



## GUEST AUTHOR

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—The Advisor Viewpoint: In Today's Challenging Times—

# How Do We Choose a Charity?

Especially in times when economic conditions are more difficult, we must choose wisely as to the use of our gifts. As a professional advisor, I am often asked by clients how to choose the charities to which to give. We want our gift to make a difference, and often, we want our gift to benefit people and institutions around us. This creates the challenge of deciding how to choose the charities.

If we choose to give an annual gift to a charity with which we have first-hand knowledge, we are probably able to reach some conclusion about the current operations of the charity. However, if we intend for our gift to have a legacy effect, such as a major gift or an endowed gift, we need to consider additional factors. How will we know the future needs of our community and the effectiveness of a particular charity's programs? How will we know that the chosen charity will be a good steward of our gift, investing it wisely and making informed decisions as to the use of the future assets our gift will generate?

For these reasons, serious con-

sideration should be given to the Community Foundation, which is governed by a board of local persons with a keen interest in our community. Assets are carefully invested to grow for the future, while making current grants.

The Foundation identifies the needs of our community and assesses the outcomes of the programs of numerous charities to which the Foundation gives funding. This provides for a wise investment, overseen by a group of leaders who know how to use local resources and talents for the betterment of our community.

For example, if we want to benefit early childhood education, the Community Foundation networks with numerous charitable organizations and collaborative programs to best invest for a targeted goal. We are able to rely on the Foundation's broad contacts and oversight skills to determine how to use resources most strategically.

If charitable organizations you have chosen change their mission or cease to operate, the Foundation can

determine how to reallocate resources to those remaining organizations best able to achieve the goal. The Foundation's ability to see community needs, and to assess outcomes, helps hold organizations accountable for the use of our gifts into the future beyond our lifetimes. Through the Community Foundation, we will be able to leave a legacy to make our community better.

The Community Foundation also offers the opportunity to discuss various methods of giving with donors and their advisors in order to achieve beneficial tax-saving results while carrying out the donors' wishes. While saving taxes is not the primary reason most people give, it should be a consideration in order to ensure that the largest net gift possible reaches the intended charity.

The Foundation's insight into community needs and ability to review outcomes of funding give each of us a way to make wise charitable gifts. Our gifts to the Community Foundation will make a difference, both today and tomorrow.