



LEAVE A LEGACY®

## Why Give

In life, most people require some kind of assistance, whether it's physical, financial or spiritual. Perhaps a local church congregation or food bank supplied meals during a tough time. Maybe you were given a scholarship that made the dream of college possible. You or a loved one may have been shown especially compassionate care in the hospital during an illness or injury.

And during life's struggles, we are often reminded that more must be done to continue positive, humane acts of kindness, and to sustain programs for personal enrichment. We wish more funding were available for medical research, for domestic abuse shelters, or a treasured arts or music program.



Charitable organizations need financial assistance from people like you to continue their work. More than 80 percent of Americans contribute to the nonprofit groups of their choice throughout their lifetimes. But according to research conducted in 2000, only around eight percent of people chose to continue this support through a charitable bequest.

By making bequests and other "planned gifts," you can continue to help organizations that are making an important difference in your community.

What better way to thank the people or organizations that have had an impact on your life, than to make a contribution from your estate through a bequest?

Gifts large and small are important. Charitable giving is not only for the wealthy!

### **I have children and relatives. Shouldn't I leave my entire estate to them?**

This is perhaps the number one cause for reluctance when making a bequest. The truth is that, depending on the current tax laws, leaving a gift to charity in your will may reduce the estate tax burden on your heirs significantly. You should consult with a financial advisor or attorney to learn how giving may actually benefit your family after you're gone.

### **Charitable Statistics: An Untapped Well of Good**

- There are more than 260 million Americans, of whom approximately two million die each year.
- In 1996, 79,346 estate tax forms were filed with the federal government. (At the time, these forms were required for estates in excess of \$600,000.) Eighteen percent of the forms listed a charitable gift.
- In other words, 82 percent of the nation's wealthiest individuals left nothing to charity.
- In addition, the IRS tells us that charity is getting a decreasing share of the money in these wealthy estates, from 21.8 percent in 1976 to 6.3 percent in 1992.
- According to a 2004 Associated Press news story, only 42 percent of adults have wills, a five percent drop since 2000.

If only 20 percent of Americans left a charitable bequest, the current number of charitable bequests would more than double. Imagine what the impact to charitable organizations would be if the 80 percent of Americans who give during their lifetimes also made a charitable gift through their estate plans!