

Everyone Can be a Philanthropist...and Every Gift Counts

You don't have to be famous or even wealthy to make a difference through personal philanthropy. People from all walks of life can make a lasting contribution to charitable organizations and causes. By giving, you become a part of a collective generosity that is uniquely American.

In 1831, politician, traveler and historian, Alexis de Tocqueville traveled across America over a nine month period, and in the process penned a great study of this country entitled *Democracy in America*. One of his most important observations was that Americans helped each other in times of need.

That would come as no surprise to people like Jack Eggers, who spent his life serving children as the janitor of his local elementary school. Jack cared deeply about his school "family", helping whenever needed and expressing his love of community by remembering birthdays and writing poems for the children and staff.

Jack wanted his community to benefit from his caring support forever. When he passed away in 2004, he left a legacy that few will forget. After living modestly his entire life, Jack surprised his community by leaving generous bequests to the school, his church, and the community he loved. Jack created a thoughtful plan in his lifetime, and his legacy will make a difference in countless lives for years to come.

If you are charitably inclined, it is very important to consider how you can incorporate charitable giving in your estate plan. Once you have taken care of your loved ones, you may wish to remember one or more favorite charities. Keep in mind that if you pass away without a properly executed Last Will and Testament or Trust, the State will make your decisions for you. Beyond your charitable wishes, a will can ensure, for example, that your dependent children are cared for by loved ones chosen by you. It also allows you to appoint the person who will execute your wishes when you are gone. Proper planning can assure that both your personal and philanthropy wishes are fulfilled.

According to the *Giving USA 2007* annual report, two-thirds of Americans give to charity in their lifetimes, yet fewer than 10% of households in the U.S. actually make a charitable bequest – an easy step and one that stands to have a profound impact if planned for properly. Whether a dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or a specific asset, you have the chance to create a thoughtful plan that remembers charities that have made a difference in your life.

For more information on incorporating a charitable gift in your estate plan, please visit www.leavealegacybroward.org. Whichever way you choose to give, remember- everyone can be a philanthropist...and every gift counts.

Paul Weigel and Michael Wohlgemuth
Paul Weigel, CFP® is a Market Trust Executive and Michael Wohlgemuth, CFP® is an Associate Wealth Strategist both for U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management.

This article is designed to provide general information about ideas and strategies. It is for discussion purposes only since the availability and effectiveness of any strategy is dependant upon your individual facts and circumstances. Always consult with your independent attorney, tax advisor, investment manager, and insurance agent for final recommendations and before changing or implementing any financial, tax, or estate planning strategy.

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Leave A Legacy® thanks Mill Creek Elementary for sharing their story.