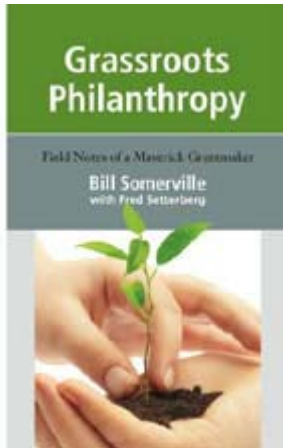




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BOOK REVIEW

Grassroots Philanthropy: Field Notes of a Maverick Grantmaker

By Bill Somerville with Fred Setterberg

Published by Heyday Books, 2008.

Review by Alicia Sullivan, American Lung Association of California

Rarely in my career have I found a "work related" book that read as easily and fluidly as this one. I was inspired by Bill Somerville's passion for his work, which spans three decades of experience as a foundation executive, and the manner in which he relayed his deep knowledge of the industry, with personal anecdotes, analysis and down to earth humor. Simply put, this veteran philanthropist believes that foundations can do a much better job. He calls for decisive, hands-on grant making, and then in a concise and common sense manner lays out how this challenge can be accomplished. He demands that the new generation of foundation executives and staff take risks, move quickly, and get out of the office and into the field. His directive: Set aside the mountains of paper that characterize conventional philanthropy and focus instead on forging enduring partnerships with outstanding individuals. Dare to change the world in imaginative ways that prove deeply satisfying, exciting, and fun! This is why Somerville founded Philanthropic Ventures Foundation which specializes in responsive approaches to grant making, such as "paperless" discretionary grants and grants with a forty-eight hour turnaround. I would suggest that these directives are a good part of the reason so many of us are inspired to work in the field of non profit management. On a day when you are feeling overwhelmed by the "process" part of this profession, take a breather to become inspired, again, by a local expert.