

Philanthropic Ventures Foundation -
specializing in customized giving for donors.

15 Years of Making a Difference

In 1991, while still a brand new foundation, PVF made grants its first year of operation totaling \$250,000. Fifteen years later, PVF is going strong, making grants in 2004 totaling \$5.2 million to over 1,500 charitable projects.

Over its 15-year history, PVF has distributed over \$40 million to non-profits locally, nationally and worldwide.

Thank you to all PVF donors who have made this possible.

Determining the Impact Of Your Charitable Gifts

In the non-profit sector, a primary focus is on accountability - the impact of one's charitable gifts. All sorts of mechanisms to measure impact have been devised, from audit procedures to surveys and even mathematical equations that quantify impact.

PVF staff believes that evaluation is critical: "Evaluation is an integral part of our operations," says Bill Somerville, PVF President. However, PVF's approach to evaluation is unique. As opposed to the standard practice of evaluating grants based on completed forms, applications and surveys, PVF takes a personal approach. PVF's primary mode of evaluation comes from close contact with the group or individual who receives the grant. PVF staff makes an effort to be out in

the community: visiting programs (often unannounced), picking up the telephone to check in, talking to service providers about how PVF can help - actually creating a relationship with the grantee. In fact, grantees often call upon PVF for advice, to share good news, or to ask for help in solving a problem.

Reports are very important too, but rarely are they "fill in the blank" forms. PVF asks for narratives that address how the funds were used. PVF asks all grantees to report back. Even the small grants, up to \$500, made through PVF's Immediate Response Resource Grants programs have a reporting process.

Here is an example of a report we received from a Santa Clara County Social Worker who works with foster care youth. As part of PVF's Social Worker Resource Grants Program, she requested and received \$250 for a 13 ½ year old boy in long term foster care to purchase a guitar, case, tuner, and lesson books. According to the social worker, this was the first time she had ever heard the child express an interest in anything:

I wish you could have been with us. It was almost as if lightness enveloped him. No one had ever done anything like this for him before and his whole belief system seemed to change. He now knows that other people care and that, with his input, wonderful things can happen. The check was also a motivating factor for him to earn additional money. He has started mowing lawns and wants to save to buy an amplifier.

Thank you so much for helping this young man. – *Sharon Wolbach, Social Worker, Dept of Family and Children's Services, Santa Clara County*

Another example is this report from a preschool teacher, a \$400 grant recipient of PVF's Special Education Resource Grants Program, funded by The Thomas J. Long Foundation:

To truly understand the difference your grant made, I want to tell you about one of our autistic children. A 3-year old girl with only 9 words in her expressive vocabulary arrived in our classroom last May. She was a beautiful girl who had a diagnosis of moderate-severe autism with mild retardation. She had tantrums that lasted up to 45 minutes. The tantrums were a result of not being able to communicate her needs. After we implemented Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) with hundreds of pictures to teach vocabulary, all made possible by your grant, our beautiful girl is now able to express herself using 3 word sentences. Her 9-word vocabulary has grown to 300 words – she is officially a talker. - *Patti Law, Preschool Special Day Class, Robert Semple School, Benicia*

Based on the feedback we get, whether it is through site visits, written reports, telephone calls or email messages, we hear loud and clear whether a program is successful, what more could be done, or when a new approach should be taken.