

The Challenge of Change

Canadians are experiencing dramatic changes in many aspects of their lives. These changes provide **individual philanthropists** with an increased opportunity to serve.

For example, the make-up of the traditional family unit is changing as the number of single parent families continues to grow. This change in the structure of family has spawned a large number of organizations, from the Big Brothers and Big Sisters movement to Uncles at Large and the modern daycare facility. While each of these organizations plays a somewhat different role in the life of a family, all do share a common need - financial assistance to help parents in the rearing of their children.

Canadians are also feeling the effects of a massive and unprecedented demographic shift. Over the last few decades, a "sandwich generation" of Canadians has been created. This generation is faced with the twin challenges of caring for their children and their aging parents at the same time. The challenges of juggling employment with the responsibility for the nuclear and extended family is bringing pressure to bear on many points within our communities.

The number of people over 65 years of age is growing dramatically, generating increased demands for health care and housing facilities as well as driving changes to retirement practices. While public and private pension programs have substantially reduced poverty among seniors, the need for research into diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease, and Cancer far outpaces the dollars available from government, foundations and special fundraising campaigns.

Technological change continues at a staggering pace. New products and services not even dreamed of a generation ago, such as cars built by robots, wireless telecommunications, the internet, and bank cards, are impacting employment opportunities and wealth distribution.

Changes in the role of government in the past decade have been dramatic. From the end of the Second World War until the late 1980s, many citizens, bureaucrats and elected officials believed that governments could solve a myriad of social, economic and cultural problems by spending more money or increasing the number of regulations on individual and group behaviour. The inability of government to generate enough funds to buy solutions to these problems was finally made apparent by the creation of mountains of public debt, whose cost of servicing began to outstrip the cost of delivering key services such as education, health care, or roads.

Opportunities Brought by Change

The changes we see and experience present us not only with challenges, but also with unparalleled opportunities. For example, by encouraging and facilitating volunteerism among a growing group of seniors, Canadians can unleash one of the greatest untapped resources in their communities. The opportunity to develop productive and creative educational programming so the benefits of technological advances are shared by all has never been greater. Consider the demand for government and charitable dollars to aid in the development of life-long learning processes. Re-inventing government has become a necessity, and the resulting reduction in expenditures at all levels of government and on most types of programs has created an overwhelming demand for voluntary and charitable activity. Our country is now managing its scarce resources in a better way and moving positively into the twenty-first century. Most important, the door has been opened wider for individual giving that will help to foster innovative solutions which benefit all of society.

Kerby Philanthropy Seminars

To learn more about philanthropy and the many ways that you can give to your charity of choice please join us on one of the dates noted below at 1:30 pm in Room 125. You can book your spot -with Helene Beck by calling at (403) 705-3235

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