

message



By James M. Walton
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If readers of this annual report issue turn to the “fine print” section and scan the list of grants awarded by The Heinz Endowments last year, they will immediately sense the significant effect one foundation can have when the bulk of its grant making is dedicated to one region.

No doubt, those on the outside would be grateful to have such a philanthropic institution benefiting their home communities. But imagine how they would react knowing that southwestern Pennsylvanians live in the fourth-richest metropolitan region in terms of foundation giving per capita, a ranking based on total foundation assets of nearly \$10 billion.

What is arguably Pittsburgh’s most important “natural resource” springs from its historical good fortune as the cradle of organized philanthropy. Beginning with Andrew Carnegie, there were dozens of industrialists and financiers who amassed vast fortunes, then gave them away.

One of these was H. J. Heinz, the founder of the legendary prepared foods business. His personal philosophy of hands-on-shoulders charitable work was all about strengthening people and organizations—giving them the resources to solve their own problems and to take advantage of new opportunities.

That mindset was faithfully translated by his son Howard Heinz and daughter-in-law Mrs. Vira I. Heinz into the Endowments that is doing so much good today.

What is impressive about last year’s grant making is that this same strengthening philosophy was behind several strategies designed to help us meet community needs in more complex times. Chief among them has been the effort to encourage more collaboration among grantees.

Collaboration is at the heart of a strategic plan that requires us to do more with the same resources, and to do so on a faster timeline in several areas offering opportunities for progress. The plan holds us to collaborating internally and with other foundations to the same degree we expect it from grantees.

An impressive example of this last year was the Arts & Culture Program’s development of the \$5.6 million Cultural District Pooled Fund—\$2 million of which comes from the Endowments. Two key collaborations involved a foundations group—Benedum, McCune, Mellon and Pittsburgh—and a grantee group, six of the downtown Cultural District’s highest-profile

performing arts organizations.

The foundations and the cultural organizations decided together on a pooled fund as the most effective strategy for helping these groups attract new audiences and avoid financial dips.

The first project will improve marketing and ticket-selling capabilities of all six organizations. New hardware and state-of-the-art Web sites will allow Web-based conveniences such as printing tickets on home computers. Organizations will have a new way to reach ticket buyers and track their interests.

There are many other examples of strengthening philanthropy, in which grantees develop new efficiencies in operations and become more effective in carrying out their missions.

From the Education Program, a \$325,000 appropriation allowed for a restructuring and expansion of the Vira I. Heinz Scholarship Program for Women in Global Leadership. It began as part of Mrs. Vira Heinz’s hands-on philanthropy in 1954, in which she wrote the \$1,000 checks for each winner.

Now, the program centers on leadership-training and career-exploration components. Administrative costs have been reduced, allowing more money to go to travel stipends. Also, the number of participating universities has increased from 12 to 15.

From the Children, Youth & Families Program, a \$150,000 grant through the Forbes Funds will enable managers of after-school programs the technical capacity to collect data that will help them improve the effectiveness of their programs.

Also, a \$12,500 Arts & Culture grant developed last year and just now being implemented will provide training for the members of the City of Pittsburgh Art Commission. These volunteers, who are responsible for reviewing some of the city’s most important projects, will learn how to develop sound policies, adopt best practices and collaborate more effectively with other arts organizations in the city.

At a time when foundations are being petitioned to do so much more with limited resources, we cannot afford to create new organizations that duplicate the missions of those we are already funding. Grants that strengthen grantee capacity by coaxing more collaboration stand a better chance of long-term success. They also validate the wisdom of our looking back frequently to study how those original donors rocked the cradle of organized philanthropy. *h*