



*Strengthening and promoting philanthropy
for community benefit*

*Grantmakers Forum of New York
919 Winton Road South, Rochester, NY 14618-1633
phone: 585-232-2380 ♦ fax: 585-232-8413
email: gfny@grantmakers.org ♦ web: www.grantmakers.org*

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Letter to the Editor

The generous gift of Warren Buffett to the Gates Foundation reminds us that there is an element of trust in charitable giving. Buffett explains that he decided to give his money to a knowledgeable foundation run by people he trusts. He gives the example of investors who trusted him with their money because he was “good at investing.” Like Warren Buffett, they chose to “leave it to the experts.”

We are fortunate in this country to have many different charitable vehicles. Some people establish foundations or advised funds to give them a role in decisions about recipients and services they support. Others make the decision to give directly to nonprofits or religious organizations, trusting them to provide needed services. Many people give *through* the local Community Foundation, United Way, Women’s Foundation, Catholic Charities, or Jewish Federation—trusting them to use their expertise to address the most important local issues. These philanthropies *know* our towns and counties, identifying changing community needs, developing partnerships, and distributing money across the nonprofit sector to improve our quality of life.

You don’t have to be a Warren Buffett to have an impact on your community. Most charities accept donations from anyone. Your gift is combined with others’ to achieve more than it could alone. Each of us has the opportunity to show the same trust and interest in our community that Warren Buffett has shown—by giving generously to the institutions dealing with our most pressing social problems.

Elizabeth C. Wilder
Executive Director
Grantmakers Forum of New York
919 Winton Road South
Rochester, NY 14618-1633
585.232.2380

The Grantmakers Forum of New York, headquartered in Rochester, is an association of funders who work together with professional advisors, policymakers and the nonprofit sector to strengthen and promote philanthropy throughout Upstate New York for economic and social benefit.