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Cover Story

The Other Generational Transfer

You've heard about the intergenerational transfer of wealth. Will the grantmaking world be different in the hands of the next generation of grantmakers?

By Jody Curtis and Allan R. Clyde and Carissa DiMargo and Catherine Andrews

Philanthropy was once mainly the domain of people at or past retirement age—50s, 60s and on up. But today our field is attracting more people in their 20s and 30s.

People may be coming to philanthropy at a younger age partly because they're more likely to be exposed to it in college, or through an internship or fellowship. In fact, there are several efforts underway to teach philanthropy at an even younger age. The Council of Michigan Foundations is field-testing the K–12 "Learning to Give" curriculum it developed in nearly 200 schools; the goal is to roll it out nationwide. Plus, many elementary and secondary schools include service learning as part of their curriculum. Nowadays, a 22-year-old college graduate may have collected years of experience volunteering for a number of nonprofit causes before even launching a first "real" job search.

Grantmaking is now a bona fide profession, one that has grown large enough to accommodate practitioners for a lifetime, either at one foundation or at a series of them—regardless of whether they give away their own money or someone else's.

Not very much of the above was true a generation ago.

La Différence

Some of the qualities associated with younger people—tech-savvy, idealistic, risk-taking, fast-moving, and impatient with "how it's always been done—are the same qualities we say we want in foundation people," said Alicia Procello, program director for the California Wellness Foundation, during a panel discussion in a session—"Integrating Intergenerational Perspectives"—at the Council on Foundations' 53rd Annual Conference last April. There are other qualities of good grantmakers that don't necessarily come with age, such as being a good listener, having self-confidence or showing respect for others.

Of course, you could argue that there are other good qualities for grantmakers that *do* tend to come with age, such as wisdom gleaned from experience. But behavioral differences are not necessarily attributable to age; some undesirable qualities, notably arrogance, afflict young and old alike.

Nonetheless, "There's definitely a noticeable generational difference in the way people approach philanthropy," said Goldman Sachs Foundation Associate Sanda Balaban, a panelist at the same Council session.

There's also a burgeoning network of organizations and projects forming a nascent "young donor organizing movement"—including Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP), Foundations for Change, Changemakers, Resource Generation, Reciprocity, Active Element Foundation, Aegis Donor Circle and the Making Money Make Change annual conference.

Inspired by this new energy around supporting young philanthropists, *FN&C* asked some "old hands" to identify who stood out in the field as an up-and-coming grantmaker. It's interesting to note that quite a few of the young grantmakers suggested to us had started their own young givers networking groups. Perhaps void filling is among the common characteristics of this generation.

We chose a small sample of them—all age 40 and under—to profile on the following pages.



Rusty Stahl, 26, Program Associate, Ford Foundation, New York City

Rusty Stahl, a Ford Foundation program associate, thought he was organizing a small network of people his age when he circulated a flyer and sent an e-mail inviting "philanthropists under 30" to join him for dinner one evening during the Council's 2001 annual conference in Philadelphia. To his surprise, 40 people showed up.

This network now has a name, Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy, and it's considering next steps such as domestic and international expansion according to Stahl, who also earned a master's degree in philanthropic studies at Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy.

"We want to create conversations within philanthropy so young people can better access and understand careers in civil society," said Stahl.



Third Wave Foundation, New York City

The Third Wave Foundation is the only national activist philanthropic organization for young women between the ages of 15 and 30. *Everyone* on staff and on the 15-member board of directors is under 35—and the majority of them are under 30.

Third Wave supports young women activists across the country—to the tune of more than \$350,000 in its first five years—to challenge sexism, racism, homophobia, economic justice and other forms of oppression and inequality to build a strong and sustainable feminist movement. Third Wave was recently one of six women's foundations in New York, New Jersey and Washington, DC, to receive \$300,000 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 9/11 relief money for regranteeing to organizations serving women and girls.

"What challenges many foundations is that young donors have different needs than their more traditional donor bases," said Third Wave Co-Director Kalpana Krishnamurthy, 25. "Understand that working with young donors is a long-term investment in the future."



Stacey H. Davis, 38, President and CEO, Fannie Mae Foundation, Washington, DC

In 1995, at just 35, Stacey Davis was named the Fannie Mae Foundation's lead executive after serving as the corporation's southeast regional vice president of housing and community development in Atlanta. She brings to the nonprofit community a true business mind, shaped by an MBA education and Wall Street experience. In the two years she's headed the foundation, it has guided more than 12 million people to homeownership and invested more than \$30 million in underserved communities nationwide.

At the beginning of this year Davis launched www.knowledgeplex.org, a Web site dedicated to linking leaders in the housing and development field. KnowledgePlex has more than 4,000 registered users. Also in January, Fannie Mae Foundation announced a \$300 million contribution of stock. Combined with its \$350 million infusion of stock in 1996, the foundation will invest \$1 billion in U.S. communities over the next decade.



Noa Staryk, 33, Board chair, The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis

As the great-granddaughter of McKnight Foundation founders, Noa Staryk remembers when foundation board meetings were held at her grandparents' home. She went from reluctantly addressing the board for a grant to a favorite program as a child, to joining the board in 1991, to succeeding her mother as chair in 1999.

Staryk earned a B.A. in community health from Brown University and an M.A. in public policy from the University of Chicago. "At McKnight, we strive to maintain grassroots support networks in human services, while simultaneously impacting issues on a systems level to make a broader difference."

Staryk does not like to "articulate being intimidated because of my age—that's a disservice to the work," she said. Rather, she hopes to embody the "perspective of a family member who is young and committed. I have a lot of energy and I am passionate about McKnight's work."



Nancy Mammel, 40, Program Director, Mammel Foundation, Omaha, Nebraska

OXYGEN (an acronym for Omaha's Next Generation), the networking and training program Nancy Mammel started last year for newcomers to grantmaking ages 25–48, focuses on what she calls a "social venture curriculum." Individuals are invited to take part in nine, monthly half-day sessions; a retreat; and a trip in exchange for donating \$5,000 for a collaborative grant. The Mammel Foundation underwrites program expenses.

Mammel had been teaching cooking and nutrition classes to girls from low-income families while her father was assembling the Mammel Foundation. When her program—Sweet Pea Café—lost its funding, Mammel parlayed her interest in social services and the community to become the foundation's only full-time employee.

"Being younger makes people more involved and proactive, and that's evident with groups like Social Venture Partners," said Mammel. "You're not only giving your money, you're also giving your expertise and your mind."



Sanda Balaban, 29, Associate, Goldman Sachs Foundation, New York City

"If you made a movie about my life, you would have to call it *The Accidental Philanthropist*," says Sanda Balaban, an "English Lit" major as an undergraduate at Swarthmore College. She taught secondary school humanities in New York City and Boston—simultaneously attaining her master's degree in education from Harvard University.

In 1999, after a couple of education-related jobs—Balaban landed a two-year term as a Ford Foundation program associate focused on K–12 education reform. In 2001, she moved to the Goldman Sachs Foundation, an all-education-oriented grantmaker, where she manages a portfolio in alternative and public school education and is involved in teacher development and induction. "I've heard philanthropy called the 'research and development' wing of society," said Balaban. "So it makes sense that more young people out of college are getting involved and taking action."



Jeff Skoll, 37, Chair, Skoll Community Fund, San Jose, California

Jeff Skoll, The first full-time employee and president of eBay, played a large role in making eBay the first Internet company to take an active role in philanthropy. In 1998, he first brought the concept of creating the eBay Foundation with a corporate donation of 107,250 shares of pre-IPO stock to the Community Foundation Silicon Valley (CFSV). That transaction opened up the practice of donating pre-IPO stock to establish a charitable fund. Skoll created his own supporting foundation—the Skoll Community Fund—at CFSV one year later. Its purpose is promoting innovations in learning and education and deploying technology to produce social and economic change.

Skoll also initiated his Silicon Valley Urgency Fund last October, realizing that agencies needed help even more in a time of declining charitable donations. The fund's latest round of grants totaled \$970,575, which was distributed to 47 Silicon Valley public benefit organizations.



Kavita Ramdas, 39, President and Chief Executive Officer, Global Fund for Women, San Francisco

Kavita Ramdas was only the second person of color ever to hold a program position at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—and she was also just 26.

"I may have raised some eyebrows," said Ramdas, who earned a master's degree in international development and public policy studies from Princeton University before she spent eight years at MacArthur working on U.S. poverty, economic development and international population issues. "I had to challenge the board that unless they addressed women's rights issues, they'd never get to the crux of poverty issues."

In 1996, Ramdas became president and CEO of the Global Fund for Women. Not surprisingly, the MacArthur board still has faith in her vision—on May 20, it awarded the Global Fund a three-year \$750,000 grant, which the fund will regrant, to advance work on reproductive and HIV-related issues.

Now, Ramdas says her age is nowhere near as important as her being a woman of color from a developing country. "In Silicon Valley I'm surrounded by CEOs who are *younger* than I am."



Paul Watson, 27, Program Assistant, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore

At only 27, Paul Watson has been working in philanthropy for several years, having been exposed at a young age through a youth advisory committee at the California Wellness Foundation.

Watson attained his master's degree in human services with an emphasis on community youth development at Springfield College in San Diego. Directly after that, he was invited to join the Annie E. Casey Foundation as a program assistant.

Watson works on a neighborhood transformation and family development initiative, concentrating his work on Oakland, California, and Hartford, Connecticut. Though his Casey stint is ending, he plans to create his own entity to partner celebrity philanthropists and established foundations to become a more effective influence in the lives of young people.

"Young professionals have innovative views and take necessary grantmaking risks, in my opinion. And when they partner with the experience and wisdom of the seniors in philanthropy, they balance each other out in a good fashion."



**Alison Goldberg, 27, Chair, Robert P. & Judith N. Goldberg Foundation
Director, Foundations for Change, Cambridge, Massachusetts**

Alison Goldberg's undergraduate studies in anthropology and art history at New England's Tufts University led her to a semester in Ghana, where she became dedicated to hunger and poverty issues. After that, she spent a year as a VISTA/Mickey Leland Fellow, split between living on an American Indian reservation in Montana and doing food policy work at the Food Research and Action Center in Washington, DC.

It was during her VISTA year, when she was 23, that Goldberg's mother endowed the Robert P. and Judith N. Goldberg Foundation. Soon after, Alison became chair (her older brother is president; her two younger brothers are board members). "Philanthropy is really for everybody. Sometimes that gets lost with the older generation."

In addition to the family foundation, she spends her time running Foundations for Change, is on the steering committee of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy and actively networks with other groups serving young donors, including Adventure Philanthropy (which focuses on donors on college campuses), Reciprocity, Resource Generation and Third Wave Foundation. (For more on those and other groups, see Goldberg's *FN&C* May/June 2002 cover story, "[Social Change Philanthropy and How It's Done](#).")



Rebecca Huston, 30, Trustee, Huston Foundation, Director of Programming, Associated Grant Makers, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Ten years ago, at the ripe old age of 20, Rebecca Huston joined her family's foundation as a trustee and eventually became secretary on the board of trustees. The Conshohocken, Pennsylvania-based Huston Foundation gives half of their grants to evangelical purposes and half to secular organizations.

"I initially became interested in philanthropy due to my family's involvement with it," she says, "but it's now something I do because I love it." An undergraduate of Denison University in Ohio, Huston received an MBA from Boston University and still resides in the Boston area, working as director of programming for the Cambridge-based Associated Grant Makers, a regional association of grantmakers. In all, Huston has devoted one-third of her life to one foundation or another.

"What I'd really like to do is get even more younger people involved in philanthropy and make philanthropy a natural part of their lives. We're good at identifying our own realm of giving and what our capabilities are."

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