

DONOR

The Kozmetsky Legacy



Jack Kozmetsky '21 swears he's been a Tar Heel since around the fourth grade when one of his first sports teams called themselves the Tar Heels. That's saying something, as he was reared a proper Texan, where roses are yellow, BBQ is beef and "Hook 'em Horns" is the gridiron mantra (but Mack is back in Chapel Hill now, so...).

When Jack came to Carolina to join its nationally ranked men's lacrosse program, he brought a lot more than sticks, pads and guards — he also brought a Texas-sized heart of gold, compassion for miles and his family's far-reaching legacy of community outreach, advocacy and support. Jack's great-grandparents, Ronya and George Kozmetsky, founded the RGK Foundation, which, from 1966 to 2016, awarded over 3,500 grants totaling more than \$133 million. Ronya and George instilled in their children and grandchildren the value of hard work, the power of education, and the strength of optimism which, when combined with their commitment to helping those in need, have fostered a culture of giving and philanthropy that transcends the borders of the Lone Star State.

The Kozmetskys' philanthropic culture is now having an impact at Carolina in the form of two grants supporting

“Each of them returned from service and started their academic careers without a transition program like Boot Prints to Heel Prints,” shared Jack’s father, Aaron. “For the sacrifices military and intelligence agency veterans have made for our country, our family believes these heroes deserve the unwavering support, services and stability provided by veteran organizations to help them live their best lives possible after service. Kozmetsky Family Foundation is proud to take a small role in helping this deserving community.”



Jack’s great-grandparents, Ronya and George Kozmetsky, founded the RGK Foundation, cementing their family’s tradition of community building by giving their time and talent, as well as their treasure.

Jack’s personal service commitment and his onboarding to the foundation’s work began in earnest prior to his freshman year in high school when he attended a week-long intensive RGK Service & Learning Institute in Austin, Texas. He was immersed in all facets of non-profit work from finance, governance, grant proposal evaluation and outcome reports to agency conference calls, site visits and follow up.

Jack said learning the operations side of foundation work was as eye-opening as the stories of domestic violence, child abuse and teen homelessness that drive their work in the first place. “I learned so much that week about how to best apply, grow and sustain resources that get volunteers into our communities and make changes not just for the present but for the future as well,” he said. “It definitely helped prepare me for an active role in our family’s

means being out in the community, working alongside other volunteers, seeing where the needs are greatest and looking for ways to meet urgent needs as well as chronic, long-standing issues around the corner, across the state and beyond.”

That’s a tall order, but Jack, as well as Will and Claire, have certainly risen to the challenge. Each amassed more than 100 hours of volunteer service every year during their attendance at Highland Park High School in Dallas, Texas. And each holds a list of accomplishments and leadership roles that could —and eventually may — rival those of their great-grandparents.

While in high school, Jack founded the Dallas Children’s Advocacy Teen Task Force, volunteered for the Dallas Children’s Advocacy Center and served as a member of the Children’s Medical Center/Children’s Health Junior Leadership Board. He was also a fundraiser, mentor, ambassador and camp counselor to his peers as well as a leader to his generation of Kozmetsky Family Foundation contributors.

The Making Trauma Less Traumatic grant is especially meaningful to Jack, as he’s spent countless hours visiting and volunteering at UNC Children’s Hospital. Jack said the Hospital School also made a huge impression on him, and inspired him to consider the possibility of bringing something like that back to Dallas, where no such services are available.

“It may sound strange, but it’s huge for a sick child to be able to keep up in school and stay with their classmates,” Jack said. “It’s something normal and non-medical that lets you stay connected to a more normal life and can really help make things a little easier for kids down the road. For me personally, that’s what this is about.”

Jack certainly doesn’t lack for ways to become involved in his adopted community. Carolina offers myriad ways to get involved and give back. UNC’s Campus Y and the Center for Public Service offer alternative spring break experiences, domestic and global volunteer opportunities, such as the Buckley Public Service Scholars program, and much more.

For Aaron and Tracey Kozmetsky, supporting Jack’s efforts to make a difference in his community, wherever that may be, is fundamental to them as parents, volunteers and grantors.

“When Jack decided to make Carolina his college home, we adopted it as well, and we’re so glad we did,” they said. “It’s been a tremendous experience for Jack, and we’re looking forward to seeing what his legacy will be.”

Campaign Funding Priorities