



## **Perspectives from the Chair about *Giving USA 2013***

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Giving USA Foundation views our role as one of reporting the landscape for charitable giving in America annually, through the vehicle of meticulous research about donations to nonprofit organizations. Our historical record goes back 58 years, and presents a fascinating picture of both the current environment and the subtle fluctuations in societal priorities over time as expressed through philanthropy.

So what do the 2012 estimates tell us about giving in America? The total of \$316.23 billion from individuals, corporations and foundations says volumes to me about resiliency and belief in the social contract between those who give and those who receive.

Some points to consider:

- With the third consecutive year of increase, giving in 2012 provides reason for optimism for sustainable improvement.
- Giving, as a general rule, follows the economy and consumer confidence. In 2012, Americans were feeling better – but not great – and their giving reflects that healing continues, with the prognosis being good.
- More than two-thirds of American households give to charity annually, so the 2012 estimate equates to about \$2,000 in charitable support per donor household.
- Giving continues to be an expression of our nation's values and compassion.
- Charitable organizations are sharing their stories and Americans are listening and responding to what is being stated.

Are broader social and policy implications revealed when you dive deeper into each category of giving? Most assuredly. Looking at our famous pie chart and noting that religion still occupies the largest percentage of real estate, it needs to come with an asterisk, perhaps – while religion's piece is large, the amount of dollars donated as compared to other types of charities has been shrinking over time, along with reported religious participation.

On the flip side, among the sources of charitable dollars, shifts in corporate giving, so reliant historically on pre-tax profits, might tell a larger story when you scrutinize the numbers against the historical landscape.

In addition to learning and applying the research provided in each of our annual reports, I hope that those who care about philanthropy will consider how to best navigate in the

near future and beyond, perhaps by starting a public conversation, or maybe by questioning the implications of each year's story on our communities.

Given we consider what we do a public trust, Giving USA Foundation will continue to be a leader of these conversations, providing the facts in a balanced historical context so necessary to making considered change.