

Global Networking

The great-granddaughter of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., talks about the Global Philanthropists Circle that she and her father, David, cofounded five years ago to catalyze giving by 70 families in 21 countries.



Peggy Rockefeller Dulany,

58, spoke with **CONTRIBUTE'S** Joan Oleck from her Montana ranch earlier this fall. Dulany is the founder of Synergos, a 20-year-old consultancy that facilitates relationships among grass roots and political and business leaders. The Global Philanthropists Circle is part of that effort.

Why a Global Philanthropists Circle?

What we found was that many Americans would like to give overseas but don't know how to find creditable organizations. So our idea was to create a network of philanthropists, many of whom are already giving overseas, and some who are not yet. At first we thought it would only attract Americans. But half of the families

who are members are from other countries, so in the course of creating the network, we have been able to build relationships of trust and mutual learning so that Americans who want to give overseas will have access to great initiatives and great ideas. And because the U.S. has such a long tradition of philanthropy, many people in many parts of the world who are just starting to give have a great desire to learn more about philanthropy. So it is a mutually beneficial learning network.

How many families are involved?

There are currently 70 families from 21 countries. Some families have multigenerational representation, and we do have quite a few parents and children. One of our initiatives is called Next Generation Philanthropists, and that is for members who are inheritors of wealth who tend to be younger, between 17 and 35. They have different issues because they weren't the makers of the money, and so it's an opportunity

for them to explore their role. They're interested in doing things together; so they meet primarily with the purpose of finding things in which to co-invest.

Where are they from?

We have several members from Europe but we also have members from Africa, Asia, Latin America; we have one Russian member, one Taiwanese member and then, of course, many Americans and Canadians.

This is a private network, but what gets you in?

They need to be serious in their interest in philanthropy. The membership fee is \$25,000 a year but we do a kind of background check on people who are interested because we obviously want upstanding citizens to be members.

How unique is the Circle?

First, ours is a multigenerational membership. Second, it's a multi-country membership, and third, it's about the donors, themselves. It is a safe space where philanthropists can talk among themselves.

What impact has the Circle had?

I'm always interested in collaborations across countries. We have one member, for example, who is from Colombia and who is very interested in promoting peace in Colombia. At one of our annual meetings, she was sitting at the same table with a member from South Africa who is very involved in the Truth and Reconciliation process. And they

got talking. He ended up coming himself and bringing Bishop Tutu and a former justice minister and a couple of members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to a meeting of 2,000 people which the [Colombian] president came to, as a result. It's amazing. It came up because they were sitting at lunch together.

You lead trips by philanthropists to developing countries.

In Mexico this last year, the group focused on the environment and water. We visited a watershed about 10,000 feet above Mexico City, which also happens to be a nesting place for Monarch butterflies. It was an amazing experience. It's startling to look down and see the huge expanse of Mexico City and its pollution and its huge water problems. Then very close outside that, you find this wonderful forest, which has been protected from loggers by Mexican philanthropists, largely as a source for the water supplying the city but also as a site for the butterflies.

What's next for the Circle?

We'll be doing week-long retreats at my ranch in Montana for people who want to deepen their sense of purpose and develop their leadership skills and have an impact in the world.

Do you have kids of your own?

I do; I have one son, who is 29.

And you're passing this on to him?

I hope so. ▲