



Summer 2014

Moving the proverbial needle for a nonprofit--increasing its impact, solidifying its mission, building sustainability into the future--this is the fashion by which the board of the Claire Friedlander family foundation considers its grants to nonprofit organizations.

By understanding a charitable organization -- really getting into its DNA --we are better able to assist in these measures--to essentially "partner" with the leadership of the nonprofit in the effective execution of their "business" plan. While business is in quotes (because these organizations are obviously not profit maximizing entities) that doesn't mitigate the importance of taking a business-like approach to the managing of the nonprofit. Budgets need to be made--and respected. Return on invested capital into initiatives and projects need to be measured and evaluated. A mindfulness of the bottom line is critical as is maintaining an eye down the runway of their mission. We believe that there is an important linkage there-- a symbiosis between fiscal efficiency and long term mission success.

Those of us in the eleemosynary sector--grant making, mission crafting and the cultivation of strong relationships--look at nonprofits under a certain lens. At the Claire Friedlander family foundation that lens is distilled into the "3 Cs": compassion, competence and fiscal conservatism.

We are looking to -- again, partner-- with non profits that are engaged -- where the compassion to their mission is palpable-- from the leadership to the staff to an engaged (an important consideration) volunteer board. We love to see volunteering and participation from these board members -- remaining very mindful that being on a nonprofit's board requires a lot more than a baseline commitment -- we like to see an "all-in" commitment. Board membership also requires a definitive fiduciary mindset to the oversight of the nonprofit's leadership--it's the check and balance set up that grant making organizations like ours yearn to see.

Competence goes without saying but often-- in any pursuit be it for profit or nonprofit--complacency can set in-- leadership, once full of bravado and an indefatigable work ethic, can fall prey to the notion of resting on ones laurels. It's our job to find those organizations that stay on the cutting edge (mindful that often it's a short term phenomenon that is quickly corrected) --always looking for new engagements, new initiatives to further their mission-- to think and execute "outside the box" and to do so with the verve and finesse that makes us proud to be a supporter.

Doing all of this heavy lifting (and make no mistake about it -- the nonprofit community--certainly the folks we have engaged with-- is very hard working) in a manner that doesn't break the bank is also a key constraint. Sure it would be a lot easier if the leadership could hire consultants and other advisors to assist their grow plans-- but for the most part they cannot. They have to rely on the resources of their board and their efforts to get the best service and counsel for the least cost. This may not be as Herculean of a task as it sounds -- finding those professionals who have a Soft spot for an organization's mission who will often donate their time and counsel pro bono is a solution that many Nonprofits wisely embrace. It's just not enough to get things done -- in the nonprofit world they have be done inexpensively.

In the last year the board of the Claire Friedlander family foundation has made grants to a wide spectrum of nonprofit organizations--from those focusing on the arts and arts education (13.5% of our giving in the period) and educational/scholarship organizations (20%) to medical research initiatives (10%) and those with a social/human services focus (30%). We are Proud of our support of the following-- all of which embody the Essence of the 3 Cs discussed above:

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts—the Tilles Center’s Swing for Kids outing has raised substantial money for the last 2 decades for more than 7,000 Long Island school children who don’t have an arts program in their schools. For some of these kids—the arts is their only outlet –its what keeps them engaged in school. By bringing their program to these schools, Tilles is embracing their mission in more ways than one.

The Dante Foundation—for more than 20 years the Dante Foundation has provided scholarship grants to Italian-American HS seniors on their way to college. For many of these kids, this scholarship represents a game-changer, they being the first in their family to attend college—for others it may provide some needed assistance while embarking on a rigorous course of study. They key to the Dante Foundation (and why the Foundation has been so supportive) is that 100% of the capital raised goes directly to the scholarship winners—100%. All expenses involved are underwritten by individuals and directors of the organization.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Claire Friedlander family foundation.