

## **A Family Affair: Philanthropy and International Giving**

Host: Ted Hart

Guest: Lisa Parker – Lawrence Welk Family Foundation

**Announcer:** Welcome to the *CAF America Radio Network*, a production of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. As the leader in global giving, CAF America offers more than 20 years of experience and expertise to corporations, foundations, and individuals who wish to give internationally and with enhanced due diligence in the United States. Through its industry-leading grants management programs and philanthropic advisory services, CAF America helps donors amplify their impact. This show is dedicated to these donors and the charity they support.

CAF America is uniquely positioned to serve as the bridge between these important partners and transforms vision into meaningful action. Guests on the *CAF America Radio Network* are leaders in their fields who share tips for success and stories that inspire. Our host is Ted Hart, the CEO of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. This is a live call-in show, add your voice by calling 914-338-0855. After the show, you can find all of our podcasts at [cafamerica.org](http://cafamerica.org). Don't forget to dial 914-338-0855. Now, welcome the host of the *CAF America Radio Network*, Ted Hart.

**Ted Hart:** Welcome here to the latest edition of the CAF America Radio Network and happy holidays. I want to thank you for joining us and tell you just how excited I am to have our guest with us here today. Lisa Parker is the president of the Lawrence Welk Family Foundation and a principal of Family Circle Advisors. She brings 30 years of experience in philanthropy and nonprofit management to her work with philanthropic families.

Our topic here today is philanthropy and generational giving. Certainly, Lisa is a recognized expert in this area. I don't think we could have a more well-positioned topic for this time of the year and going into 2016 as the notion of families giving together, coming together, working together philanthropically is one that we want to explore today. Lisa Parker, welcome here to the *CAF America Radio Network*. How are you?

**Lisa Parker:** Excellent. Thank you so much, Ted, for having me on the show today.

**Ted:** It's great to have you here. We've got so much to talk about today because you sit at the center of so many different streams that are making a difference in philanthropy today. Certainly, you come from a family history of philanthropy, you represent generations of donors and givers, and you recognize that giving away money is not as easy as it might sound. Doing it well can be complicated and needs to be strategic and more importantly, for our topic today, is how do you incorporate generations and to have a dialog that can be meaningful to the philanthropic discussion of families and communities.

**Lisa:** Yes, it's my favorite topic. I'd be happy to share whatever I can to illuminate for your listeners some of the joys and challenges that we've had along the way.

**Ted:** Along that topic of joys and challenges, you became involved many years ago in your grandfather's foundation, how old were you? Share with us how that is the underpinning of what it is that you do today.

**Lisa:** I became involved in the foundation in 1982. My mother had taken over the foundation from her father in 1980 and at that point, she really saw an opportunity to engage the younger generation in the foundation's work. There's 10 of us in my generation, the third generation. I was 13 and we ranged in age from 12 to 14. They invited us to be a junior board and we were included in the annual meeting of the foundation. One of the things that hooked us early was that we had full voices at the table. When we reviewed organizations or when the full board did, our input was welcomed and valued, so we felt included and this was a great opportunity.

It was interesting because, later on, we found out that we were one of the first, if not the first junior board in the country, and I would be asked to speak at conferences about, "Gosh, how did you guys put together a junior board and how has it functioned effectively?" It was interesting because the conversations I was having around that always began with, "We want out kids to be involved in giving, but they're not interested. We really want them to understand that with this wealth comes the obligation to be engaged in philanthropy. To whom much is given, much is expected." That mentality is true, but it's all cloaked in guilt.

The experience that we had as a junior board was really joyful. Not only did we get to participate in the full annual meetings, but we had our own breakout session where we could make grants to organizations that didn't necessarily fall within the foundation's guidelines. We became the junior board that could and started quite young, what was considered quite young at the time.

**Ted:** You have authored *The Hip Family's Guide to Happier Holidays*, I'm very curious about the connection between being a hip family and having happy holidays.

**Lisa:** [chuckles] Thank you for mentioning that. I put that guide together because I think that the hip family knows that the holidays aren't about the hustle and bustle and making everything just right, but an opportunity to connect in a meaningful way with the people in your life and as part of that, being very intentional about how you do your giving at the holidays and making that one portion. There's so many ways to give back and to give presents that give back.

I'm sure that CAF America has many resources where that comes from, but it could be a really simple activity. For example, some families I know and that I recommend, put out a giving jar around the holidays. At the end of the day, any extra coins or cash you have in your pocket you can throw in there and then, decide as a family, "Okay, how are we going to use this to give back over the holiday." It could be as simple as buying a homeless person a pair of shoes or it can be bigger, sponsoring a refugee, whatever big or small idea you have. The message in that is that anybody can be a philanthropist. It can be very simple and you don't have to have a family foundation.

**Ted:** The reason that I brought that up in the context of the earlier point of the junior board and bringing children into the notion of philanthropy is that none of these concepts are just a given or natural, as you said. It takes careful thought to pass the philanthropic gene on, if you will, to the next generation. What can you share with our listeners who have children, who want them to not only understand, as you said, "To those who are given a lot, much is expected", but also, just the opportunity to make a difference in this world? How do you pass that on and what are the messages that you can share, particularly, during this holiday season, which can be a wonderful platform to start that dialog?

**Lisa:** Right. I became very curious about this question, about either we have these milestones for our kids in terms of their intellectual development and their physical development, but how do we nurture that giving gene from the get-go and when is it appropriate to bring kids into that conversation, start to have activities and conversations around giving? Really, it starts with empathy. I recommend that families start as early as four because that's when the capacity for empathy starts to open up in our human development.

There's ways to reach kids and to, I say, light the spark that engages them from the heart and with passion in philanthropy. It's interesting that early on, a four and five-year-old, almost universally their first cause is animal because they can identify with both how adorable animals are and how vulnerable they are just as they are in their very young ages. Then, from there, kids start to become involved in school and start to develop their interests and hobbies. I always just tell families start with where your kid is. If you have a child that is interested in, for example, computers, computer game, they can just take their laptop and head on over to the local retirement home and teach an older person how to use Facebook or simply how to send a virtual card for the holidays.

If you have a child, for example, who's interested in animals, one of the things that we did in the giving season is when my daughter was about four years old, we would always visit the San Diego Wild Animal Park, a petting zoo, because she had formed this really adorable, dear relationship with a deer, a particular deer named Arthur. When it came time to take our giving jar and do something to give back, she was very clear that she wanted to give this to Arthur. We went with it, took this jar literally to the ticket counter at the animal park and they took the donation and followed her wish that this go directly for Arthur's care and wellbeing.

What was really great is that when a child takes that kind of initiative, it just warms the hearts of the nonprofit entities. Just about three weeks later, we got an envelope with a picture of Arthur with all the caregivers and thanking Gillian. She was really hooked at that point and to the power that even just the littlest person can have in giving back.

**Ted:** That's such a terrific story. I wonder if-- You used a number of different phrases there and I wanted to explore this whole notion of empathy and opening the door to someone being empathetic towards the needs of others or needs of society or needs of animals as a precursor to philanthropy.

I wonder in your 30 plus years of experience and your deep knowledge in this area, if in bringing children into the philanthropic space, if that's actually the wrong topic in the wrong discussion point at an early age, but as you said, opening up to where the children are at, if it's animals, if it's someone that they see needy on the street or something of that sort, instead of putting that in a charitable context, a philanthropic context, which is more maybe in a lot of people's minds, more along the lines of duty as opposed to empathy maybe equaling passion.

**Lisa:** Absolutely. This is all in the context of A, preparing our kids to be good citizens, but also, when you have a family foundation or you're thinking about having a formal philanthropic practice, this is part of the training ground and I say that philanthropy, the precursors to do it well or to have developed empathy and gratitude. We know that this is a great way to approach it because even among teenagers, who are engaged in philanthropic activity, studies bear out that they're less likely to drop out of school, get pregnant, develop substance abuse issues. I think that these are really ought to be looked at as building blocks, the architecture leading up to engagement in the full family philanthropy.

Even at that point, I think that a young person or a young adult, one of the best experiences they can have to become an effective grantmaker is to work on the other side of the table, to work in a nonprofit, to have the experiences raising money, writing a grant request because that too is allowing them to walk in the other shoes and see really the great amount of labor and effort and passion that goes preparing a nonprofit to request funds from a foundation.

I look at that as a trajectory and starting with the four-year-old and developing their empathy and then, with that, comes naturally- really, the side effect of that is gratitude. I really love some of the learnings we have now around neuroscience and happiness and at the individual level. One of the studies that I love is one that happened at Harvard University over about 40 years following men who are givers. Those that gave time or money over their lifespan we're 42% happier than those that did not. Even the gratitude that comes from engagement in giving, whether it's in small ways or as part of the family foundation, we know that gratitude also is extremely potent in our physical and mental wellbeing.

The same study looked at these men and some of them had kept a gratitude journal over the decades of the study and those that did, it was very clear, they added seven years to their lives, which is a greater effect than even giving up smoking, which adds about five years to your life. All of these things are good at the individual level, but also, as part of being engaged in the family's philanthropy.

**Ted:** What a wonderful statistic to point out that while you're helping others, there's actually a lot in it for you. I'm very curious because your experience is not just limited to the next generation or as we're talking today, about how to get children to be involved in the family's philanthropic interests, but you've actually been engaged in four generations of philanthropy, how much more complicated is that become?

**Lisa:** Yes. I'll answer that in two ways. Every generation has its personality and its worldview that has developed some different events in history and it's complicated anytime you are trying

to engage multiple generations around decision-making, particularly, at the foundation board table. We're living longer and staying active longer, which means that this is really important to find a way to engage multiple generations and to make sure that they are serving the greater good, optimally.

For example, when we started to look at our fourth generation and how to engage them, we knew it was going to be a completely different way than my generation had been engaged. We knew that we wanted to start early as my generation had, but we also knew that this was a generation that wasn't going to be too passionate about sitting at a board table with their parents. We started a junior board for them and all kinds of other activities to help them engage in and find their own passion, but to engage them even younger.

In this generation, giving is a more a part of the general conversation and oftentimes, our high schools have service requirements so we started our fourth generation at the age of 7, was going to be 12- [crosstalk]

**Ted:** Even younger than you were in getting started?

**Lisa:** That's right. We also know that when I'm multiple generations are engaged in philanthropy- again, one of the selfish benefits is that this really helps to make the family stronger. A lot of research has been done on families that maintain their engagement in philanthropy and that also maintain the wealth. We know that about 70% of families lose their wealth by the third generation and we're really curious about that 30% that hangs on to the wealth. In a few studies now, it's shown that that 30% overwhelmingly has a philanthropic practice.

**Ted:** That's another very important statistic because what that would lead you to suggest is that philanthropy as a natural and normal part of success.

**Lisa:** Yes. One of the things that being engaged in philanthropy as a family does is it helps you develop communication and to have a family mission. Those were the two other things that this 30% of families had in common is that they had a system of communication that was effective. Didn't mean they didn't have conflict, but they had a way of dealing with it that would allow them to go forward. Naturally, with a philanthropic mission, it often closely mirrors your family mission.

**Ted:** We're going to-- Lisa, we're going to take just a very quick break. When we come back, we're going to have about eight minutes left and what I wanted to do is pick up on that concept of families and families coming together and how we have this dialogue and discussion as we're approaching the holidays for the advice and tips that you have on having this conversation and maybe using the holidays and the goodwill of the holidays as a way to jumpstart or restart the philanthropic engagement of multiple generations. We'll be right back.

**Announcer:** Remember our podcasts and archives are always available 24 hours a day at [campamerica.org](http://campamerica.org). If you're listening today, our phone lines are open. Call in and ask a question by dialing 914-338-0855. Now, back to the *CAF America Radio Network* and our host, Ted Hart.

**Ted:** We are back here with the *CAF America Radio Network* and Lisa Parker, who is president of the Lawrence Welk Family Foundation and principal of the Family Circle Advisors and certainly, a leader in this entire notion of a family affair, philanthropy, and generational giving. Is there a better time than, maybe, over the holidays, when families come together to turn our attention to empathy, to caring for others and for philanthropy? What do you think about that, Lisa?

**Lisa:** I love this time of year because it's a natural time to reflect on how we want to, as a family, give together. Even just sitting around the holiday ham or by the fire, there's some conversations that can happen that are extremely powerful. One of one of my favorite questions that I've heard, Ted, this was actually a pose to a group of philanthropy professionals in a conference I was at, "Reflect on what is the greatest gift you have ever given and what is the greatest gift you have ever received?" Now, this is a conversation best had with adults. The four and five-year-olds will be talking about the real gifts that they've gotten.

**Ted:** Right. The ones that are wrapped up and they got to unwrap at Christmas.

**Lisa:** Right. To hear adults have this conversation when it was pose in the meeting that I was in, each response was, "The greatest gift I have ever been given is the time and opportunity to be with loved one or it was a time when I was acknowledged for some piece of my work or my giving that affected somebody else." It's a really interesting conversation to pose to be adults and to have the kids nearby hearing the response.

Then, the other thing that I love to have as a conversation starter is just to ask, "How has your life been changed by others giving to you?" With that, following up, "Have you been the beneficiary of philanthropy?" This is a great conversation to have because, so often, we don't think of ourselves as having been the beneficiaries of someone else's philanthropy, but universally, it's true. We all have.

Then, you start to think about the ways that that's happened for each individual in the family. Have they been the recipient of a scholarship? Have they watched public television? Have they been in a lovely park or museum that was endowed by a philanthropist? It's great to see how really philanthropy is a democratic notion. We all serve and we all have the benefits of other having served on before us.

**Ted:** Part of the discussion is taking stock and doing an inventory of the many ways that philanthropy and the charitable sector do affect all of our lives even though you may come from a very wealthy family. You may have lots of means and very few wants, taking stock in what philanthropy has meant to the broader community, has meant to your own success or that of your family. As you pointed out, there are good personal reasons to be engaged in philanthropy because it may help spell the future success of your family and yourself, but may also affect your health. Is it a tough sell or is it just a matter of putting in the time and building the infrastructure for families to succeed?

**Lisa:** Great question. I don't think it's a tough sell. Although, I really have a lot of, again, empathy for advisors who are working with families and wanting to help them have these important conversations. It's something that can't actually be done in one conversation and that's why using the holidays and other appropriate times to think about these things is really important and that's the other message I would have about the holidays is take this holiday as an opportunity to talk about your next holiday and how you want to be intentional.

I love holidays too because they're right for breeding rituals and traditions. Think intentionally about a tradition that your family might start that that might affect your children and grandchildren. Is this the giving jar at the table?

**Ted:** For some reason, you're breaking up just a little bit. I'm hoping that we're going to get a clear signal here, maybe just summarize the point that you are making. We have about two minutes left on the show,

**Lisa:** Right. Can you hear me better now? Hello?

**Ted:** It is disappointing. We're somehow losing your signal. Can you hear me, Lisa?

**Lisa:** Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me? Hello?

**Ted:** Yes, Lisa. Let's try in about one-minute time to summarize. We, unfortunately, lost about two minutes of your wonderful point you were making.

**Lisa:** I'm so sorry. Can you hear me now? Hello?

**Ted:** Lisa, can you hear me?

**Lisa:** I can. I'm so sorry, Ted. Can you hear me?

**Ted:** I can now. We have about one minute left. Could you summarize the wonderful point you were just making?

**Lisa:** Absolutely. I was just saying that the holidays are a great time to think about the rituals and traditions that you might want to have with your family the next time around and it's an opportune time to have that conversation and look at, do you want to have the giving jar at the table-

**Ted:** Lisa, I want to thank you very much for being our guest here on the CAF America Radio Network. I'm just going to apologize, we did lose the last couple of minutes. I think you were emphasizing the time of the holidays and what a great time of the year it is to be connecting with family and to pass on that philanthropic tradition. Thank you, Lisa Parker, president of the Lawrence Welk Family Foundation, for being my guest here today on the *CAF America Radio Network*. Happy holidays.

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