



Whatcom Community Foundation

CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE
WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER

“Ethical Wills”...

If you’re a reader of the various “business” or “financial” magazines or newspapers, you may have read about the new “ethical will”. These are documents written by older folks who are trying to impart some of their values...or ethics...to their heirs. These are *not* legal documents, but merely essays about the person’s “value system”...

The concept is an interesting one...but when it comes to passing on the values you place on charity and contributions, it’s hard to impart a value system without using specific examples, and the minute you get specific, your “ethical will” begins to sound like a *real will*, with specific organizations named.

But there is a valid way the Whatcom Community Foundation can help you as you educate your heirs about what your value system is when it comes to charity: Establish a Family Charitable Fund with the WCF and put your heirs on the advisory panel that advises the Fund’s giving each year! In this way:

- *Your heirs will listen to your concerns as the annual giving is discussed, so they get an idea of your charitable interests and develop a personal commitment to them...*
- *You have a chance to hear your heirs as they suggest new charities for family support...*
- *As the years pass, you can expand the Fund as you see fit...and/or you can increase the influence your heirs have on the decision-making process...*
- *Of course, as this process continues, you and your family have a chance to evaluate the services of the WCF, and let your confidence grow in it as well...*
- *And, when you do die, your heirs will be accustomed to the process of handling the charitable portion of your estate, and will feel a sense of involvement and tradition in doing so!*

As you work with the Whatcom Community Foundation and your family, you’ll discover that this locally-run, tax-exempt organization can help you not only with carrying on your “ethics”, but also make your contribution process safer, more consistent, and more efficient. And it will bring you and your heirs closer together as you all work in an organized way to “give back” to the organizations, projects, and communities you love.

We want to thank you for your concerns about helping others in a continuing way, and we ask that you let us tell you about our full range of services to the charitable donor. Of course, our conversations will be confidential and you are under no obligation of any kind.

One of a series of papers about charitable giving from the Whatcom Community Foundation

