

THE PREMIER LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Cape Fear

WINTER 2019

LIVING

The POWER of GIVING

MELISSA SPAIN CEO,
THE COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
NC EAST

REMEMBERING
& PAYING
TRIBUTE TO OUR
WWII VETS

OSTERIA
CICCHETTI
KEEPING IT IN
THE FAMILIA

CONNECTING CAPE FEAR CULTURES

FEATURES

FLAVORS

FACES

THE UNCW
CAMERON
SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS

CHANGE
LIVES

DISASTER RELIEF FUND FOR
CAPE FEAR REGION THROUGH
OUR CF OF NC EAST FUND

THE NORTH

THE CAROLINA AZALEA

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

HOME

EAST

NC

POWER

THE NORTH CAROLINA

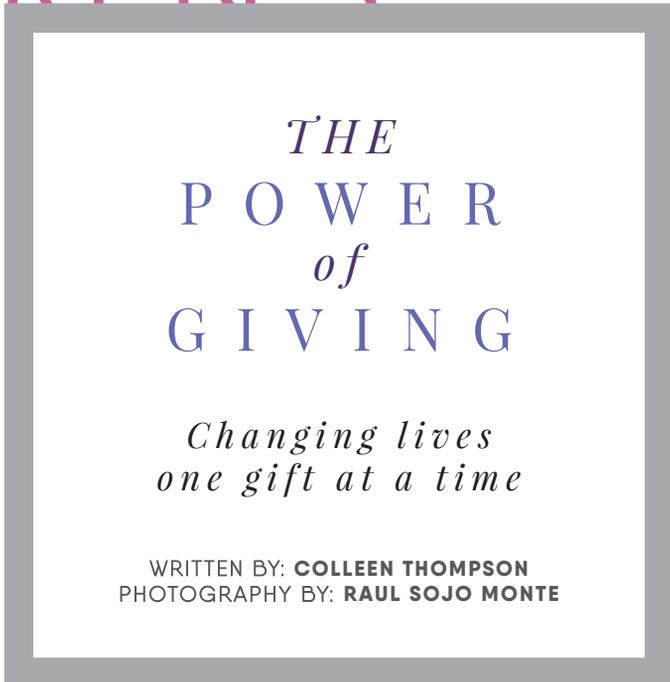
COASTAL LAND TRUST

TRUST

THE ASSOCIATION

OF FUNDRAISING

PROFESSIONALS



THE
POWER
of
GIVING

*Changing lives
one gift at a time*

WRITTEN BY: COLLEEN THOMPSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: RAUL SOJO MONTE

THE GIRLS LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY OF WILMINGTON

(GLOW)

STEP UP
WILMINGTON

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

OF EASTERN

NORTH CAROLINA

FROM *THE* COMMUNITY

"I'VE LEARNED THAT YOU SHOULDN'T GO THROUGH
LIFE WITH A CATCHER'S MITT ON BOTH HANDS. YOU
NEED TO BE ABLE TO THROW SOMETHING BACK."

— MAYA ANGELOU





THE
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NC EAST

PROMOTING, ENABLING &
CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY
IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

For Good. Forever.

The last several years have seen a quiet revolution in philanthropic giving.

Beyond the machinery of big business and off the radar of anonymous hedge fund managers, community foundations have woven into

the very fabric of philanthropy across the United States. Building from a local support base of donors, focusing on issues and causes affecting the very communities we live and work in. It follows an ancient teaching that the first duty concerning charity is ensuring there are no needy among your own.

Organically, community foundations are getting people to think, engage and care, things Melissa Spain, CEO of The Community Foundation of NC East, does every day of the week. Spain sits on a three-legged stool of assets, capacity and trust; a power player (my words, not hers) for all the right reasons.

My talk with Spain begins quite philosophically. We are debating whether some people are genetically predisposed with a “giving gene.” Is anyone born with it, or is the art and passion for giving taught and learned?

“I give a great deal of thought to this, and after a 30 year career in fundraising, development, public speaking, charitable giving management and relationship building, I believe several important factors play into this question,” Spain explains. “We tend to acquire knowledge and a desire to do things later in life, but those essentially come from what we were surrounded by early on in life. So, for me personally, my desire to learn and surround myself with opportunities to give back began at an early age. I believe I was born to be a fundraiser. My comfort level in interacting with others, asking them to contribute or to help make a difference in the lives of others, has always come naturally for me.”

It’s a good thing that asking those who have to give to those

who need comes naturally to Spain. On a very profound level, steering the Community Foundation of NC East is all about building trust—trust between members of the Cape Fear community through transparent stewardship and a flow of resources.

Fostering relationships face to face with those who have resources and can be inspired to give to those with ideas and aspirations can make a huge difference. It is something Spain takes very seriously and with a huge amount of pride.

“The Community Foundation of NC East, is extremely proud to call eastern North Carolina home. Since our origination, we have had the honor of working with so many amazing partners,” says Spain.

“Personal connections with my donors are a top priority for me. I think one of the keys to success is building and maintaining personal relationships. When you stop and think about the amount of integrity and trust that our clients put in us, it’s tremendous. Knowing and respecting that people are entrusting their financial resources to us, to oversee, manage, and invest -- it means they are entrusting the very thing they have worked their entire lives for. The giving spirit of our donors along with our ability to connect their financial resources to the needs and opportunities across our eastern region, are what matters most, 365 days a year,” remarks Spain.

“I’ve been very blessed to call many of our donors some of my closest and dearest friends—family really. I establish such close personal relationships that I am often with them up until their passing away, and that is a very rewarding gift.”

The success of community foundations lies in the fact that when solutions are developed by the community and for the community and rooted in authentic relationships with the people most affected, they are more likely to be sustainable.

L to R:
Melissa Spain
presenting check to
American Red Cross
for Hurricane Florence
Disaster Relief, 2018;
Melissa Spain, pictured
with Randy Tomsic and
Suzie Koonce of Wells
Fargo, 2018 Hurricane
Florence Relief
Funds Distribution.



“First and foremost, regardless of where one resides geographically, we know that when communities thrive, so do the people. When we invest our philanthropic resources in the people, in the nonprofit sector, we are investing in the very lives and the support systems that provide a better quality of life, making our communities a better place to live and thrive,” explains Spain.

With more than 800 Community Foundations in the U.S., there has been a huge effort to educate and transform people’s mindsets as they relate to giving. “We are so unique in that we as CFs serve as much more than just Fiduciaries, we serve as the trusted and valued partners in whom families place the entirety of their philanthropic and financial resources, knowing that we will identify the most significant needs they wish to address. We provide a wealth of due diligence and continued oversight to their funds, as well as to the nonprofits and charities we fund.”

Community Foundations award grants to local groups as a way to strengthen and invest in the community around them. They strengthen the pipeline and capacities of people-led action responding holistically to a range of different issues within the community.

Spain refers to this as building Community Capital. She holds a strong belief that when communities thrive, so does the state in which they reside. “When individual states thrive, so does our nation, and as a nation we are only as strong as our weakest link,” she concludes.

The regional expansion of the Community Foundation of NC East, originally based in Spain’s hometown of Greenville, has resulted in the opening of a second office location in Wilmington. This has provided an opportunity to work with families, professional advisors, nonprofits and community leaders throughout New Hanover County and the Cape Fear Region. Granting funds to the region has evolved into significant partnership opportunities



Melissa Spain, presenting awards to the 2019 NC Azalea Festival Youth Art Contest Winners.

for several organizations and will culminate with a Regional Philanthropy Day in 2020.

Identifying where resources are needed most within the Cape Fear region is a diverse laundry list that ranges from education and at-risk youth, to the unmet needs of women and girls, to affordable housing and health-related issues like pediatric cancer.

“Wilmington has now become one of the most desirable and popular retirement cities in the U.S. Our beautiful coastal city is a significant contributor to the economy of North Carolina. There are many opportunities for giving to help continue making the Cape Fear Region one of the most inviting and rewarding communities in which to live and work,” Spain says.



An organization particularly close to Spain's heart is GLOW (Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington), which the Foundation has supported since its inception in 2016. "When I was first contacted by the development director, I was extremely interested in learning as much about GLOW as possible. I immediately scheduled a site visit to the school, which was in its second year, at their original location," Spain recalls. "I was met at the front door by such amazing and passionate staff and teachers and was introduced to many of the girls who were students. I was so inspired by the unique program and the national model which the school was poised to follow. It was a very success-oriented curriculum and one that grabbed my interest and heart. Our foundation has advocated for girls and women throughout our history and we knew without question that the return on our financial investment would be beyond measure with GLOW."

For many individuals and families, the opportunity to contribute to their own charitable fund is the start of a philanthropic journey, a journey which will inherently be a personal one. Being motivated by values and important causes close to your heart is a good place to

start. An important benefit for many donors is the chance to pause, think and develop a vision for the causes they wish to support and the difference they want to make, allowing them to achieve their charitable objectives over time.

"I have always believed that no matter what we are doing with our lives, we should one day be able to say that we have left things better than we found them. This journey of life we are given is a gift. I am really grateful for the gift of promoting, enabling, and celebrating philanthropy." ¶

*To learn more about the Community Foundation of NC East, please view the website at www.cfnceast.org.
You can also visit their office locations in Greenville and Wilmington.*