

Making A Difference

Taking Philanthropy to New Heights at Spectrum Health

Soaring high above the West Michigan countryside in a hot air balloon, David Muilenberg began to rethink his approach to charitable giving. The ride was a coveted prize offered during a national campaign for a Tennessee-based children's hospital in the early 1980s. But the cramped gondola, unpleasant heat of the burner flame, and a new-found fear of heights made his trip anything but enjoyable.

Thirty years later, David admits that his first foray into philanthropy was motivated by both the worthy cause and the opportunity to win a great prize.

"As time went by, I began to get more involved in local charities and community foundations and decided to keep my efforts in the West Michigan community," says David. "Helen DeVos Children's Hospital seemed like a perfect fit."

Today, his involvement in philanthropy at Spectrum Health encompasses both sides of the giving process.

David brings his career expertise as a financial planner and advisor to the Professional Partners Program, a group of local professionals specializing in estate, financial and tax planning. Gift Planning Director Sheila Steger recalls that when this program needed some rejuvenating, David served as a vital advisor, along with local attorney and Foundation Trustee, Tom Kyros.

"Planning professionals are often asked by their clients to help them decide how and where to donate. Our Professional Partners suggest the hospital as an outstanding option when it's an appropriate fit for their clients," explains Sheila.

David understands his unique position opens doors of opportunity for giving and philanthropy.

"In my profession, I'm constantly talking with people about how they can give to the hospital. I introduce them to the appropriate people at the hospital and Foundation, and then I step back."

While many individuals seeking a beneficiary may gravitate toward their alma mater, Professional Partners like David aim to expand their vision for giving.

"It's something people may not think of at first. But once you put the seed out there, particularly in light of all the amazing developments on 'the hill,' they get excited about the idea. This is especially true in terms of the new Helen DeVos Children's Hospital," smiles David. "Everyone has a place in their heart for kids."

David not only energizes clients for this cause, he also leads by example. He's given generous gifts toward patient rooms in the new Children's



Hospital and a waiting area in the Lemmen-Holton Cancer Pavilion.

He has a personal connection to the specialties offered at each of these facilities: a colleague experienced the miraculous survival of her premature baby, and on a far more personal level, he lost his father Marvin to non-Hodgkins lymphoma when David was a senior in high school.

"You never know when your life will be touched by the outstanding services this hospital provides," observes David.

Treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma was still in the experimental stages when Dr. Mark Campbell cared for his dad. When the two met again in the course of his involvement with the Professional Partners Program, David was inspired to give to the new Lemmen-Holton Cancer Pavilion.

"I've been richly blessed with my dad's good name and what he built here," he says.

It's clear that David is committed to continuing that legacy by giving back in every way he can. If you would like to join the Professional Partners group at the Spectrum Health Foundation, please contact Sheila Steger at (616) 391-5149 or sheila.steger@spectrum-health.org.

In June, David Muilenberg joined the festivities at the Lemmen-Holton Cancer Pavilion Dedication with his fiancée, Angela Boersma, and mother, Arlene Muilenberg.

"You never know when your life will be touched by the outstanding services this hospital provides."

— David Muilenberg