

## How two local corporations look at philanthropy

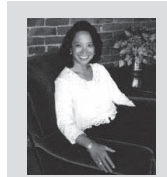
*Editor's note: This is the second piece in a series on local philanthropy.*

**ASPEN'S CORPORATE** philanthropy is shifting its focus to match from giving in crisis to giving as a long-term community resource. As margins become tighter, many local business owners look at philanthropy as an investment in both the company and the community. Reese Henry and Aspen Skiing Company are two organizations that have expanded their portfolio to include grantmaking that is active, strategic, and sometimes catalytic in nature.

An excellent example of active philanthropy is the Leadership Exchange Program Reese Henry & Company created at Aspen High School. Each year, the local accounting firm sponsors a one-week program where six students travel to New York City to be introduced to a broad cross section of the nation's top businesses. Students participate

in half-day sessions with investment bankers, hotel and restaurant operators, major apparel retailers, marketing firms and professional recruiters, just to name a few. The students also meet with former Aspen graduates who are working in NYC for Q&A sessions on what life is really like in the real world. Upon returning from the trip, participants give a presentation to their fellow classmates, spreading lessons about what they learned and what is expected of them as they head off to the next phase of their lives.

"This program embodies our core beliefs of what active philanthropy should be about," states Peter Van Domelen, managing partner at Reese Henry & Company. "We try to impact as many kids as possible for



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each dollar we spend. It's so much more than just writing checks. The idea is to have people in private business get personally involved in creating hands-on, real life, educational experiences for kids. In this way we can really leverage the

impact of each philanthropic dollar. We can make a difference in people's lives, and have a lot of fun doing it."

At the Aspen Skiing Company's Environmental Foundation, the employees are in charge. Not only do they donate to the foundation, the employees decide where their contributions go. When the SkiCo established its Environmental Foundation, it did so with the intent of engaging its employees — and engage them they did. Employees opt to donate a minimum of one

dollar per pay period, which is then matched dollar-for-dollar by both the SkiCo's Skiing Company's Family Foundation and Aspen Community Foundation. Every four years, a new round of employees step up to run the Foundation and own their role as philanthropists in the valley. Mark Cornish (from ticketing and Chair of the Board), Nick Kertz (engineering), Carmen Barber (D&E), and twelve other employees take their fiduciary responsibility seriously, especially since they're giving away their co-workers' money. They've become smart grantmakers by actively partaking in the review, evaluation and selection of grantees who will have the greatest impact on our environment.

The Foundation has granted more than \$1.8 million in the last 14 years, money that has gone to more than 350 nonprofits.

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