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## KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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# Philanthropic group amplifies the impact its members have in KC

Kansas City Business Journal - by [Michael Braude](#)

Conventional wisdom has it that today's baby boomers are self-centered and uncaring. Certainly, contemporary literature and television sitcoms would give us that impression. We have come to believe it is the "me" generation.

It is genuinely refreshing to discover that precisely the opposite can be the case in real life, right here in our town.

That was precisely the case when I sat down recently with four very sensitive, caring, successful young men to discuss their brainchild, Impact KC.

Jeff Teeven of Kansas City Equity Partners, Greg Wolf of Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP, David Dickey of Sprint Corp. and Richard Wetzel of McCownGordon Construction LLC enlightened me on the details of their marvelous philanthropic initiative.

Impact KC is an effort by a group of civic-minded young men and women to truly make a meaningful impact on our community. Although they accomplish this with substantial gifts of money, their goal is considerably more far-reaching.

They also seek personal exposure to significant Kansas City-area philanthropies by offering lots of time volunteering to the agencies. Obviously, many members will end up making an impact as board members of the organizations where they donate time.

We can look forward in years to come to seeing these same folks in leadership roles in our major philanthropies.

Today, everyone in Impact KC pledges a \$1,000 contribution annually. Considering the fact that these young people are in the early stages of their careers, this financial commitment is substantial.

Each year, all contributions are aggregated, and the fund is administered by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation.

Annual one-time grants are awarded to several organizations. Area good works submit detailed applications for grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000. This year, the group received more than 100 applications.

Impact KC makes grants in four areas: arts and culture; children, youth and families; community development; and life sciences.

Three types of organizations are ineligible: political groups, postsecondary education institutions and religious organizations for denominational programs.

The application is properly very detailed. Groups must clearly spell out their mission, activities, number of years in existence and ratio of staff to volunteers. A clear description of how the grant will be used and how the project will be evaluated must be included.

A key question on the application is, "What percentage of the agency's total budget is expended for administration and fund raising?" Impact KC's members may be young, but they know how to ask the right questions.

They also do not intend to simply send money to worthy groups and then forget about them. They require semiannual reports detailing expenditures to-date, planned expenditures and interim program results. Additionally, Impact KC makes one or two site visits during the year.

Their concept is simple but brilliant. These young people understand that, individually, it is difficult for each of them to make a big difference in our community.

By pooling their resources, they grasp what a big difference they can make.

Jeff, David, Greg, Richard and their colleagues will be huge successes in their chosen fields. They also will make Kansas City much more successful and livable because of their vision in bringing Impact KC to life.

It is heartening to realize that at least some of today's young people understand that the universe is about more than just "me"!

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