

A LIFETIME LEGACY OF HEALING

CHARLOTTE LINDON

Charlotte Lindon inherited her dedication to philanthropy from her grandfather, but her interest in supporting health-related charities is uniquely her own.

Mrs. Lindon's Russian-born grandfather immigrated to the United States with no money, speaking no English. When he died at the age of 40, his Joseph Phillipson department store at Roosevelt and Halsted had grown to become the city's second-largest, while its profits had enabled him to establish several Jewish charitable institutions.

Like the grandfather she never met, Mrs. Lindon has spent most of her life trying to make life better for others—although she acknowledges a rather slow start to giving. In her grade school, the Red Cross awarded students buttons for their 10-cent contributions. Rather than give every year, she recalls, “I just saved my button from year to year.”

These days, however, she finds deep satisfaction in philanthropic support of causes close to her heart, notably physical and mental health services. As an informed benefactress, she looks to The Chicago Community Trust for the

“Most of my profession has been, hopefully, making life better. With philanthropy too, you can make a difference in the world. Make the lives of at least some people better.”



information she needs to decide which organizations to support through her donor advised fund.

“I research an organization’s mission myself; but then I’m interested in the Trust’s evaluation,” she says. “If the Trust has supported an organization, I know I’ll have the information I want. I want their help to identify a program so fantastic that I’m moved to make a significant gift.”

Mrs. Lindon’s lifetime of dedication to health and social services began when she became a social worker supporting veterans after World War II. Later she advocated for abused and dependent children in the courts, and eventually trained to become a practicing psychologist. These pursuits, like her philanthropic efforts, grow from deep and personal roots.

“My brother was developmentally disabled,” she explains, “and my mother had absolutely no one to turn to. At that time, there wasn’t anybody out there to help.” She also knew that she had a cousin who was blind—and although she knew nothing but his name, her support of the Hadley School for the Blind later led to the discovery that he had achieved renown as a prominent local doctor.

Thanks to these life experiences, Mrs. Lindon has been a long-time supporter of organizations such as Orchard Village and Little City, which provide services for people with developmental disabilities; the Hadley School for the Blind; and Jewish Homes for the Aged—organizations with which she feels a personal connection.

“I think the most important thing is that people have food and shelter and mental and physical health care,” she says. “It’s not as comfortable for me to give to, for example, the arts and education. They are worthwhile, certainly. But that’s not my passion.”

Instead, Mrs. Lindon’s passion is supporting the programs and services people need to have healthier lives. In addition to relying on the Trust for information, she looks to ensure that this philanthropy continues by including the Trust in her estate planning.

As a child of the Depression, she understands her generation’s desire to guard their assets. Her husband saw his father lose everything, and wanted to protect against a future in which he could be poor again. He encouraged her to leave the money she inherited from her mother to their children.

Mrs. Lindon had different plans. That inheritance goes to charity, and she continues to derive a great deal of satisfaction from giving through it. Her own legacy, too, is marked for charity. “The far greater part of what I leave in my estate will go to The Chicago Community Trust. I’m sure my grandfather would have been pleased.”