



Why The Philanthropic Mind?

By Chuck English and Mo Lidsky

We wrote our recently published book, *The Philanthropic Mind*, to address what we saw as a major source of frustration for both organizations and philanthropists. Philanthropy is the space in which the nonprofit and business worlds are often forced to find common ground. Yet, it doesn't always work out that way – mostly because of very differing expectations. The philanthropist who wants to use his resources to change the world is confronted by the organization seeking month-to-month operating funds. The result is mutual disappointment.

We could find no definitive resource on how to close the gap. While much has been written on how organizations should approach major donors, there was nothing available providing the philanthropist's perspective. Moreover, it occurred to us that the best source of that information was the philanthropists themselves.

We conducted candid and comprehensive interviews with dozens of Canada's top philanthropists. We asked them about their passions, motivations, defining experiences, likes, dislikes, joys and challenges. We talked openly about, approaches, solicitations, expectations, relationships, decision-making, family and the next generation. In fact, we asked all the questions we could think of without crossing the boundaries of appropriateness. Ultimately, we discovered that these notable givers are passionate and thoughtful about philanthropy and took advantage of the opportunity to provide their side of the story.

The interviews were rich in content. Some of what we heard was astounding – even with our combined decades of experience. The insights we gleaned were often unexpected and many of the stories were eye-opening. Our surprising discoveries included:

- the extreme differences in generational perspectives,
- perspectives on the perks offered to donors;
- what happens when gifts go wrong;
- a look at gifts given spontaneously;
- the extremes of trust and accountability
- the relationship between big vision and small detail;
- the intersection of business and philanthropic interests;
- the shocking effectiveness of the personal solicitation

Our goal is for *The Philanthropic Mind* to be an important resource to all those involved in charitable giving, allowing them to be (and help others be) more philanthropically thoughtful and strategic. Therein lies the intrinsic value to CAGP members. For fundraisers, the book may provide a road map to the philanthropic sweet spot – the point



where the giver's interests and passion intersects with the organization's goals and mission. Advisors and planners can use *The Philanthropic Mind* to develop a better understanding of clients' motivation and inclination.

We wrote *The Philanthropic Mind* with the intent of raising the bar on the enterprise of philanthropy in Canada. We believe it mirrors the values of CAGP in fostering collaboration; increasing the base of knowledge in the charitable sector; and enhancing the professionalism of fundraisers and advisors.

More than anything, we were inspired by the incredible men and women we interviewed. We hope that in turn *The Philanthropic Mind* will do the same for everyone involved in the philanthropic endeavour.

If you are a CAGP member, you can now buy this book at a 20% discount! Follow this link www.cagp-acpdp.org/en/the-philanthropic-mind and login to see purchasing instructions. If you have any questions or have trouble accessing the page, please contact our Membership Coordinator at membership@cagp-acpdp.org.