

Flexible charitable vehicles. Effective financial solutions.

A professional advisor's perspective.



Throughout his years as an attorney specializing in estate planning, Chris Christ has had the opportunity to introduce many people to their community foundation as a vehicle for philanthropy. "The community foundation is more global than a single-purpose charity," says Chris. "It's a neutral third party, an impartial organization, established to improve and enrich the quality of life in the community."

Flexible giving. When donors establish a fund through their community foundation, they open the door to a very broad range of charitable options. The community foundation can manage virtually any type of gift for any charitable purpose, offering everyone the opportunity to make a lasting contribution that directly benefits their community.

"Clients who voice interest in giving through a charitable trust or a private foundation accomplish many of the same objectives by using their community foundation as a vehicle," Chris explains. "Clients get the advantage of good counsel regarding local needs and community resources. They can direct funds into their own areas of interest and make recommendations for grants to charitable agencies of their choice."

One of the advantages of the community foundation is that it "offers the donor much more flexibility in the use of their charitable dollars than a direct gift to a charity," Chris says. "Many charitable organizations encourage planned giving, but the organization is the sole beneficiary of the gift. With their community foundation, on the other hand, donors can name multiple beneficiaries."

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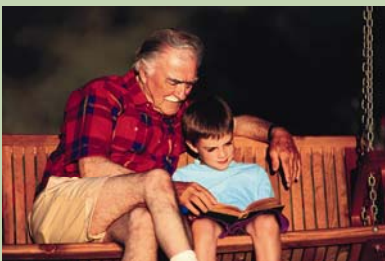
A valuable resource

One of the advantages community foundations offer advisors is statewide access to technical resources and experienced planned giving professionals.

"Community foundations can provide information on specific types of charitable gifts, such as charitable remainder trusts," says Chris Christ. "There are some subtleties within each instrument, and being able to work with their legal counsel has been very helpful."



Looking Forward. Giving Back.



“A gift to the community foundation can take many different forms. It’s a highly flexible, very personal way to give.”

*Chris Christ
President Emeritus
Vandervoort, Christ, & Fisher, PC – Battlecreek, MI*

Tax benefits

As a public charity, a community foundation offers the highest level of tax benefits for charitable giving. Donors may give cash, stock, closely held securities, real estate, or personal property, and receive maximum tax benefits.

Through planned giving that integrates philanthropy with overall financial and estate planning, advisors can ensure that their clients receive full benefit from contributions, while supporting the local community and charities of their choice.

Personalized giving. Experienced and knowledgeable staff, who share a deep commitment to the well-being of the community, can help find the best charitable organizations to fit each donor’s interests and help donors and their advisors structure a charitable fund to satisfy specific goals and financial objectives. Chris sees many donors use their community foundation as a means of giving during their lifetimes and providing a charitable endowment after their deaths to support their charitable interests in perpetuity. “Giving through their community foundations is more personal,” says Chris. “There is a real identification with the idea of ‘giving back.’ I think people feel they are contributing more fully to the development of their community.”

Responsible financial management. Gifts to the community foundation can become part of a lasting endowment. “For many people, the idea of endowment is attractive,” says Chris, “particularly when they feel assured of good stewardship and know there are provisions for responsible use of the funds.” Principal is expertly and responsibly managed in a balanced portfolio, and available income is used to fund projects according to donor wishes. Funds are invested with professional, well-known financial institutions, and performance is reviewed regularly. The foundation’s financial position is evaluated annually by an independent audit. These safeguards ensure that contributions will be preserved and earnings will be maximized over time.

Faithful to donor intent. One of the major strengths of a community foundation, in Chris’ opinion, is its ability to provide a flexible vehicle for donors with multiple philanthropic interests. The foundation keeps in close contact with nonprofit agencies throughout the local area, and their broad perspective and local knowledge assure that grants will always be targeted where they can do the most good. “The leadership of the community foundation is well trained and sensitive to seeing that the client’s needs and objectives are served,” Chris explains. “Their goal is to see to it that donors get into a fund or gift situation that meets their objectives.”

For example, one of his clients was an elderly woman who lived quite frugally. When she began planning her estate with Chris, she had amassed over \$1 million. As they talked, he learned that the people in her community meant a great deal to her, and she had several charitable interests – providing continuing support for her church; helping children; maintaining a strong, economically health city center; and preserving the historical society for her ethnic group. “Once she started talking about what she wanted to do, it was clear that our community foundation was the best resource [for her charitable bequests],” says Chris. “I was confident that her objectives would be met. We established the endowment for her church, and set up a designated fund to support the zoo, economic development in our city, and the local historical society.”