

Exploring WIF Values

Stewardship:

We believe in being responsible and thoughtful stewards of our human and financial resources and holding ourselves accountable to the same standards to which we hold our grantees.

By Tiffany Graham



By all accounts, stewardship is defined as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care; or the conducting, supervising, or managing of something. Most definitions of stewardship I've seen are typically comprised of action words: Managing. Caring for. Supervising.

These action words reflect my view of stewardship as a continuous circle of activities and responsibilities in which we all have a part to play. It begins with each WIF member having a desire to make a difference in her community and agreeing to a common vision. Secondly, we exercise the faith and confidence that our collective investment will be managed wisely to provide the greatest impact. Next, we see the exponential results of our gifts year-over-year and report on our progress. And lastly (and really simultaneously), we take time to appreciate each other as we work side-by-side throughout the journey.

As a professional fundraiser, I also think of stewardship as the process we use to thank and involve donors including formal recognition, events, personal visits and other ways we use to build relationships with donors. But ask any donor and she'll tell you that more than a fancy name plate on a wall or the best seat at an event, she wants to know that you're using her gift wisely and that it is making an impact. Our fiduciary responsibility reigns supreme – using our resources in alignment with the WIF mission and values, and strategically investing in the Charlotte community's most pressing needs.

Wisdom Commons, an online collective, shares this: "Stewardship means that we weigh not only our own needs and desires but those of other people and future generations. We realize that none of us is a self-made person and that part of what we own is wealth that flows from others through us. We appreciate the natural resources, societal resources and financial resources that have been handed down to us by our ancestors and we are conscious of our own legacy."

By joining and serving as WIF members, we are given an incredible and powerful opportunity to effect change. But this opportunity also comes with a heavy responsibility. We demonstrate that stewardship is a top priority by holding financial accountability and transparency to the highest standards, applying due diligence to learn as much as we can about non-profit organizations, and being judicious in ensuring that every possible dollar goes directly towards making an impact in the Charlotte community.