



## Changing the Future Today: How Younger Donors are Embracing Philanthropy

When you have the passion to effect positive change, you don't have to wait. Investing in the causes you care about can happen at any age - as three families have discovered.

The Cousineau Family Fund, Luke 12:48 Fund and the DeFrain Family Fund are three donor-advised funds that have been recently established by young families in our community. All three are not only taking action for philanthropy but also involving their children as part of the next generation of world-changers.

### **COUSINEAU FAMILY FUND**

It was a trip to Peru that first changed the trajectory for Will and Macy Cousineau. The couple, who traveled frequently for both work and pleasure, witnessed a Christmastime event at their hotel where impoverished local children lined up for nearly a mile to receive bread, hot chocolate and a small toy. This made such a strong impression on the couple that they knew they wanted to share their blessings – starting with adopting three sisters from Latvia.



The Cousineau Family

After the family welcomed a biological son and Will changed jobs in 2016, they felt again an urge to do more. A desire to give to causes they cared about led them to the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

The Cousineau Family Fund, a donor-advised fund, was established in 2017.

"It's been great; the Foundation has helped us set it up and decide what kind of fund would be best," Will said.

Involving their four children is a priority of their family fund.

"We want our kids to be able to have a portion of the fund, where they can identify things they care about, charities and causes, and get into the habit of giving at a young age," Will said.

The Cousineaus are still deciding what causes they want to support each year, and they are also exploring the opportunity to use their fund to encourage service and travel in the younger generation.

"Before we had kids, we traveled quite a bit internationally, particularly to Central and South America, and it was very impactful on us," Will said. "We'd like to support one or two seniors in high school who have a history of volunteering in the community and use our fund to send them on a trip overseas where they would be able to experience a new culture – taking their volunteerism on a local level to an international level."

## LUKE 12:48 FUND

Jen DeJong was surprised and grateful when she received a generous bonus from her company at the end of 2017 – but she knew she wanted to use the money to benefit a greater cause.

"I immediately thought, 'If I'm going to receive this, how can I receive it in such a way that I'm not using it for myself?' It has to be something that multiplies," she said. "I talked to my husband Marc, and he was in agreement."



The DeJong Family

The DeJongs had been involved with the Community Foundation for several years in various capacities, and after some thought the family decided to use Jen's bonus to start a donor-advised fund they called the Luke 12:48 Fund.

"We wanted to use the money in a way that would bless other people and other organizations. We wanted to put it in a fund that would continue to grow but that we could also give out at least annually," Jen said. "It felt like a perfect match to have the Community Foundation manage it."

And why the name?

"Luke 12:48 says that to whom much is given, much is expected. We chose that as the name because my husband's grandparents always used to quote that, and he wanted to honor them," Jen said. "We believe that what we receive financially is not really ours, so this is a way to give it back and not cling to it."

The DeJongs are looking forward to giving their first grant this year, and they have two daughters, Maria (8) and Rose (5) whom they plan to include in the process. They hope to support organizations working to break the cycle of poverty.

"Through our fund, we hope to multiply the efforts of and empower the organizations that are already doing great things and need help financially," Jen said.

## DEFRAIN FAMILY FUND

Megan and Chad DeFrain have a passion for alleviating hunger and food insecurity in the local community.

For years, they have financially contributed to St. John's Breadline and the Central Illinois Foodbank. After hearing a presentation on donor-advised funds with the Community Foundation, however, they recognized the value in establishing a donor-advised fund that could continue their fight against hunger for decades to come.



The DeFrain Family

"We learned that we could start a fund designated to specific recipients. So we can still give to those charities every year but also give to our fund, so that our gifts will be larger over time," Megan said. "Donor-advised funds are a really powerful tool that way."

The DeFrains plan to make an annual contribution to sustain their fund's growth. They will then make donations to charities each year.

"Hunger is a significant problem in central Illinois; there are a large number of children in families with food insecurity, and they don't know where they will get their next meal," Megan said. "It's a basic tenet of our Catholic faith to feed the hungry, and we felt strongly we should try to help in that way."

Working with the Community Foundation to establish the DeFrain Family Fund "couldn't have been easier," Megan said, and the couple is thrilled to be able to share in this experience with their two daughters, Lucy and Phoebe.

"It's almost like a legacy plan for them; our goal is to grow this every year, and then it can be a fund we can pass on to the girls," she said. "We hope to teach them about good stewardship and charity and the importance of taking on a responsible role for your community. We try to lead by example and create a culture of community and of giving."