



2019 PHILANTHROPY REPORT: MEET THE FUTURE OF PHILANTHROPY

The American College of Financial Services

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How Sow Good Now is changing the game.

In The American College of Financial Services' 2019 Philanthropy Report, we challenged ourselves and our readers to reimagine what it means to be a financial services professional in a changing field and tumultuous economic times. We're proud to announce the Philanthropy Report is now available online! You can read the entire report here.

Driving up and down the hills of suburban Philadelphia's scenic Chester County, Mary Fischer-Nassib, CAP[®], pondered a nagging thought. The former Villanova University volleyball standout and mother of five felt happy, but not content; full, but not fulfilled. It was then that she posed the question we all must ask ourselves at one time or another. "Is this all there is?"

For years, there was so much happening within her world, most notably the planning and execution required to get five kids out the door each morning. Life moves fast, but imagine the blur of raising three sons (Ryan, Carl, and John) and two daughters (Carey and Paige) separated by seven years. With five athletic kids playing a different sport each season, managing 15 team schedules per year was the norm, not to mention the support and encouragement offered along Ryan and Carl's path to the pinnacle of their sport in the National Football League.

As homework, on-the-go dinners, and racing from game to game ended, it was logical to wonder if this end really marked a new beginning. Drawn to helping people, Fischer-Nassib had internalized the growing chasm between mainstream society and philanthropic giving: most notably, she felt, because people only connected philanthropy with financial means.

"To me, it has always meant more. It is sharing your time, talent, and treasures to help others," she said. "That is what makes you a philanthropist."

When Carl was chasing after quarterbacks at Penn State University, she traveled with him to an awards ceremony in Houston. As they visited a local children's hospital, Fischer-Nassib observed the emotional and mental healing.

"When Carl stepped into a room, all of the parents jumped up, the kids were so happy," she said. "It made me realize that no matter the message, people respond to athletes. They give their time and treasures – that's philanthropy."

That ah-ha moment proved her hypothesis, and as she had always taught her children, it was time to throw her passion behind her purpose.

She re-entered the workforce as a high-net-worth financial consultant at Vanguard, where she helped generate \$32 million dollars of monthly new business in both high-net-worth retirement and non-retirement accounts. In empowering her clients, she re-affirmed the growing disconnect between charitable intent and execution.

"So many of these clients were looking for ways to give back, but they had no education on how to do it," she noted. "The ecosystem had no structure or broad communications strategy."

It was her next career move that really cemented her “calling.” As a Philanthropic Associate at Wells Fargo Private Bank, she was a sponge that benefitted from a boss who was more than happy to impart his wisdom. Through associates, she learned about The American College of Financial Services’ Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy® (CAP®) designation program and immediately took the leap.

“It was exactly what I was looking for,” she said. “I thought to myself, finally someone has put it all together. I always had this mindset that I wanted to pave the way, but CAP® taught me what I did not know.”

Upon her graduation, she believed she was ready to package her knowledge as an athlete, coach, mother, financial services professional, and CAP® designee to make the most of her gifts.

“Everything I was taught validated my beliefs, but did so in much greater detail. It filled in the blanks,” she noted. “It gave me a toolbox of knowledge to go out into the world and utilize social capital and financial resources to maximize impact.”

With that mission in mind, Sow Good Now (SGN) was born.

Right on its homepage, it is clear that the charitable organization is following Fischer-Nassib’s strong beliefs about philanthropic intent, while leveraging the entire leadership team’s experiences with organized sports. Together, her and co-founders Dawn Hornibrook and Betsy Curtis have played and coached basketball, swimming, and volleyball, not to mention the life lessons that sports have imparted on their families.

SGN was founded as a faith based 501(c) (3) public charity in July 2018 and has already engaged over 300 young philanthropists in many program areas. The face of philanthropy is changing – moving from a predominantly wealthier, more mature, circumstance-based endeavor to a plan of passion for younger, more engaged individuals.

“I just recently became comfortable talking about this calling,” Fischer-Nassib said. “I want kids to embrace it at a young age.”



SGN recruits high-performing athletes to present at events and engage students in how and why to give back. It also serves as a classroom to teach the core principles of philanthropy, and functions as a platform for kids to evaluate how non-profit organizations address social issues.

Goals also include demonstrating how athletes can marry philanthropic passion with the way they make a living, and standardizing what it means to be an SGN athlete. Fischer-Nassib hopes that young children are not the only benefactors. She believes that putting athletes in a comfortable setting – on the field or in the gym – can help them grow as communicators and mentors.

At its core, she thinks that all philanthropy is personal, and that organized sports provide the perfect venue for young people to start their philanthropic journey.

“To use a sports analogy, if I hand someone a basketball at a young age, some will turn into gym rats and share their passion through organized sports,” Fischer-Nassib noted. “This is the same concept. If I jumpstart the philanthropic learning curve, some will recognize that passion earlier, helping deliver the greatest long-term impact.”

SGN has been on the football field at Malvern Prep, the Chester County all-boys school where Fischer-Nassib’s three sons excelled. It has been on the volleyball court through a partnership with Villanova University, and in the pool to benefit the underserved in the City of Chester.

In 2019, SGN also started to expand beyond its local reach when Providence College volleyball player Sara Sheehan contacted the organization about avenues to get involved. Through a partnership with the college, non-profit organization FriarServe – which pairs college volunteers with five Providence Catholic Pre-K-8 schools – and local fundraisers, an instructional clinic inspired community activism and involved 60 elementary school kids in a non-profit evaluation.

“It was a major success,” Fischer-Nassib said. “It demonstrated that our mission was transferrable beyond local relationships. It could scale, which is so exciting.”



Now, the athlete has a donor-advised fund established through SGN that will allow her to raise more funds and make a greater philanthropic impact over time.

After telling this story, Fischer-Nassib took a pause, which in a way let the magnitude of all SGN has already accomplished sink in. She is excited about how the organization can leverage technology to grow and cultivate relationships. She is nostalgic and appreciative of the many ways CAP® crystallized her calling.

Maybe most importantly, she can forge forward to further SGN’s mission with a clear answer.

“Is this all there is?” Not even close.

Learn more about Sow Good Now's mission to jumpstart the philanthropic learning curve by visiting www.bit.ly/sowgoodnow.

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