



# Whatcom Community Foundation

CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE  
WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER

## *“Copying Warren Buffet”...*

Investor Warren Buffet has been called “The Sage of Omaha” because of his spectacular investments through his company, Berkshire Hathaway, and because he is such a no-nonsense guy when it comes to advising others about business and financial matters.

He has also been remarkably candid about his legacy to his children: He has often stated that he is leaving most of his money to charity, and confirmed it recently with a commitment to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to give them approximately 37 *billion* dollars in stock over the next ten years. Wow! Buffet has explained that giving too much money to your children often results in them being lazy and often, aimless, and he doesn’t want that to happen, at least financed by *his* estate!

Recently one of the Whatcom Community Foundation’s donor families decided to copy Mr. Buffet. The family has two children, both now in their mid-forties, and the parents decided that there was no need to underwrite these adults over a certain amount. After consulting their attorney, they modified their wills so that (1) a fixed amount from their estate was reserved for their children, and (2) any funds above that amount would go to the Whatcom Community Foundation establishing a charitable trust in the family’s name. The fixed portion for the kids would be adjusted upward each year to allow for inflation.

As a result of this decision, the family has:

- Limited the estate taxes that will be collected;
- Guaranteed that their estate will continue their tradition of supporting charities;
- Made sure that their offspring will have reasonable funds;
- Been able to direct the Foundation to support charities to match the family’s interests; and
- Assured themselves that if charities change or disappear in the future, the gifts from the family’s trust still will go to successor and/or similar charities in the area of the family’s interests.

Note that at no time in this “paper” have we mentioned the size of this family’s commitment, and it certainly isn’t billions. That’s because *regardless of the amount, anyone* can do the same thing in their wills, either by giving “excess dollars” as in this example, or by making a specific bequest to the foundation.

Perhaps you share Warren Buffet’s concerns about large bequests to family members, or perhaps you don’t have *any* children! But if you are interested at all in charitable giving from your estate, you owe it to yourself and your family to investigate the way the Whatcom Community Foundation can perpetuate your goals efficiently and easily both in this way and others. Call us to arrange an appointment to chat about our services, or to request more information. Of course, there is no obligation and our conversations will be completely confidential.

*One of a series of papers about charitable giving from the Whatcom Community Foundation*

