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LIVING WEALTH THE FAMILY ISSUE



Axelowitz Kauffmann Group at UBS Private Wealth Management

Mark Axelowitz, CIMA[®], Managing Director Todd Kauffmann, Senior Vice President

How can I turn a passion activity into philanthropy?

By Mark Axelowitz

Most high net worth families and individuals I know keep their philanthropic giving separate from their passion activities, such as artcollecting, sailing, serious golf, etc. But that need not be the case, as I learned about ten years ago. In fact, my experience is a case study in how you can turn a passion activity into philanthropy. It also shows how serendipity can not only help those in need but land you a role on TV's *Law & Order*.

My own commitment to philanthropy began in 1992 when I attended a benefit concert for a fairly new poverty-fighting organization. After that night, I began contributing more than the price of my ticket. And I was not alone. Today, that group, the Robin Hood Foundation, holds sold-out concerts starring the likes of Bono and Beyonce and to date has distributed \$1.45 *billion* in grants.

While I continued supporting Robin Hood, it was a visit to the East Harlem School at Exodus House that resulted in my teaching an after-school investment class there. Through my teaching, I learned about Boys & Girls Harbor, an education and performing arts nonprofit. And in 2001, I joined its board.

Three years later, Dick Wolfe, the producer of *Law & Order*, offered to donate a speaking role on his show as an auction item at a Boys & Girls Harbor benefit event. We accepted that generous offer, and during the subsequent bidding war, my own \$10,000 bid beat out Chevy Chase's and I got the part.

Now, I'm not a TV or movie buff, but I have to admit that the day I reported to the *Law & Order* set, I was pumped. I had just 19 words to recite, and having done my share of public speaking, did not rehearse before my 15 seconds of fame. And, yes, I flubbed my lines. Several times.

But I still got paid, \$10,000 it turns out, and I immediately donated that paycheck to Boys & Girls Harbor. I also got an idea. Despite my awkward debut, the *Law & Order* experience was fun and a real break from my routine. Not only that, actors actually got paid, and I could donate that pay to my favorite charities. So, I went to auditions.

And I got parts, on shows like Boardwalk Empire, Blue Bloods and even the Three Stooges movie. That said, don't look for me to receive an Oscar any time soon. But do look to my experience as an example of what you yourself might do with your passion activity. If you collect art, instead of donating money to a school, let's say, hold an auction for one of your works at the school. And, as I've used my access to people through my acting to enlist them for my causes, you can invite your art-collecting friends to donate works to your event. Or, if you know someone who knows a high-profile golfer, auction off a round with that person at your club and donate the proceeds. Etc., etc.

In short, with a little imagination and a bit of work, you too can turn something you love doing into a vehicle for doing good. ©

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"Look to my experience as an example of what you yourself might do with your passion activity."

-Mark Axelowitz

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Left to right: Michael DaSilva, Todd Kauffmann, Mark Axelowitz Joy Christian

About Mark Axelowitz and Todd Kauffmann

Mark Axelowitz has provided investment advice to ultra high net worth individuals, family offices and foundations since 1987. He is a certified investment management analyst (CIMA®), a designation he earned through the Wharton School of Business, and he has completed advanced programs in wealth management through the NYU Stern School of Business and the Wharton School's Critical Elements of Consulting. He was selected as one of the Top Ten Outstanding Brokers of the Year by Registered Rep. magazine and was one of Barron's Top Advisors of America. Mr. Axelowitz is an officer on the board of The Boys & Girls Harbor, has co-chaired the Harbor Investment Conference since 2006 and is a member of the Robin Hood Foundation. He has a BA from Hofstra University. Todd Kauffmann has advised clients since 1989 and has been in partnership with Mr. Axelowitz since 1994. He focuses on asset allocation techniques when constructing portfolios specifically tailored to each client. He also advises on lending solutions, fixed income and foreign currency transactions. He completed the Investment Consultant Program at the Wharton Business School and is working toward his CIMA® certification.

Minimum Fee for Initial Meeting None required Minimum Net Worth Requirement \$10 million

Financial Services Experience Axelowitz, 26 years Kauffmann, 25 years

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