

# [Gift Hub](#)

## Blogging Philanthropy

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<http://www.gifthub.org/2008/01/grassroots-phil.html>

### Grassroots Philanthropy by Bill Somerville with Fred Setterberg



Bill Somerville is the President and Founder of [Philanthropic Ventures Foundation](#). Born poor, he was the first in his family to attend college. Now, with 48 years experience in nonprofit work, he has written a short, passionate, and wise book, with Fred Setterberg, [Grassroots Philanthropy: Field Notes of a Maverick Grantmaker](#). Bill recommends funding people, not projects. To get to know people, Bill suggests that funders push back from their paper laden desks, and go out into the community, not just to talk to grant-seekers, but to seek out high potential change agents, and get to know them, whether or not they have applied for a grant. To free up time for such direct engagement, Bill suggests ways to streamline paper flow. Bill's advice comes across as that of a man driven by an ethic of service. Those in need are not abstractions to him, nor statistics. With all that money in foundations, he seems to feel, surely more can be done right now to make a positive difference in the lives of people the funder can meet, and should meet, face to face. I can see this book being very helpful not only to salaried grant-makers at large foundations, but also to the founder and family members of unstaffed private foundations, or those who might have a donor advised fund, or just anyone who wants to make gifts not as transactions by mail, or online, but hand to hand, heart to heart, and eye to eye. January 26, 2008 in [Readings](#) | [Permalink](#)