy can be a meaningful opportunity for families to connect around shared values and drive change.” Erickson adds, “When you combine the financial capital of a private foundation or donor-advised fund with all the elements a wealthy family brings to the table – entrepreneurship, innovation, systems thinking, networks, and a willingness to take risks – family philanthropies have really extraordinary opportunities for impact.”

This publication has been designed to help you contemplate how best to engage your family, however you define “family”, in your philanthropy. It is important to think through all the questions listed in this publication and remember that your answers and that of each of your family members will likely change over time as your family's experience and availability for engaging in philanthropy evolves. An extensive list of recommended resources for each of the ten questions is included at the end of this publication. For more information on this topic or additional assistance with philanthropic topics, contact your Goldman Sachs Private Wealth Management Team.

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Recommended Resources

1. Why should you engage your family in philanthropy?

- [The Bridgespan Group](#). “How Do I Work with My Family to Achieve High-Impact Philanthropy?”
- The National Center for Family Philanthropy. [“The Power to Produce Wonders: The Value of Family in Philanthropy.”](#) pp. 12–15.

2. Who should be involved in your family philanthropy?

- Center for High Impact Philanthropy. [“Talent for Giving: Building the Team to Help You Do Good. A guide for high-net-worth donors”](#). October 20, 2021.
- Moody, Michael, Allison Lugo Knapp, and Marlene Corrado. “What is a Family Foundation?” *The Foundation Review*. Volume 3: Issue 4. 2011.
- The National Center for Family Philanthropy. [“The Power to Produce Wonders: The Value of Family in Philanthropy.”](#) pp. 26–27.

3. What values are core to your family philanthropy?

- GS DAF. [“Getting Started with Your Philanthropy: An Overview for Donors.”](#) April, 2016.
- GS DAF. [“Crafting your Charitable Mission Statement.”](#) June, 2016
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. [“The Giving Commitment: Knowing Your Motivation.”](#)
- The Philanthropic Initiative. [“Raising Children with Philanthropic Values.”](#) February, 2009.

4. How do you want to involve your family members in philanthropy?

- Goldseker, Sharna and Michael Moody. Goldseker, Sharna and Michael Moody. *Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors Are Revolutionizing Giving*. “Chapter 10: Fielding a Multigenerational Team.” Updated and Expanded Edition. Hoboken: Wiley, 2021. pp. 215 – 237.
- The Philanthropic Initiative. [“Giving Together: A Primer for Family Philanthropy.”](#) September, 2008.

5. Which decision rules should you use in your family philanthropy?

- National Center for Family Philanthropy. [“Managing Family Dynamics: A Primer for Community Foundation Staff and Donor Families.”](#)

6. When should you start talking with your family about philanthropy?

- 21/64. [Growing Goodness Workshop](#) – a 90-minute interactive workshop on best practices, tangible tips and tools from North America’s leading thinkers and researchers on child development, psychology, and family philanthropy.
- 21/64. [Growing Goodness Toolkit](#) – a curated set of ten best practices to answer the question “How do we raise the next generation to have good values while growing up amid affluence?”

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Recommended Resources (continued)

- Brill, Betsy. "[How to Make Philanthropy a Family Affair.](#)" Forbes.com, April 19, 2011.
- Goldseker, Sharna and Michael Moody. *Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors Are Revolutionizing Giving. Appendix B: Best Practices for Families.* "Appendix B: Best Practices for Families." Updated and Expanded Edition. Hoboken: Wiley, 2021. pp. 329 – 371.
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. "[Talking to Your Family About Philanthropy.](#)"

7. How can you engage your spouse/life partner in philanthropy?

- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. "[Giving as a Couple.](#)"

8. How can you engage your preschool- and elementary school-age children in philanthropy?

- National Center for Family Philanthropy. "[Snow Day Survival Guide.](#)"

Books

- *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie (ages 5 and up)
- *Beatrice's Goat* by Page McBrier (ages 4 and up)
- *Chicken Soup for Little Souls: The Goodness Gorillas* by Lisa McCourt (ages 4 and up)
- *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting (ages 4 and up)
- *If the World Were a Village – Second Edition: A Book about the World's People* (ages 8 – 12)
- *If You Made a Million* by David Schwartz (ages 4 and up)
- *Old People, Frogs, and Albert* by Nancy Hope Wilson (ages 7 and up)
- *Sophie and the Sidewalk Man* by Stephanie S. Tolan (ages 8 and up)
- *The Giving Box: Create a Tradition of Giving with your Children* by Fred Rogers (ages 4 and up)
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (ages 7 and up)
- *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern (ages 4 and up)
- *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* by Tomie dePaola (ages 4 and up)
- *The Star Gift* by Flavia Weedn (ages 4 and up)
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan (ages 3 and up)
- *What if Everybody Gave?* by Janet Wakefield

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Recommended Resources (continued)

Websites

- www.generationon.org – A global youth service movement igniting the power of all kids to make their mark on the world. Provides tools and resources to kids, teens, families, educators and organizations to help kids change the world and themselves through service.
- <https://www.learningtogive.org/> – Provides materials and support for educators, youth leaders, and families to help youth develop generosity and agency for their ongoing roles in community. Their vision is a world where all youth are knowledgeable and equipped for lifelong engagement in philanthropy as givers of time, talent, and treasure for the common good.
- www.ncfp.org/collection/generations-together-engaging-youth/ – A special collection curated by NCFP's Engaging Youth Peer Network. All resources are intended to be able to be used directly with kids.

9. How can you engage your middle school- and high school-age children in philanthropy?

Books

- *A Kid's Guide to Giving* by Freddie Zeiler and Ward Schumaker (teens)
- *Catch the Spirit: Teen Volunteers Tell How They Made a Difference* by Susan Perry (teens)
- *Gracie's Girl* by Ellen Wittlinger (ages 9 and up)
- *Homeless* by Bernard Wolf (ages 9 and up)
- *Pay It Forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde (teens)
- *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference* by Barbara Lewis (ages 8 and up)

Websites

- www.dosomething.org – The largest not-for-profit exclusively for young people and social change, DoSomething's millions of members represent every US area code and 131 countries. Using their digital platform, DoSomething members join volunteer, social change, and civic action campaigns to make real-world impact on causes they care about.
- www.generationon.org – A global youth service movement igniting the power of all kids to make their mark on the world. Provides tools and resources to kids, teens, families, educators and organizations to help kids change the world and themselves through service.
- www.ncfp.org/collection/generations-together-engaging-youth/ – A special collection curated by NCFP's Engaging Youth Peer Network. All resources are intended to be able to be used directly with kids.

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Recommended Resources (continued)

10. How can you engage young adults in philanthropy?

Books

- *It's Our World, Too!: Young People Who Are Making a Difference: How They Do It – How You Can Too!* by Phillip Hoose (young adult)
- MacBurnie King in *Soulmates: A Novel to End World Hunger* by John Henry Ballard (young adult)
- *The Ultimate Gift* by Jim Stovall (young adult)

Articles/Guides/Workbooks

- [“52 Ways to Take Action”](#) – A list of next steps young funders can draw from to help map out their paths into family philanthropy.
- [“Family Philanthropy Glossary”](#) – Definitions for many of the terms and lingo used in the field of philanthropy.
- [“Engaging the Next Generation in Your Philanthropy: An Overview for Donors.”](#) GS DAF guide.
- Goldseker, Sharna and Michael Moody. *Generation Impact: How Next Gen Donors Are Revolutionizing Giving*. Updated and Expanded Edition. Hoboken: Wiley, 2021.
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. [“Next Gen Philanthropy: Finding the Path Between Tradition and Innovation.”](#)

Websites

- [Generations Together: Engaging Youth](#) – A special collection curated by NCFP’s Engaging Youth Peer Network. All resources are intended to be able to be used directly with kids.
- www.resourcegeneration.org – A multiracial membership community of young people (18 – 35) with wealth and/or class privilege committed to the equitable distribution of wealth, land, and power.

Organizations

- [2164.net](#) – A nonprofit practice providing multigenerational advising, facilitation and training for next generation engagement, especially within family philanthropy and other family enterprises. 21/64 specializes in serving families with funds, foundations or other enterprises as well as wealth and philanthropy advisors – so that multiple generations can work, give and serve together more effectively.
- [Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy](#) – An academic center within Grand Valley State University that aims to help philanthropic institutions and individuals understand, strengthen, and advance philanthropy.

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Recommended Resources for Parents about Family Philanthropy, Wealth, and Parenting

Books: Families and Philanthropy

- *Creating Change Through Family Philanthropy: The Next Generation* by Alison Goldberg and Karen Pittelman
- *Philanthropy, Heirs and Values: How Successful Families Are Using Philanthropy to Prepare Their Heirs for Post-transition Responsibilities* by Roy Williams and Vic Preisser
- *Raising Charitable Children* by Carol Weisman
- *Raising Financially Fit Kids: Revised and Updated* by Godfrey, Joline
- *Raising Kids Who Will Make a Difference: Helping Your Family Live with Integrity, Value Simplicity, and Care for Others* by Susan Vogt
- *Teaching your Kids to Care: How to Discover and Develop the Spirit of Charity in Your Children* by Deborah Spaide
- *The Financially Intelligent Parent: 8 Steps to Raising Successful, Generous, Responsible Children* by Eileen and Jon Gallo
- *The Giving Family: Raising Our Children to Help Others* by Susan Crites Price

Books: Families and Volunteering

- *Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul: Stories to Celebrate the Spirit of Courage, Caring and Community* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Arline Oberst and John Boal
- *The Busy Family's Guide to Family Volunteering: Doing Good Together* by Jenny Friedman

Books: Families and Wealth

- *Family Wealth—Keeping It in the Family: How Family Members and Their Advisers Preserve Human, Intellectual, and Financial Assets for Generations* by Jay Hughes
- *Wealth in Families* by Charles Collier

Books: Money Messaging to Children

- *Children of Paradise – Successful Parenting for Prosperous Families* by Lee Hausner
- *Dollars and Sense for Kids* by Janet Bodnar
- *Kids, Money and Values: Creative Ways to Teach Your Kids About Money* by Patricia Estess
- *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's ATM* by Nathan Dungan
- *Raising Financially Fit Kids* by Jolene Godfrey
- *Silverspoon Kids: How Successful Parents Raise Responsible Children* by Eileen, Jon and Kevin Gallo

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Recommended Resources for Parents about Family Philanthropy, Wealth, and Parenting

Articles/Guides/Workbooks

- [“Family Dynamics Content Collection”](#) – National Center for Family Philanthropy resources.
- [“Giving as a Couple”](#) – Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors guide.
- [“Giving Together: A Primer for Family Philanthropy”](#) – The Philanthropic Initiative.
- “How Do I Work with My Family to Achieve High-Impact Philanthropy?” – [The Bridgespan Group](#).
- Brown, Fredda Herz and Dennis T. Jaffe. “Overcoming Entitlement and Raising Responsible Next Generation Family Members.” *The Journal of Wealth Management*. March 2011.
- [“Raising Children with Philanthropic Values.”](#) – The Philanthropic Initiative.
- “Scanning the Landscape of Youth Philanthropy: Observations and Recommendations for Strengthening a Growing Field” by Jen Bokoff and Amanda Dillon. Foundation Center. 2014. This report finds that more than 200 foundations worldwide offer youth grantmaking programs and more than 100 related resources exist. The appendix of the report provides a complete list of existing programs, foundations, and universities related to youth grantmaking that existed at the time of print | 2014.
- [“Talking to Your Family About Philanthropy”](#) – Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors guide.
- [“The Power to Produce Wonders: The Value of Family in Philanthropy”](#) – [National Center for Family Philanthropy](#) summary of the National Symposium on the Value of Family Philanthropy.

Organizations/Websites

- www.doinggoodtogether.org – A Minneapolis-based national nonprofit that works to make volunteering and service, along with daily kindness, easy for every family.
- www.learningtogive.org – Equips K-12 teachers to educate students as philanthropists with knowledge, skills, and behavior to be more compassionate and engaged citizens and lifelong givers of time, talent, and treasure.
- [Generations Together: Engaging Youth](#) – A special collection curated by NCFP’s Engaging Youth Peer Network. All resources are intended to be able to be used directly with kids.
- www.resourcegeneration.org – A multiracial membership community of young people (18–35) with wealth and/or class privilege committed to the equitable distribution of wealth, land and power.
- [Social Impact Institute – Youth Giving](#) – A hub to inspire, connect, and inform youth grantmaking which shares data on the depth and breadth of the youth giving movement, builds knowledge around process and strategy, and connects potential partners, and drives collaboration and data.

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Recommended Resources for Parents about Family Philanthropy, Wealth, and Parenting

Family Philanthropy Advisors

- [2164.net](#) – A nonprofit practice specializing in next generation and multigenerational engagement in philanthropy and family enterprise.
- [Arabella Advisors](#) – Arabella helps foundations, families, investors, and corporate clients achieve greater good with their resources. Arabella offers a comprehensive suite of philanthropy services including: planning and strategy development, outsourced foundation management and philanthropy support, family engagement, and support for impact investing. Arabella also offers platforms to support and host donor collaboration, new initiatives, and policy advocacy.
- [The Bridgespan Group](#) – Bridgespan is a nonprofit advisor and resource for mission-driven organizations and philanthropists. Bridgespan works with individuals, families and foundations as they align their values and beliefs to maximize the results of their giving. Bridgespan generally engages with individuals and families as they are about to embark on or revise a significant philanthropic investment.
- [National Center for Family Philanthropy](#) (NCFP) – NCFP is a network of philanthropic families committed to a world that is vibrant, equitable, and resilient. NCFP shares proven practices, work through common challenges, and learn together to strengthen our ability to effect meaningful change. NCFP's range of programs and services support family philanthropy at its many points of inflection and help families embrace proven practices and advance momentum.
- [Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors](#) (RPA) – A nonprofit organization that helps donors create thoughtful and effective philanthropy throughout the world, RPA currently serves more than 200 donors in facilitating over \$450 million in annual gifts and grants to more than two dozen countries. RPA provides research and strategic planning, develops philanthropy programs, provides complete grantmaking management services, serves as a fiscal sponsor for philanthropic initiatives, and communicates widely about philanthropy.
- [The Philanthropic Initiative](#) (TPI) – A nonprofit advisory team that designs, carries out and evaluates philanthropic programs for individual donors, families, foundations, and corporations. Since it was founded in 1989, TPI's goal has been to help clients to invest in their own values, communities and societies for maximum impact.

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