

# NEW YORK OBSERVER

## *Early philanthropists with a passion share their tips on how to make it*

By Anna Sanders

**F**or a few young New Yorkers, getting involved in philanthropy is second nature. For 11-year-old Lillian Pravda, founder of Vision For and From Children it's a passion. Pravda started giving away toys and books at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary when she was just six years old. But for the rest of us with time and money to spare, deciding where to start can be difficult. Luckily, four young philanthropists have donated more of their time to provide tips on how to make it in the giving world.

Though Elspeth Gilmore, 33, inherited money when she was 21 years old, most of her original giving involved writing checks to various charitable organizations. When she was 26 years old, a friend introduced Ms. Gilmore to Resource Generation, an organization of wealthy young people hoping to transform philanthropy.

"A friend dragged me to it," Ms. Gilmore said. "Which I think is a pretty common story for Resource Generation. Looking at wealth and class and giving can be pretty tough subject on a whole bunch of different levels."

Ms. Gilmore said Resource Generation, a group she now co-directs, got her directly

involved in organizations she supported financially. Since joining, she said a highlight has been working with Gulf South Allied Funders, a group of nine wealthy young people who met through Resource Generation and raised \$1 million a year for three years following Hurricane Katrina. The group gave \$3.5 million to the Twenty-First Century Foundation, an organization focused on black communities, who then donated the money to grassroots organizations in the south.

"It was getting to work with a group of people where we actually pooled our money together and had conversation with other organizations," she said.

Ms. Gilmore emphasized the importance of getting involved in a philanthropic community.

"The most important thing for me has been having peers in a larger community that supports me in grappling with the bigger questions that come up in philanthropy," Ms. Gilmore said.

Ms. Gilmore said young people interested in philanthropy should try to find a community of peers to help them work through questions about where to give and how much.

"That I can actually have elders and mentors that I can hash all of this

out with has I think been my biggest recommendation," she said.

For the last 15 years, Jason Franklin, 31, has worked in the nonprofit field. When he moved to New York to study nonprofit management at the Milano Graduate School at the New School, Mr. Franklin became involved with his family's small foundation—Franklin Weinberg Fund—and other organizations in the city. But his passion for community work began in high school when he started a group called Oregon Students Supporting Education.

"[It] grew from four students to 10,000 students in six months and helped turn back the tide against budget cuts in Oregon public schools," said Mr. Franklin. "So I guess I started early and realized the possibilities for change."

Right now Mr. Franklin is the head of Bolder Giving, a group that works to inspire people to take more risks in their giving. He's also an adjunct professor at NYU's Wagner School for Public Service and serves on the board at North Star Fund, Proteus Fund, 21st Century School Fund and Resource Generation.

When it comes to getting started in philanthropy, Mr. Franklin said perfection isn't important.

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