

The Giving Tree

FROM BABY BOOMERS TO MILLENNIALS, EVERYONE HAS REASONS FOR EMBRACING PHILANTHROPY.

BY PENNY DICKERSON

Elizabeth Brothers personifies philanthropy in Winter Park. She relocated from Massachusetts to serve Rollins College as its first associate vice president of development and remains connected through membership at the First Congregational Church of Winter Park—historic founder of both Rollins and the Mayflower Retirement Community where Brothers resides.



Elizabeth Brothers

CENTRAL FLORIDA FOUNDATION



SCOTT COOK

"I expected to find a wasteland when I arrived in 1980, but was surprised to see opera, ballet and theater," says Brothers. "Rollins was a 100-year-old, beautiful college with no money. So, I targeted the nearest and dearest first—trustees and alumni."

Brothers established a robust fundraising reputation and garnered the institution's first \$1 million bequest and 100 percent donor participation from the 50th reunion class. She still contributes annually to the arts fund she established while a board member at the Central Florida Foundation and believes in giving while you are still living.

The Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins also supports giving. In April, it partnered with the college's Philanthropy and Non-Profit Leadership Center for a panel discussion, "The Giving Millennial." The collaboration sought to engage dialogue around a generation often dubbed lazy and self-centered, as well as influence global leadership, and promote Crummer as a major resource in Central Florida with regard to innovation and strategic thinking. "Millennials are truly the generation of multidimensional giving," says Micki Meyers, a panelist and assistant vice president of student affairs at Rollins.

Millennials represent America's fastest-growing population and according to a 2014 Millennial

Impact Report, approximately 80 million millennials live in the U.S. and spend \$300 billion annually on consumer discretionary goods [Case Foundation].

Jessica Schwendeman defies her generation's poor reputation. The 28-year-old corporate volunteer manager of the Heart of Florida United Way is a Peace Corps veteran and board chair of Orlando's Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN). "I think earlier generations believed in giving or volunteering because *it's the thing to do*," she says. "We are more excited about initiatives that make an impact on important social issues in our community in a measurable way."

Pat Corvington, a noted philanthropy advocate who delivered the keynote address at the launch of Orlando's YNPN chapter in 2005, offers insight a decade later: "Millennials are extremely engaged through service, like volunteerism, and they donate money. Fundraising, like crowdsourcing, is big and they're really good at it. Their online networks are broad, and they know how to use them."

Brothers adds that, whether it's time or money, "If you give thoughtfully, you get satisfaction and do some good." **oam**

Penny Dickerson is an award-winning journalist.