

Find inspiration

There are so many creative ways to be philanthropic.

Why not give a gift of a donor-advised fund for a birthday or an anniversary? Or a GiVE 365 membership for Father's Day? Maybe a scholarship fund for graduation.

Some Community Foundation donors, including the ones you'll read about here, have done just that.

A local, family-owned company has figured out a way to help its employees give and learn about philanthropy.

Imagine what you could do.

Company helps employees become philanthropists

Pouring some \$4 million into the community in just over 10 years is a pretty remarkable feat.

But when it's done by the employees of a Memphis-based, family-owned company, it's almost hard to fathom.

With the help of a fund at the Community Foundation, the 350 employees of Power & Telephone, an independent worldwide distributor of materials for telecommunications and cable TV industries, now understand more about giving than most.

Company founder Miller Pentecost believed in philanthropy and wanted his company to play a

part in helping its employees give back to the community.

"Giving was important to my father," said daughter Martha Pentecost Pitts. "He believed that sharing what you have is the right thing to do to."

Pitts said that giving back is important to everyone in the family, including her mother, Virginia, three siblings, and now children and grandchildren. "Now we've got the fourth generation coming along," said Pitts, acknowledging that most are still small children and not interested in philanthropy — yet.

Pitts said the majority of the company's employees give primarily to their churches. The company matches those gifts with gifts to local nonprofits of the employees' choosing.

"This has really encouraged smart giving among our employees," she said. "A lot of them have learned a great deal about local nonprofits and what they do. Because they decide where they want gifts to go, they learn more about what various organizations do in our community."

"It is important to us that this matching program is employee driven," she said. "Our employees decide where the grants go."

Pitts said many employees also volunteer for the organizations they support. "We participate in the Plane Pull for Special Kids every year," she said, "and the Bowl-a-Thon for Junior Achievement."

"We couldn't do this without the Community Foundation," said Pitts. "Our employees are so appreciative and it has really expanded our world."



The annual Plane Pull for Special Kids brings out Power & Telephone's strongest employees.