



Building Hope & Opportunity: Philanthropy's Role in Catalyzing Children's Savings Accounts

A CGLR Funder-to-Funder Conversation

April 19, 2022 | 12:30–2 pm ET/9:30–11 am PT

Presenter Bios

MODERATOR



Sterling Speirn
Interim President & CEO
Maine Community Foundation

Sterling Speirn is the Interim president & CEO of the Maine Community Foundation, and he also serves as a Trustee of the Greater Washington (DC) Community Foundation.

Sterling was president & CEO of the Peninsula Community Foundation (now the Silicon Valley Community Foundation) from 1990-2005 where he founded the Center for Venture Philanthropy (CVP) and established the Peninsula Partnership for Children, Youth and Families. The CVP's Assets for All Alliance created the largest Individual Development Account program in the country, matching the savings of working poor families as an asset building strategy to escape poverty. Sterling also co-founded the Raising A Reader take-home book bag program as a supporting organization, where today he serves on the Board of Directors.

From 2006-2013 Sterling was president and CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation where he collaborated with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, in support of the First Five Years Fund and the Educare network. Under his leadership, in 2009 WKKF launched America Healing, a five-year \$75 million initiative to promote racial healing and address racial inequity.

Sterling began his career as a 7th and 8th grade English Teacher in Cleveland, Ohio and later served in the U.S. Department of the Interior. He also worked as a Legal Aid lawyer in North Carolina, managed a large community health center in northern California, and managed the national computer grants program at Apple Computer. He graduated from Stanford University and the University of Michigan Law School.

PRESENTERS



Rebecca Loya, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
Institute for Economic and Racial Equity
Brandeis University Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Rebecca Loya is a Research Scientist at the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management. For the past ten-plus years, Becca and her team have studied and supported Children's Savings Accounts and other asset building programs for low- and moderate-income families. Her recent work on children's savings accounts includes research on equitable and inclusive program design, funding sources, and policy diffusion.



Carl Rist
Independent Consultant
Former Senior Fellow, Prosperity Now

Carl Rist is an independent consultant located in Durham, NC, who specializes in asset-building, economic opportunity and financial security strategies designed to benefit residents in low-income communities. Current clients include the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation, the Indiana Institute for Working Families, and Crisis Assistance Ministry, a Charlotte-based direct services agency. Previously, Mr. Rist spent almost 30 years at Prosperity Now (formerly the Corporation for Enterprise Development), working on a variety of strategies to expand economic opportunity and help lower-income households build wealth. Mr. Rist's accomplishments at Prosperity Now included: 1) directing Prosperity Now's efforts to ensure that more than a million low-income children have access to children's savings accounts (CSAs), 2) launching and directing the 1:1 Fund, a fundraising and marketing tool created by Prosperity Now that has raised over \$2 million from individual donors to help match the contributions of low-income children saving in CSAs, and 3) designing the prototype for the Prosperity Now Scorecard, a state-by-state data tool that assesses how well all families are able to build and preserve wealth, and how well state policies support wealth-building and wealth preservation. Mr. Rist earned an M.A. in public policy in 1991 from the Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University. He also holds an undergraduate degree from Davidson College.

DISCUSSANTS



Patty Grant
Executive Director
Community Foundation of Wabash County

Patty Grant has served the Community Foundation of Wabash County in Indiana in various capacities since 1989. Leveraging the influence of Lilly Endowment's 7 phases of the GIFT Initiative, Patty's leadership supported the Foundation's asset growth from \$15,000 in 1990 to over \$77 million today.

Patty served as project director for the first Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship program and the Community Alliance to Promote Education Initiative (CAPE), a \$5 million spend-down initiative to advance educational attainment. As Executive Director, Patty led the Foundation's team in development of the innovative Community Foundation Early Award Scholarship Program, which utilizes Indiana's CollegeChoice 529 Plan to build college going identities and assets for post-secondary education. Patty holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from DePauw University, Greencastle IN and an MBA from the Chicago Booth School of Business, University of Chicago, (formerly the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business), Chicago Illinois.



Benita Melton
Program Director - Education
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Benita Melton, Director of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's Education program, has worked for the Foundation for more than 20 years. She joined Mott as an associate program officer in 1995, was promoted to program officer in 2000 and program director in 2015. She has worked primarily on federal and state budget and tax policy issues, as well as strategies to help low- and moderate-income families save money and build assets. A Michigan native and graduate of Michigan State University, Melton earned a bachelor's degree in finance and accounting. She is a member of Asset Funders Network Executive Committee and active in other grantmaker affinity groups. Prior to joining Mott, she worked for the Pistons-Palace Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Detroit Pistons basketball franchise.