

Sacramento's New Face of Philanthropy

As economic challenges mount, a new generation of philanthropists is determined to implement a more effective approach to giving in the Greater Sacramento region.

A group of businesspeople is launching a new organization, Social Venture Philanthropy of Sacramento, to provide funding and high level expertise to selected nonprofit organizations.

Modeled on a time-tested venture capital investment philosophy, the goal of Social Venture Philanthropy of Sacramento is to make measurable progress in specific areas of community life by offering financial support and business expertise to nonprofit organizations that can make an impact in those areas.

“People want to do more than write a check to a non-profit,” said Jack Crawford, General Partner of Velocity Venture Capital. “Business professionals who are committed to philanthropy want to use a variety of their skills to help build strong, more vibrant non-profit organizations, just as we would in building successful for-profit businesses.”

Crawford is partnering with other dynamic individuals and the Sacramento Region Community Foundation to launch the initiative.

Charley Ansbach, managing partner in Sacramento for Skystone Ryan, a leading fundraising consulting firm, is part of the team assembled by Crawford to launch the effort.

“Social venture philanthropy has the ability to both engage professionals and raise the performance level of non-profit organizations,” Ansbach said. “As someone who has worked with non-profits in Sacramento, this is an exciting step for our community and will yield returns far beyond the dollars.”

The initial focus area of Social Venture Philanthropy of Sacramento is to assist non-profits that can support the goal of making the Sacramento region one of the healthiest and most physically fit communities in the country. The first round of funding and expertise will go to four or five select organizations that can work together to help achieve that objective. Subsequent rounds of funding will be available to address other needs identified by the group's board.

While the concept of social venture philanthropy is new for Sacramento, there are established social venture groups in 25 cities, including Seattle, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles and San Diego.

“The concept is catching on because people understand that by pooling resources and talents, they can have a much greater impact on a non-profit and a community,” said Ruth Jones, executive director for Social Venture Partners International, a network of 25 cities that have established social venture philanthropy funds.

Social Venture Philanthropy of Sacramento chose to partner with the Sacramento Region Community Foundation because of its expertise in working with non-profits and donors in the region.

“We are pleased to partner with the next generation of Sacramento area philanthropists and provide the support and guidance as they grow this effort,” said Ruth Blank, CEO of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation.

Social Venture Philanthropy of Sacramento will host an invitation-only dinner to introduce potential donors to the “venture philanthropy” concept.

“I believe this new model of philanthropy will see local nonprofits outperforming their counterparts in other regions,” says Crawford, “and making a deep and enduring difference in the quality of life in the Sacramento region.”

For more information, contact the Sacramento Region Community Foundation at (916) 921-7723.