



## Changing Lives

### **Encouraging Multigenerational Giving**

*How clients trained their adult children to give wisely.*

#### **THE FAMILY**

Jerry Smith is the founder and CEO of Calnex Holdings. Jerry and his wife Clare have two married daughters, Karen and Cheryl. Karen and her husband, Brandon, just added a third grandchild to the family. Cheryl and her husband, Mark, are the proud parents of two young children.

Still working long hours to expand the family business, Jerry and Clare are passionate about their philanthropy. In 2013, they supported nearly 30 different social and humanitarian agencies doing work internationally and in the local Dallas area. Last year they hired Excellence in Giving to help them make wise decisions about the organizations they granted almost \$3 million to.

#### **INVOLVING THE SECOND GENERATION**

Jerry and Clare agree that both of their children should be more engaged in the family's giving. Until now, Jerry and Clare had given \$25,000 to each daughter to allocate to their favorite charities with no formal oversight of the funds.

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Now that Cheryl was 30 and Karen was 26, the parents thought that charitable giving would provide a platform to bring the next generation together around the funding of worthy causes.

The parents also realized that their charitable giving could be used to teach their daughters, sons-in-law and eventually grandchildren, key lessons about stewardship and community involvement. Since the family did not grow up with wealth, Jerry and Clare wanted their children to be able to deal responsibly with significant giving.

Did the children know how to invest wisely in causes they cared about? Were their favorite charities making an impact or were they only responding to appeals from development officers? Jerry and Clare asked Excellence in Giving to mentor their daughters and sons-in-law, meeting with each couple to help them understand how to effectively evaluate a charity.

## **EQUIPPING THEIR CHILDREN**

In a process that would subsequently take place with Cheryl and Mark, Excellence in Giving's first step was to understand Karen and Brandon's current involvement in their parents' giving. The team spent a few hours on the phone and in-person discussing what causes were most important to the couple and how they viewed their role in their parents' philanthropy.

"At this point, I think our role in mom and dad's giving is fairly undefined," Karen explained at the time. "They've always been willing to support charities Brandon and I care about, but we've never really considered how much say we have in where and how charitable gifts are made."

At Excellence in Giving's suggestion, Karen and Brandon selected a charity to take through the evaluative process. The Asian Education Fund, a charity based in Hong Kong, matched their passion to provide education to immigrant youth in Southeast Asia's growing cities. Excellence in Giving gathered information about the organization, including financial audits, board minutes, and the strategic plan. Excellence in Giving also scheduled a conference call for Karen and Brandon with the organization's senior leadership. All the information was compiled, and Excellence in Giving scheduled a follow-up meeting with Karen and Brandon to discuss the findings.

## **THE SOLUTION**

Excellence in Giving's role in Karen and Brandon's life was not finished once the training session was over. Through phone calls and face-to-face meetings, Excellence in Giving continues to help them make wise giving decisions. Jerry and Clare have increased Karen and Brandon's foundation allotment to \$100,000 for them to disburse annually to charities of their choice.

"Brandon and I are excited to be involved in our family's philanthropy at a much more strategic level," said Karen. "I think we both understand what it means to be not only generous but also wise givers. Al and his team made all the difference for us."

Excellence in Giving then followed suit with Cheryl and Mark, helping them find causes about which they too were passionate.

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The multi-generational training efforts with the Smith family will culminate in a family meeting in the future. "I'm so glad that our children have embraced giving. It is something that Clare and I feel so strongly about," said Jerry. "Excellence in Giving's involvement gave my wife and me more confidence in our kids' ability to make wise choices in the projects and organizations we support."

*Contact Excellence in Giving at (719) 329-1515 or visit [ExcellenceinGiving.com](http://ExcellenceinGiving.com) to learn how you can train your children to give wisely.*