Editor’s Note

The junior and senior cohorts have been quite busy the past several months. Even in the midst of continuing COVID restrictions, it has not held them back from their program responsibilities. The senior cohort letter-writing campaign rolled out in November and resulted in total contributions to FPP of $41,521, a new record. They are also conducting one-on-one asks and are actively marketing the first online auction event ever held by FPP on April 30 at 7 PM. Mark your calendar!

The junior cohort received a record 26 proposals asking for a record amount of funding: $118,545! After holding virtual site visits, presenting team reports and negotiating through a serious consensus building process, they awarded $40,000 in grants, a record amount, to 14 local community organizations, also a record. There is no question that the increase in community needs caused by the pandemic were manifested in these record responses. We are so proud of our students for stepping up big-time in this time of economic, social and health distress.

In this issue, we are pleased to introduce several FPP alumni who in March were elected to the Board of Directors of the Three Pillars Initiative, which is of course the organization that is scaling the FPP model nationally. Their continuing commitment to philanthropy while in college and in the work force will give Three Pillars the perspective and knowledge to stay relevant as we promote youth philanthropy education. You will also find three articles written by FPP participants. There are also two articles we felt were important to share, one that offers ten tips for successful youth leadership, and the other on the prospects of raising minimum foundation grant distributions above 5% per year. And finally, I have contributed an article entitled, “Foundations, Gen Z and the Future of Black Philanthropy” which offers a perspective on inclusion and equality in the field of philanthropy. Enjoy!

Rick King, Editor
Director, FPP

FPP Alumni Join Three Pillars Board

Three Pillars Initiative is pleased to announce the election of 5 new members to the Board of Directors, 4 of whom are FPP alumni. Please share your congratulations with them.

Grace Derks, FPP ’18

Grace graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School and was a Future Philanthropists Program (FPP) graduate in 2018. She is currently a student at Fordham University in New York City, majoring in Humanitarian Studies and minoring in both Psychology and Irish Studies.

While growing up in Oak Park, Grace was highly involved in various community initiatives during high school. During her summers she served as a Camp Counselor, both at Camp Maclean in Burlington, Wisconsin, and more recently at YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. At Fordham, she is involved in student organizations that raise awareness and knowledge about various humanitarian crises and issues worldwide. She has interned for various organizations such as the American Osteopathic Foundation and the Woman’s Global Education Project.

She is passionate about public health, specifically reproductive health and the promotion of education as a tool to remedy various public health issues. Grace treasured her time as an FPP participant, and has greatly valued the lessons and tools that the program has given her. She is honored to be able to serve on the board of the Three Pillars.

Maille O’Donnell, FPP ’15

Maille is an FPP graduate in the class of 2015. She studied Environmental Science and Policy at the University of Maryland and graduated in spring 2019. She is passionate about creating a just and sustainable food system and is dedicated to seeing the end of factory farming in her lifetime.

After graduating, Maille joined the Good Food Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing alternatives to animal products, including plant-based, cultivated, and fermentation-derived proteins. She supports the Corporate Engagement department in engaging with food manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, investors, and food service companies to accelerate the global transition to alternative proteins.

Maille is excited to support the TPI in teaching the art, science, and business of philanthropy to students around the country, having experienced firsthand how empowering and fulfilling the FPP program is, both as a student participant and as a Graduate Mentor in 2019.

Fran Reckers, FPP ’15

Fran was a member of the 2014 FPP cohort. In 2018, she graduated from Swarthmore College with an Honors degree in Neuroscience. While at Swarthmore, she focused her volunteer efforts on engaging youth softball players and conducting instructional softball clinics for young women.

Following her Swarthmore graduation, she returned to FPP to serve as the program’s Graduate Mentor during the 2018-19 academic year.

Currently, she is a Research Specialist in the Kable Lab at the University of Pennsylvania. She is collecting data for a study that aims to discover more about how memory-guided-decision-making changes with age via brain scan technology (fMRI). Her future plans are to pursue a Ph.D. in Developmental Neuroscience.

She is grateful for the opportunity to be involved in TPI and thereby empower youth leaders across the country to have positive impacts on their communities.
NEW TPI BOARD MEMBERS – continued

Charlie Lemke-Bell, FPP ’19
Charlie is currently a Sophomore in the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. During his college career, Charlie has served as a Policy and Advocacy Intern at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. He also serves as Co-Chairman of the Classics Committee on the University of Denver Programming Board. In this position, he has helped plan, organize, and execute on-campus events for the student body of 12,000 students.

Charlie is excited to further his involvement in youth philanthropy while serving on the board of TPI. He looks forward to witnessing the impact of the program as it continues to be implemented throughout the country.

Brian Tanenbaum
Brian is the founding partner of The Law Offices of Brian Ira Tanenbaum, Ltd. Brian has been actively engaged in the practice of law for almost 40 years both in New York and Illinois. His practice encompasses corporate, business, financing and commercial real estate transactions. He also handles general business disputes, franchise litigation, contract litigation, fraud, recovery and enforcement litigation in both state and federal court and arbitration proceedings.

Brian earned his B.A. degree at the Honors College at The University of Michigan with high distinction and high honors in American history. He received his J.D. from Hofstra University School of Law in 1981.

Brian served as a mentor to Chicago high school juniors and seniors for several years with the Future Founders Foundation, a not-for-profit organization. One of the principal goals of the Future Founders Foundation is to empower and build entrepreneurial skills in business for Chicago high school students. Brian served on the board of directors of First Colonial Bankshares Corporation for approximately five years.

Finding Truth
By Sydney Rayburn, FPP ’18
Finding truth in complex issues and research is a prevalent topic of discussion, especially this past fall semester. Much, if not all of my academic career has been centered around critical thinking and assessment. My fall courses, Data Analysis and Fundamentals of Epidemiology, focused on assessing the validity of scientific studies. We learned about reducing bias and confounding variables through analyzing the study criteria, assessing the population of the study, critiquing methods, and stratifying data. Obviously, these methods are specific to scientific studies. However, I have used these tools to apply them to my own personal practices when looking for truth in the media that I consume.

One of the concepts that has been most useful is that correlation does not necessitate causation. When reading about public health issues in the news, I often come across claims such as “x causes x” or “x improves your health.” Many times these claims are unsubstantiated, as we learned in class that the only way to prove causation is through successfully conducted randomized control trials. However, I have found that many authors use results from heavily biased studies to display misleading information.

I also took a Nutrition class with a professor that strictly abided by scientific trials. Over the course of the semester, we reviewed news articles about diets and nutrition and compared the information to scientific, peer reviewed journals. This process was rather eye opening: several widely believed ideas about health that I have read in magazines, newspapers, and seen on television were not backed by science at all.

More generally, I believe one of the best methods of figuring out the truth complex issues is using statistics, always ensuring to look at the numbers in context. For example, with any given graph, the scale can be skewed to support the message an author is trying to convey. In my Data Analysis course, we observed a news clip of a reporter comparing two graphs that had drastically different scales, but neglected to point out the difference in scale in their analysis. Thus, the audience was led to believe a different message than the graphs actually presented. Furthermore, when consuming media, I always keep in mind the makeup of the author’s audience and how that might affect the way in which they present their opinion.

In general, my professors also encourage us to look at author’s sources, the sources of their sources, and so on. I’ve taken a lot of what I’ve learned in an academic context to apply to philanthropy as well. Whether critically assessing grant proposals or thinking through ways to apply current research to philanthropic endeavors, being able to discern truth is quite useful. In addition to this, philanthropy is entangled with data and numbers. The ability to use such data to tell a story and find truth in issues has been invaluable in my experiences thus far.
An Interview with Joe Smith, Mentor

Joe is the longest serving FPP mentor and is a founding member of the Three Pillars Initiative where he serves as Treasure Pro Tempore. We thought we’d ask him about his experience and his insights about mentoring and the future of youth philanthropy.

What motivated you to become a mentor of the FPP/TPI?
When Rick and Cheryl King first approached me about becoming involved with the FPP two things struck my heart immediately. The opportunity to continue to have a positive impact upon the next generation, now that my children are grown, filled a gap in my life whose size I underestimated until I became involved with FPP. The second driver was the opportunity to be at the beginning of a program that would expose young people to an adult relationship based upon commitment not compliance. Until now they were only required to be compliant answering to authority figures such as their parents, their teachers, their coaches et al.

What year did you begin the program?
I have been with the FPP and the TPI since their inception. Specifically, I have been with FPP for 10 years.

How many students do you mentor in each cohort?
I have been the personal Mentor to 22 students. In the first class I mentored 3 students in a cadre of 15. Since then, I have mentored 5 in a cadre of 25. Each year I find myself working with other participants who come for counsel.

How much of an investment of your time do you need to participate as a mentor of the program?
This question is important and deserves a complete answer. The minimum commitment is composed of being available for a monthly pre-session conference call, attending the monthly sessions, prepping, and attending site visits and return site visits, participating in at least one community service exercise, working with a subcommittee of senior students on their fundraising project and participating in the annual retreat to keep improving the program. Over a two-year window that compilation translates to about 80 hours.

What type of impact are you seeing your students, mentors, and community because of the program?
By exposing these young people to the art, science, and business of philanthropy we have seen many of our graduates make a commitment to philanthropy, social justice, and responsibility as part of the criteria they use in evaluating where they will pursue their next level of academic achievement. During their university experience they take ownership and leadership with the philanthropic activities of their sororities, fraternities, and clubs. As they have entered into the work force and become part of our active FPP Alumni network they have begun to contribute their time, talent, and treasure. In short, they are living the Three Pillars.

Would you recommend TPI to an organization?
This question is important because it affects both left brain and right brain logic in play.

TPI offers the opportunity for an organization to attract donors who have been elusive targets by offering them a program that can influence recruiting future donors and at the same time provide a new revenue source for an organization. Helping kids is a valuable decision-making trigger.

The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation would tell you that the positive optics created by FPP are tangible. In the annual Village of Oak Park and River Forest Directory and Answer Guide, the FPP was featured as the “crown jewel” of the OPRFCF. This type of brand equity is invaluable.

Most importantly the empirical design of TPI being rooted in the experience of FPP and the strong moral compass of Rick King make it an investment with both a predictability for success and a sustainable ethical purpose. That is not a bad combination when one is considering any investment.

Do you have any additional stories of impact you would like to share with us?
It would be an understatement of the greatest magnitude to say that my experience with FPP and TPI have enriched my life. The fact that graduates of the FPP have pursued careers in the social work, nonprofit and dedicated philanthropic arenas is gratifying. Those graduates who choose to work for companies with high corporate social responsibility values truly square the circle.

The other impact upon my life has been the ongoing relationships I have had with my cohorts, other graduates of the FPP, the parents of FPP members and my fellow mentors. Those gifts are beyond quantification. Having been invited to attend graduation parties, write letters of recommendation to universities, medical schools, potential employers and both the Peace Corps and the Fulbright Scholarship has left me with a sense of awe and humility.

With the cultural change inflicted upon us by COVID 19, the overwhelming need for people to be in contact with one another has become blatantly apparent. There is no component of our society more in need of this interaction than our young adults. TPI offers that opportunity by providing a combination of conversation, competition, and the ability to focus upon a common goal whose desired outcome is the greater good. At FPP we have experienced this phenomenon firsthand. Simply put, I have had the opportunity to look at the face of the future. It has smiled back at me.
Ten Tips for Teens Who Want to Lead

Excerpt from The Student Leadership Challenge, James Kouzes and Gary M. Morgan (John Wiley & Son, 2013).

TIP 1: BE SELF-AWARE
The best leaders are highly aware of what’s going on inside of them as they are leading. They’re also very aware of the impact they’re having on others.

Self-awareness gives you clues about what’s going on inside you and in your environment.

Your feelings are messages that are trying to teach you something. So, listen and learn, take time to reflect on your experiences.

TIP 2: MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS
The best leaders are careful not to let their feelings manage them. Instead, they manage their feelings.

Sometimes you will feel frustrated and upset by the feedback that you receive. You might even feel angry at the person who gave you the feedback. Be aware of your feelings, but don’t let them rule your behavior. If you sense that you need help managing your emotions, seek it from a trusted teacher, advisor, counselor, family member, or cleric.

TIP 3: SEEK FEEDBACK
The best leaders ask for feedback from others-feeds back not only about what they’re doing well but about what they’re not doing well. That’s one reason why managing your emotions is so important. No one is going to give you negative feedback if you’re likely to get angry. Let people know that you genuinely want their feedback, and then do something with the feedback they give you.

TIP 4: TAKE THE INITIATIVE
The best leaders don’t wait for someone else to tell them what to do. They take the initiative to find and solve problems and to meet and create challenges. The same is true in learning: the best leaders take charge of their own learning. Because they’re self-aware and seek feedback, they know their strengths and weaknesses, and they know what they need to learn. They find a way to get the experience, example, or education they need. It’s your learning, your life. Take charge of it.

TIP 5: SEEK HELP
Skilled athletes and performing musicians have coaches. Leadership is a performance also, and it never hurts to have some help. Ask a teacher or mentor you respect to watch you perform, give you feedback, offer suggestions for improvement, and give you support generally. Look to your group advisors, teachers, and faculty members you feel connected to; career centers and counseling centers might offer personal development services too. You can also consider fellow students and friends whom you feel have great leadership experiences.

TIP 6: SET GOALS AND MAKE A PLAN
If you have a clear sense of what you want to accomplish, you’ll be much more likely to apply what you learn. Leaders who are successful at bringing out the best in themselves and in others set achievable goals.

Also, make your goals public. You will work harder to improve when you’ve told others what you’re trying to accomplish.

Once you’ve set goals, make a plan. There may be several ways to get from where you are to where you want to be. Pick the one that best suits your needs.

When you make your plan, remember that journeys are completed one step at a time. It’s the same with leadership development. Take it bit by bit. There is no such thing as overnight success in becoming an exemplary leader.

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TIP 7: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
People who practice often are more likely to become experts at what they do than those who don’t practice or do so only fitfully. We know this is true in the arts and in sports, but the same idea hasn’t always been applied to leadership.

Practice gives you the chance to become comfortable with and try out new methods, behaviors, and strategies in a safe environment. In fact, every experience is a form of practice, even when it’s for real. Whether the experience is a raving success or a miserable failure, ask yourself and those involved, “What went well? What went poorly?” “What did I do well? What did I do poorly?” “What could I improve?” The best leaders are the best learners.

TIP 8: MEASURE PROGRESS
You need to know whether you’re making progress or marking time. It’s not enough to know that you want to make it to the summit and how to recognize that summit once you’re there. You also need to know whether you’re still climbing or sliding downhill.

Measuring progress is crucial to improvement no matter what the activity. The best measurement systems are ones that are visible and instant—like the speedometer on your dashboard or the watch on your wrist. For instance, you can count how many thank-you notes you send out by keeping a log.

TIP 9: REWARD YOURSELF
Connect your performance to rewards. It’s nice when others recognize you for your efforts, but that doesn’t always happen. So along with the goals that you set and the measurement system that you put in place, create some ways to reward yourself for achieving your goals. Give yourself a night off. Buy yourself something you’d like. Mark the achievement in red pen on your calendar. Tell others about it.

TIP 10: BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND HUMBLE WITH OTHERS
Credibility is the foundation of leadership, and honesty is what constituents look for in a leader.

Being honest means that you’re willing to admit mistakes, own up to your faults, and be open to suggestions for improvement. It also means that you’re accepting of the same in others.

Honesty with yourself and others produces a level of humility that earns you credibility. People don’t respect know-it-alls, especially when the know-it-all doesn’t know it all. Admitting mistakes and being open to new ideas and new learning communicates that you are willing to grow. It promotes a culture of honesty and openness that’s healthy for you and for others.

You Need to be LinkedIn!
Grace Derks, FPP ’18

As a high school junior or senior, you might feel a little hesitant to put a lot of effort into creating your LinkedIn profile. But I found it to be pretty helpful. I have been able to stay in contact with past FPP mentors, former bosses and coworkers. LinkedIn has also connected me with plenty of people who I may know through my parents, who have positions in the workforce and could possibly be wonderful contacts for future internships or jobs. It is also a wonderful place for a version of your resume that employers can refer to with endorsements from former mentors or employers. Both your high school and college probably have alumni association pages that are great places for connections. Future Philanthropists Program also has an alumni page (that you should all join!)

All that being said, here are my tips for a great LinkedIn profile. I started with a professional headshot that my internship this summer provided for me. Any sort of headshot works, but just make it a clear picture of your face that is somewhat professional, like a senior portrait. I uploaded all my information from my resume, and I included my skills and volunteer experiences. Then I just connected with pretty much anyone I knew. You never know where an opportunity might be hiding!
I begin my story with a quote from Inception, which so happens to be my all-time favorite movie and what I consider a stroke of genius by director Christopher Nolan. While my idea, which you will come to learn is not exactly defining or (thankfully not) destroying my life, it is one that grew inside of me until I found somewhere to plant it.

At the start of this year, after sitting down at my desk inside my bedroom and classroom I joined the only class of the semester that I was really excited about: civics. I was hopeful that it would be jammed full of current-event-based discussions relating to how and if our government works as it should and thankfully, I was met with exactly that. Not only would the class contain full classroom discussions, but it would also contain a 3-hour, month-long service-learning project where students were tasked with creating and executing a philanthropic plan to encourage the fulfillment of their civic duty. Immediately after hearing this, the idea began to grow and form inside of me. I had to find a way to raise money for World Bicycle Relief (WBR). WBR has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Long story short, my dad runs the marketing division for a bike part components company called SRAM, and WBR is their humanitarian initiative. WBR is committed to helping individuals in developing countries overcome the barrier of distance through the power of bicycles. Bicycles provide an effective mode of transportation to the countless people who need them for their daily lives.

Over the course of the COVID quarantine, I taught one of my closest friends, Mitchell, how to mountain bike, something I have been doing for my entire life. Watching him develop a passion for the sport that I have dedicated more hours than I can count to was incredible, and it furthered my understanding of the power of bicycles. Whether they bring a smile to your face from an adrenaline rush, or if they simply get you to where you need to go faster, they are undeniably a spectacular tool. As luck would have it, Mitchell was in my civics class, and when the service-learning project rolled around, we teamed up to raise as much money for WBR as we could. Before we were able to ask our friends and family for their support, we had to research different tactics for doing so. We learned how to appropriately ask for money, how to sound formal and polite without coming across in a robotic tone, and how to ensure people that what they were doing was making a difference. We provided the potential donors with three different donation reference points: $25 was a set of wheels, $50 was a mechanic's toolkit, and $147 was an actual bicycle. The donations poured in over the course of a month, all varying in size. Mitchell and I both had to remind ourselves and everyone involved that every bit, no matter the amount, helps. With a total of 35 emails sent, our fundraising page had 26 incredible donors participate! In the end, our fundraising page totaled $4,328 (29 new bikes!), almost 15 times our original goal!

As a high school junior and a relatively new member of the Future Philanthropist Program, I was met with the realization that everything I had learned in FPP regarding the philanthropic ideas and tendencies of humanity played a role in my ask for WBR. The reading and comprehending of the grant proposals, the virtual site visits, and the crucial collaboration with my teammates will lead us to make the best-educated grant allocations that we can have all shown up, in one way or another, in my project. The experience to organize and execute my own fundraiser with quantifiable results was ever-so-humbling. To essentially be at the mercy of people’s generosity was an incredibly educational experience. The idea that I would like to circle back on is one that I feel that not everyone may be able to truly grasp. The idea that every piece counts towards your goal or cause is really important to understand. With Mitchell and my original goal only being $300 dollars, we really had to understand that whether a donation was $10, $25, or any other amount, we had to take it just as seriously as the others. In my eyes, generosity is not a quality that comes about naturally. It is a virtue of sharing, selfless actions that I can only wish presented itself in all of humanity. As long as there exists those who are willing and able to give, I believe that the hope to evolve and improve still remains, and with that hope, no task is unsolvable.
The Case for Increasing Foundation Payout Beyond 5%

EXCERPT FROM THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY
“Plan to Boost Donor Payout Faces Long Odds in Congress, but Some Advocates Say the Timing Is Right”
By Alex Daniels | December 3, 2020

A plan to rewrite federal rules governing how quickly money from foundation endowments and donor-advised funds must be given out to charity faces long odds in a new Congress that will be busy dealing with a lengthy list of other pressing issues, according to some nonprofit leaders.

Still, many philanthropy experts, even those who oppose some aspects of the proposal, believe the heft of the personalities backing it and shifting public attitudes about the role of accumulated wealth could help the Initiative to Accelerate Charitable Giving gain support from a wide swath of lawmakers in both parties.

The proposal has yet to result in a bill before Congress, and it is already exposing divisions among different types of nonprofits, their advocacy organizations, and academics.

Community Foundations Concerns

Community foundations, which originated the idea of donor-advised funds, are actively pressing to alter the proposal, arguing they operate differently than organizations like Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, and Vanguard Charitable, which generate revenue for the for-profit companies that created them. Community foundations argue that their regional focus makes funds they manage an indispensable tool for donors who want to improve their cities and localities.

Kat Taylor, a philanthropist in California, believes that the new federal proposal has a number of advantages that should give it traction in Congress. In addition to seeking community foundation sign-on, the new proposal also includes a big sweetener with widespread support in philanthropy: creating a “universal deduction” that would allow all taxpayers to write off charitable giving regardless of whether they itemize. “All of these measures would improve the accountability and impact of philanthropy,” she says. “The last thing you want to do is for charity or philanthropy to lose its credibility.”
Foundations, Gen Z and the Future of Black Philanthropy

By Rick King

For most of us, the name Frederick D. Patterson is not a familiar one. Named the third president of Tuskegee University in 1934, he is best remembered as the founder of the United Negro College Fund. Since its inception in 1944, more than $5 billion has been raised which annually provides 10,000 scholarships worth more than $100 million to youth who otherwise could not afford a college education. UNCF, now comprised of 37 historically Black colleges and universities, set a precedent by being the first cooperative philanthropy venture in American education. It also made Black philanthropy real.

Today, the U.S. leads the world in the commitment of resources to charity. Last year, Giving USA reported that annual charitable giving in America reached a record $450 billion, about 70% of it from individuals. The total assets of more than 86,000 U.S. foundations are in excess of $1 trillion. The public charity sector generates more than $2 trillion in revenue annually and it represents 10.2% of the entire U.S. workforce. The power of philanthropy is palpable, but it is not equally shared.

Black philanthropy, measured by total individual giving, foundation grantmaking and corporate contributions, has experienced “a long pattern of philanthropic neglect and under-investment in the infrastructure of Black institutions” according to The Black Social Change Funders Network in its 2017 publication, The Case for Funding Black-Led Social Change. Among the many reasons for this is the dearth of Black voices at the decision-making table. Only about 8% of foundation CEOs are people of color, according to a 2016 report, State of the Work, by the D5 Coalition, a 5-year study on DEI. In addition, fully 85% of large foundation board members are White while 7% are African American. Foundation funding focused on reaching people of color has never exceeded 8.5%, according to the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equality. It is true that large foundations today have demonstrated more intentionality in setting diversity goals in governance, management and grantmaking. But, according to a 2017 BoardSource study, these efforts continue to show limited results in actual practice.

That said, there has been, of late, an uptick in foundation grants awarded to Black-led organizations that support the development of organizing and empowerment skills of indigenous adult social change leaders. However, foundation support for programs that specifically train youth in community engagement and empowerment is glaringly absent. It seems axiomatic that funding Black youth programs, those that can give teens an early voice and a path toward using the power of philanthropy to create social change, can lead to a virtual pipeline of future leaders in Black philanthropy. The active engagement of the next generation is, therefore, a vital component of the longer-term objective of philanthropic egalitarianism.

Why Now?

The simple answer to that question is this: they are ready. The emergence of Generation Z is revealing certain social, economic and political behaviors and attitudes that will frame the scope and pace of change for decades to come. According to the Pew Research Center, Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012 and 67 million strong, is the most diverse and likely the most well-educated generation ever. Given their elevated awareness of the world around them, the result of their 24/7 connection to a virtual world and their extensive social media networks, they are also more inclusive than any previous generation. According to the Brookings Institution, the non-White population in this country will be the majority by 2045. As former President Barack Obama highlighted in his 2016 Howard University commencement address, “If you had to choose a time to be young, gifted and Black in America, you would choose right now”.

Gen Z, also becoming known as “the resilient generation”, has already had to face an outsized share of challenges: a deadly pandemic, the disruption of school closings and virtual learning, social isolation, a resurgence of social injustices, a widening wealth gap and threats to the very essence of our American democracy. Black youth have had to deal with all of this, but in the context of historical and systemic disparities such as access to educational, healthcare and economic opportunities. As a result, youth today are encouraged to pursue individual personal growth and development goals, which is incontrovertibly important. But, frequently and perhaps unintentionally, the focus on individualism can also serve as a distraction from them pursuing collective social change objectives. Black Millennials are already less concerned about helping Black communities exclusively, according to a study conducted by the Stanford Social Innovation Review. If Black Gen Zers are swayed by this way of thinking, their indifference to becoming future social change agents will diminish the pipeline of future philanthropic leaders and therefore the power of Black philanthropy.

Changing the Narrative

Without a broad and comprehensive effort to teach teens how to use the power of philanthropy, we are not likely to see any material changes to the status quo. “Philanthropy is about change”, said Jamie Merisotis, CEO of the Lumina Foundation. But change is often difficult because it requires that the parties involved agree that change is important. According to those engaged in Black philanthropy, teaching youth about the charitable sector has not worked well within the social structure of the Black community. With the exception of Black churches, that social structure, as

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applied to philanthropy, was typically built on the historical scenario of White-led nonprofits supported by White-led philanthropy serving Black constituencies. Foundations that were established as far back as the Gilded Age and the era of “robber barons” enabled such practices. Part of the efforts to get rid of that archaic structure must include initiatives that teach youth about philanthropy’s role in social change, starting at the community level. We need to flip the narrative from Black youth being considered the target of philanthropic largesse to being decision makers using the power of philanthropy to create social change.

Foundations, in fact, have the ability to change the narrative around Black philanthropy. They have the capacity to support more creative and inclusive approaches to Black youth philanthropy engagement and empowerment. The 2020 ABFE/Bridgespan report, Guiding a Giving Response to Anti-Black Injustice, offered this: “One way to contribute...is to give in ways that de-center funders and re-center the most marginalized communities.” For example, re-centering philanthropy can mean transferring grant allocation decisions to indigenous leaders. In the case of youth, it means providing them with an even broader responsibility, one that would not only include grant making decisions affecting their community but also the development of their skills in raising and investing money, taking on strategic volunteer activities, advocating for social change and using their voice to end institutionalized bias. Over time, and with a continuing investment in their training and development through early adulthood, they would represent a growing pipeline of future philanthropic leaders. By the time they reach older adulthood, they might even be distinguished as the generation that led the transformation of Black philanthropy.

Is there another Frederick D. Patterson in Generation Z, someone who will set that precedent? Are we bold enough to put the future of philanthropy in their hands and really hear their voices, without judgement? In his autobiography, Dr. Patterson wrote, “How people feel about you reflects the way you permit yourself to be treated. If you permit yourself to be treated differently, you are condemned to an unequal relationship”. Youth have always felt they are treated differently, Black youth in particular. We have an opportunity to change that by bringing them into the world of philanthropy in their formative years. To do otherwise is to perpetuate the status quo.

How people feel about you reflects the way you permit yourself to be treated. If you permit yourself to be treated differently, you are condemned to an unequal relationship”

Frederick D. Patterson

Total Philanthropic Funding for COVID-19 in 2020 at $2.2 Billion

Funding from foundations more than doubled to $4.7 Billion

Of funding specified to certain recipients, 35% was designated to communities of color

Corporations accounted for 44% of all COVID-19 related funding

54% of all COVID-19 gifts came from community foundations

U.S. nonprofit sector lost nearly 930,000 jobs since the crisis began

Source: “Philanthropy and COVID-19: Measuring One Year of Giving” by Candid and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy (2021)