

Palisades Expert Helps Establish and Nurture Family Foundations

As part of her job at Whittier Trust Company, Pacific Palisades resident Julie Williams Lytle advises families on how to set up a foundation and instill philanthropic values in their children.

By Danielle Gillespie

2011-01-20

Many philanthropic parents hope that their children will also lead a charitable life, but they wonder how to instill this value.

'A family foundation can be a wonderful way to teach your children how to give,' said Julie Williams Lytle, vice president and director of the philanthropic services department at Whittier Trust Company, an investment management company.

A Pacific Palisades resident since 1984, Lytle has spent the past year assisting families with setting up and managing their own foundations. Lytle and a staff of seven currently handle \$730 million for 31 foundations, ranging in size from \$1 million to more than \$200 million. She serves as an officer or director on nine of those foundation boards.

'We help them operate the foundation so they can be involved in the details as much or as little as they wish,' said Lytle, who is certified by the Institute for Preparing Heirs and the Southern California Grantmakers, which is a membership association of private sector grantmakers.

She and her staff help families establish a mission statement and find charitable organizations that align with those goals. They teach families how to evaluate organizations to assure the money they donate will be used wisely and effectively. They also manage the financial assets of the foundation, the grant making, check writing and regulatory compliance.

Family members sit on the board together and hold formal meetings, typically once or twice a year. If desired, Lytle and her staff will prepare all the information for those meetings as well as facilitate them, so they are highly effective.

'A foundation is a great legacy, and it keeps the family close,' said Lytle, noting that when the children



grow up and move to other parts of the country, the foundation is an excuse for them to get together.

As part of her job, Lytle also advises her clients on how to teach their children philanthropy. While it is never too late, Lytle says parents should start while their children are young because values are established at an early age.

Parents can begin by requiring their young children to choose gifts for another family member. This encourages children to think about someone else's interests and needs.

'It starts with the family and then spreads to their friends, their community and hopefully, the greater world,' Lytle said.

Allowance is also a good teaching tool. Children should be encouraged to set aside some money for savings, giving and spending. Lytle recommends youthgive.org, a Web site where children can set up an account to donate to charities.

Most importantly, Lytle says that children learn by example, so parents need to make their acts of kindness known.

'A lot of parents serve on boards and volunteer, but they do so while their children are in school,' Lytle said. 'Sadly, the children don't often notice.'

Lytle also recommends that parents consistently encourage philanthropic behavior.

'I think this is the hardest,' she said. 'The best way to be consistent is to integrate giving into family tradition.' For example, every birthday, require the child to give a gift to someone in need.

Lytle plans to share these tips and more to parents and their children at Palisades schools throughout the year.

A native of Norwalk, Lytle learned philanthropy from her mother, who was president of the Madonna Guild at her church in Santa Fe Springs. When a parishioner's home burned down, her mother raised thousands of dollars and collected clothes, kitchen goods and other items for the family.

For 10 years, Lytle served on the Weingart Center Association board. The center provides homeless men and women the skills they need to become self-sufficient. Lytle, who's engaged to Scott Nesbit (CEO of Rockpoint Land), also made giving a theme when raising her children. She has three children from a previous marriage.

Her daughter, Christine, a junior at UC San Diego with ambitions of becoming a human rights attorney, volunteers for the Western Service Workers Association on campus. This summer, she will work in Costa Rica at an orphanage with a group called Global Crossroads.

Her son, Ted, of Agoura Hills recently completed an Emergency Medical Technician program and will participate in a medical mission through Operation Rainbow in Ecuador in April. He has volunteered in animal shelters and taught autistic children how to surf.

Her younger son, Connor, is a senior at Windward School and a member of the school's community

service honors society.

Before joining Whittier Trust, Lytle was a partner with the Los Angeles office of Ernest & Young for 13 years. Prior to that, she worked for XL/Data Comp in Hinsdale, Illinois as a district manager and for IBM as a marketing manager.

She received her bachelor's degree in kinesiology from UCLA, and a professional MBA at Harvard, sponsored through IBM. At Ernst & Young, she attended an advanced leadership program from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

Lytle decided to move into philanthropic work because 'I get to help good people do good things all day long.'

For information about family foundations, contact Lytle at (626) 403-3283. Her office is located at 1600 Huntington Drive, South Pasadena.