

# BPI

**Business and Professional  
People for the Public Interest**

2010 Annual Report



## Contents

- 4**  
Public Housing
- 8**  
Public Education
- 12**  
Affordable Housing
- 16**  
Political Reform
- 20**  
Financial Information
- 21**  
BPI Staff
- 22**  
Contributors

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### Founder

Gordon B. Sherman  
(1927–1987)

### Founding Director

Alan Saks  
(1928–2005)

## BPI Staff

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E. Hoy McConnell, II

### Staff Counsel

Aya Barnea  
*Staff Counsel*  
Polikoff-Gautreux  
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*Senior Staff Counsel*

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Affordable Housing  
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Public Housing Program

Robbie Silverman  
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Susannah Levine  
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Public Education  
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### Director of Development

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### Administration

Deborah Johnson  
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Marissa Manos  
*Administrative Director*

## Dear Friends,

We're often asked how BPI—a relatively small organization with a disproportionately large impact—is different from other organizations involved in addressing Chicago's social justice challenges.

In short, what does BPI bring to the table?

One of the most distinctive aspects of BPI is our versatile approach—we deal in law *and* policy.

Whether a situation is best addressed by drafting and advocating for a new law or ordinance, conducting comprehensive research to bring a particular policy approach to Chicago that has been successful elsewhere, convening and leading a network of advocates and stakeholders, initiating appropriate litigation, or launching a strategic campaign, BPI is well-positioned for involvement.

Our staff includes both lawyers and policy analysts as well as lawyers with advanced degrees in public policy.

This special attribute of BPI—our organizational versatility—comes to mind now because what BPI brought to the table over the past year includes examples of all of these law and policy approaches across our four program areas:

- In public housing, our ongoing Gautreaux representation of CHA residents means that we continue to be deeply involved in all aspects concerning their well-being and the health of their communities. In conjunction with our advocacy for a more expansive approach to community building, we have begun an intensive effort to improve the schools in these communities.

- In affordable housing, BPI’s work to address the foreclosure crisis took center stage. Among a number of initiatives, we were deeply involved in creating the innovative Circuit Court of Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program, and are go-to leaders on state legislative efforts to address the debilitating problems that foreclosure-driven vacant properties are causing in Chicago and throughout the region and state.
- BPI’s public education work was in evidence in the classroom, the courtroom, and the conference room—in the expansion of the Partnership for Instructional Leadership (BPI’s whole-school change project in collaboration with CPS), our lawsuit challenging the inequities of the Illinois school funding system, and our new initiative focused on improving schools in CHA Transformation Plan communities.
- Our political reform work featured the recent release of a new BPI report on the role of inspectors general in combating government corruption as well as a favorable Appellate Court decision in BPI’s legal representation of Chicago’s inspector general in a case with potentially precedential importance.

Another attribute that distinguishes BPI is our people—Board members and staff.

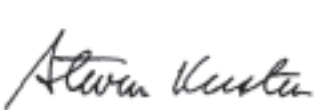
BPI’s 48 directors are a diverse group of respected, knowledgeable, and dedicated leaders representing a range of civic and professional experience that is rare to encounter. And, BPI staff members—a dedicated and brilliant team—bring BPI’s mission to life through an uncommon commitment to excellence, hard work, and the social justice values that define BPI.

Included among BPI’s Board members are three new directors elected over the past year: Pam Daniels-Halisi (Managing Director for Community Development, The Private Bank), Julie Hamos (Director, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services), and Guacolda Reyes (Vice President of Community Development, The Resurrection Project). BPI’s new directors are recognized and respected leaders, and we are privileged to welcome them to our Board.

No description of the “people of BPI” would be complete without acknowledging the important contribution of BPI’s generous supporters—from the foundation funders who see merit in BPI’s programs to the individual donors who find expression for their commitment to social justice in supporting BPI.

Never content to accept things as they are, we’re deeply grateful for *your* continued partnership in BPI’s work as we renew and redouble our efforts to meet the challenge of making change in the Chicago region.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Kersten  
*President*



E. Hoy McConnell, II  
*Executive Director*



# Public Housing

Our focus on community building led BPI to a new point of intersection between our public housing and public education work—re-visioning public schools in Transformation Plan communities. Thriving communities need good schools, and applying our expertise and relationships in both housing and education, we are off to a strong start, focusing initial efforts in the Roosevelt Square area.

And, following the robust dialogue generated by *The Third Side: A Mid-Course Report on Chicago's Transformation of Public Housing*, BPI and CHA are together exploring new ways to give the 5,000-plus families scheduled to remain in traditional (100% public housing) developments an opportunity to live in healthier communities and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

## **How has the Plan for Transformation responded to the economic downturn and the tanking of the housing market?**

CHA's original vision for the Plan for Transformation was bold and expansive—to replace nearly all its high-rise public housing with mixed-income developments and to rehabilitate the rest. Although the job is taking longer and has been made more difficult by the economic downturn, the vision continues with important adjustments.

Today, with most demolition completed, planning encompasses much more than housing. BPI has helped lead efforts to push the planning envelope to incorporate more of what we know to be vital elements of good communities—schools, parks, youth programming, and economic development. Planning efforts currently underway for Lathrop Homes, Ickes Homes, and LeClaire Courts include, as fundamental principles, that the new replacement communities must address all of these, as well as energy efficiency, transportation, and jobs for residents. Planning efforts have moved beyond the Working Groups to include the surrounding community. Youth and adults are participating in efforts to envision the community as they would like it to be. While broad community planning can be cumbersome and challenging, in the end it is the first step toward building a vibrant and sustainable community rather than a housing development.

## **Is the importance of schools recognized in CHA's Plan for Transformation efforts?**

Increasingly, good schools are being recognized as essential components in all Transformation communities, whether mixed-income or traditional public housing. BPI has been instrumental in helping CHA understand the importance of schools, and in facilitating the growing relationship between CHA and CPS. For example, BPI is a key participant in the community planning effort for Smyth School (discussed in the Public Education section of this report), and the planning efforts for the next three mixed-income communities, Lathrop Homes, Ickes Homes, and LeClaire Courts—all of which are increasingly focused on the centrality of neighborhood schools to their long-term success.

## **Beyond mixed-income developments, can public housing families move to neighborhoods of opportunity?**

BPI's *Gautreaux* litigation was the impetus for the first efforts to provide CHA families with the chance to live in homes outside of Chicago's highly segregated, poverty-concentrated public housing developments. Pursuant to *Gautreaux* court orders, scattered site housing was built in dozens of Chicago neighborhoods and thousands of families were empowered to move to private rental housing in over one hundred suburbs.

Today CHA is acquiring new public housing units in a variety of neighborhoods and has initiated a major new program to enter into long-term leases with landlords throughout the city. BPI has helped craft the criteria for these programs, and we are participating in their implementation to ensure that access to neighborhoods of opportunity—those with low poverty rates, safe streets, good transportation, access to shopping, jobs and good schools—becomes a readily available option for CHA families.

## **Is there anything to report on prospects for families living in traditional developments—those who will remain in CHA developments that are 100 percent public housing?**

As a first step, over the past year BPI and CHA have together looked at a number of possible approaches to improve the quality of life and life opportunities for families in Altgeld Gardens, the largest (over 3,000 residents) of Chicago's traditional developments located in the far Southeast corner of the city. Through dozens of interviews with local stakeholders and community residents, BPI has explored the challenges families face and the important role of many neighborhood institutions.

We're pleased to report that CHA is now implementing new programs, including an urban farm providing over 100 Altgeld residents with summer employment and training. A research-based intensive services program with a focus on children and family case management—modeled on the program BPI helped design for Ida B. Wells and Dearborn Homes residents—is in the works.

BPI is also helping CHA forge deeper relationships with key local institutions, including Altgeld elementary schools and Carver Park. It's our hope that these efforts will grow over the next year, with an increasing emphasis on improving options for Altgeld's youth, who comprise about half of the development's population.

# Public Education

Working to bring CPS and CHA together to improve schools in Transformation Plan communities, BPI's in-depth research, interviews, and focus groups have given form to a promising new on-the-ground initiative on the Near West Side—with the potential to improve educational opportunities for thousands of Chicago public school students.

Our Partnership for Instructional Leadership Project expanded to a total of eleven CPS schools last year. The Partnership's innovative program model provides both a successful approach and coaching support to improve teaching and learning from pre-K through the upper elementary grades—with the whole school united to improve student outcomes.

On the legal side, BPI filed a groundbreaking lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Illinois' flawed education funding system, which has been ranked among the worst in the nation.

## **Now that it has completed its third year, what does the future hold for BPI's Partnership for Instructional Leadership?**

The Partnership is a BPI-supported network of CPS elementary schools in the Logan Square neighborhood (Area 4) that aims to increase student achievement by helping schools build the professional capacity necessary to initiate whole-school improvement. Based on early successes, CPS Area 4 officials decided at the end of the second year to add a new cohort of schools to the Partnership. Now, at the conclusion of Year Three, Area 4 leadership has announced plans to expand the Partnership's school improvement framework to all of its 26 schools. This fall, BPI will release an analysis of the Partnership's accomplishments and lessons learned to CPS and City officials as well members of the school policy and reform communities.

## **BPI's new project with public schools and public housing is already underway in the Roosevelt Square community. What is the principal objective of BPI's initiative at John M. Smyth Elementary School?**

Our overarching goal is to bring CPS and CHA together in a joint effort to improve the only CPS neighborhood elementary school (Smyth) in the Transformation Plan community of Roosevelt Square. BPI has long believed that good schools are essential if a mixed-income community is to be truly successful over the long run. At the same time, the lack of collaborative coordination between CPS and CHA has resulted in empty schools in some places, dwindling enrollment in others, and little attention paid to the children remaining in or moving into schools in Transformation Plan communities. In our view, this situation will not be remedied without the collaborative engagement of both CPS and CHA.

## **What progress has BPI made in its efforts at Smyth?**

BPI is working closely with CPS Chief Area Officer Dr. Jennifer Cheatham (responsible for Smyth and 24 additional schools on Chicago's Near West Side) and her planning team for improvement at Smyth School. CHA senior management is also taking an active role in the Smyth community planning process, joining Smyth's principal, select teachers, members of the Local School Council, community leaders, parents, aldermanic representatives, community service providers, early childhood experts, and Roosevelt Square's developer. Thus, at a high level, CPS and CHA are working together on

## **What are the plans for moving forward?**

The Smyth School Educational Advancement Team, essentially a community-wide school improvement planning process, has been meeting bi-weekly through June 2011 to formulate its recommendations. These recommendations will chart the way to achieving three goals:

- Improving academic performance at Smyth.
- Fostering high-quality early childhood programs both at Smyth and in the larger Roosevelt Square community.
- Increasing parent and community engagement with Smyth—a critical component of good schools.

Beyond strengthening Smyth and the Roosevelt Square community, BPI believes that catalyzing a strong working partnership between CPS and CHA as part of a community planning process for Smyth improvement has the potential to become a scalable model for improvement efforts in other Transformation Plan communities.

## **What's happening with BPI's lawsuit that challenges Illinois' school funding policy?**

In March 2010, BPI and our pro bono partner Sidley Austin filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the state's current school funding system on the grounds that it discriminates against taxpayers living in property-poor school districts. BPI believes that the state's school funding formula violates the equal protection clause of the Illinois Constitution by effectively forcing residents of economically struggling communities to pay higher property taxes for local schools than owners of homes of similar value in more affluent towns.

In January of this year, the Circuit Court of Sangamon County granted the state's motion to dismiss our lawsuit. We appealed the trial court's decision, and oral arguments for the appeal will be heard in August. Regardless of the decision, it appears likely that our case is headed to the Illinois Supreme Court. It is our hope that the Court will ultimately direct the Governor and state legislature to come up with a new formula that is fair to Illinois taxpayers and remedies the inequities of the current system.

# Affordable Housing

For years, BPI has worked to support the development and preservation of affordable housing. More recently, we've focused our efforts on developing a comprehensive approach to the foreclosure crisis. Foreclosures wreak havoc on families—uprooting households, wiping out savings, causing children to struggle in school. Foreclosures damage neighborhoods—depressing home values, weakening the tax base, and breeding crime.

In our view, a sound approach to the foreclosure crisis should have at least three components. First, we need to help people stay in their homes. Second, when properties are vacant, we need to make sure they don't cause problems for neighbors and the surrounding community. Third, when there's no market for a vacant property, we need to make sure it's in hands that will maintain it and work to return it to productive use. BPI is engaged on all three fronts.

And, thanks to BPI publications and outreach, hundreds of local government officials are now armed with effective tools to help families and neighborhoods threatened by foreclosure.

## **Is BPI doing anything to help people save their homes from foreclosure?**

In 2009-10, BPI worked closely with community groups and others to create the Circuit Court of Cook County Foreclosure Mediation Program. The program helps homeowners at risk of losing their homes work with their lenders to find alternatives to foreclosure. Since it began operating in the spring of last year, more than 30,000 people have entered the program. Of those completing the process about three-fifths have found an alternative to foreclosure.

Far too few, however, have made it through the entire process. So we're continuing to work closely with the court and key program partners to streamline the process and ensure that all participants get the help they need.

## **What is BPI doing to combat the scourge of vacant, abandoned properties? There seem to be many neighborhoods where this problem is visibly taking its toll.**

Across the state, thousands of homes have been abandoned, leaving no one to care for the property. A bank may eventually foreclose, but until then, the property is in limbo, sometimes for months, sometimes years. BPI is working on state legislation that would give local governments authority to require those with the biggest legal and financial stake in a vacant property (e.g., financial institutions) to maintain those properties and keep them safe.

BPI is also working with more than 80 municipalities in the region to help them deal with their vacant properties, providing information and assistance on how best to use the tools they currently have at their disposal.

## **Is there any opportunity to transform foreclosed homes into quality affordable housing or other community assets?**

We think there is. To date, the foreclosure crisis has reduced the supply of affordable housing with many once-affordable homes now boarded up. BPI believes these boarded-up homes may represent a future opportunity.

For instance, we're working in Lake County and in the city of Chicago to create programs that will transform vacant properties into quality rental or for-sale housing.

We are also partnering with a group of municipalities in south suburban Cook County to create a land bank—a quasi-public entity that could take ownership of some of the least desirable properties and ensure they are well-maintained.

By making such properties more marketable over time, a land bank could eventually sell to a private buyer, or to an affordable housing developer, or even transfer the property to a park district for community recreational use. Any of these options would be a decided plus for the community.

# Political Reform

Though it's the "rookie" among BPI's programs, our political reform work established itself as a high-impact component of BPI's overall agenda over the last year.

As pro bono counsel for Chicago's Inspector General, BPI filed a lawsuit to require the City to comply with its IG's subpoena requesting information essential to a no-bid contract investigation.

We also released an important new report in May 2011, *Inspectors General and Government Corruption: A Guide to Best Practices and an Assessment of Five Illinois Offices*. This IG work also contributed to new legislation that brings the RTA, Metra, CTA, and Pace under state executive-level IG jurisdiction.

Additionally, after assisting the CHANGE Illinois! Coalition to pass Illinois' first-ever campaign contribution limits law, we joined the Coalition's drive to make the law even stronger.

## **BPI has been exploring the role of inspectors general in combating government corruption. What has BPI concluded?**

After two years of in-depth research examining nationwide best practices, evaluating IG statutes and ordinances, and interviewing IGs from around the country, BPI recently published *Inspectors General and Government Corruption: A Guide to Best Practices and an Assessment of Five Illinois Offices*. The report highlights the importance of inspector general offices in the fight to combat the corrosive effects of political corruption and outlines the six critical elements we conclude are necessary for an effective IG office: independence, jurisdiction, investigatory powers, enforcement powers, complainant incentives and protections, and accountability. The report also puts five Illinois IG offices under the microscope, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and making recommendations for improvements. (For the full report, visit [www.bpichicago.org](http://www.bpichicago.org).)

## **Will BPI's report lead to any changes in Illinois governance or IG offices?**

We hope that our report will provide a model for designing and assessing IG offices throughout the state that helps them become even more effective in rooting out waste, fighting public corruption, and promoting honest and efficient government.

BPI's IG research has already had policy ramifications statewide. In the wake of a scandal involving financial misconduct at Metra, BPI supported State Senator Susan Garrett's efforts to create an Office of Inspector General for Metra and other local transit agencies. BPI provided policy research and helped draft IG legislation for Metra. In early 2011, Governor Quinn signed a law placing employees, board members, and contractors of the Regional Transportation Authority and its service boards (Metra, the Chicago Transit Authority, and Pace Suburban Bus System) under the jurisdiction of the Executive Inspector General for the Office of the Governor.

## **Has there been a decision in the lawsuit in which BPI is representing Chicago's Inspector General?**

BPI is acting as pro bono counsel for the Inspector General of the City of Chicago in its effort to require the City's Corporation Counsel to comply with a subpoena that requests confidential information needed for the Inspector General to investigate a no-bid contract awarded to an ex-top aide to former Mayor Daley.

This case has potentially far-reaching legal implications. It pits two important legal principles in opposition: the public's right to know (City Inspector General) versus the sanctity of attorney-client privilege (City Corporation Counsel).

In April 2011, the First District Appellate Court of Cook County reversed the trial court's dismissal of our lawsuit, ruling that Chicago's IG office does have the authority to enforce its subpoena and to retain private counsel. The Appellate Court remanded the case to the trial court for the limited purpose of determining if the attorney-client privilege applies in this instance.

### **What success have BPI and the CHANGE Illinois! Coalition had in reforming Illinois government?**

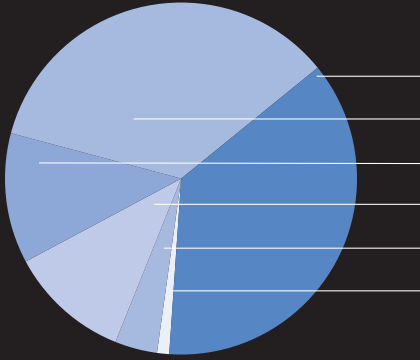
BPI has been on the Steering Committee of CHANGE Illinois! since its formation in early 2009. BPI Director Deborah Harrington is a Coalition co-chair.

Much of the focus of CHANGE Illinois! has been on enacting limits on the amount of money individuals, businesses, labor unions, political parties, and PACs can contribute to elections. Big campaign contributions by a few can out-muscle and, in effect, trample the will of the people by making candidates more beholden to big donors than to their voters.

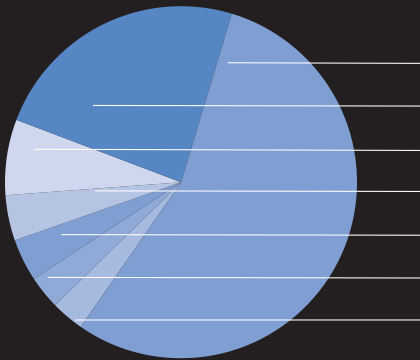
Until recently, Illinois was one of only a handful of states without any limits whatsoever. As of January 2011, this is no longer the case, thanks in large part to a relentless campaign by CHANGE Illinois!. Today, Illinois has strict limits on campaign contributions.

However, an important loophole remains: The four Illinois legislative leaders and their political parties are not subject to contribution limits in the general election. This needs to be fixed. CHANGE Illinois! is supporting new legislation to do so, but not surprisingly, it faces stiff opposition from the political leaders. Even so, we intend to keep on pressing the Illinois legislature to strengthen the law.

# 2010 Financials\*



<b>2010 Sources of Funds</b>	<b>(\$000)</b>	<b>%</b>
Foundations	865	37%
Attorneys Fees	825	35%
Individuals	279	12%
Fellowships	264	11%
From BPI Endowment Fund	92	4%
Interest   Other	17	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,342</b>	<b>100%</b>



<b>2010 Uses of Funds</b>		
Personnel	1,288	55%
To Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship Fund	550	24%
Occupancy	173	7%
To Operating Reserves	97	4%
Office Expenses	92	4%
Program Support	78	3%
Communications   Fundraising	64	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,342</b>	<b>100%</b>

● Revenue from foundations, fellowships, and individuals provided three-fifths of BPI's operating funds in 2010.

● Gautreaux attorneys' fees of \$825,000 (non-recurring) generated over one-third of revenue, of which \$550,000 was re-invested in BPI's Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellowship Fund.

\*Unaudited

# BPI Staff



*first column  
top to bottom*

**Paula Kruger**  
Technology Coordinator

**Hannah Birnbaum**  
Aizik Wolf Human Rights  
Fellow

**E. Hoy McConnell, II**  
Executive Director

**Julie Brown**  
Senior Staff Counsel

*second column  
top to bottom*

**Alex Polikoff**  
Director  
Public Housing Program

**Robbie Silverman**  
Staff Counsel  
Skadden Fellow

**Taylor Healy**  
Staff Counsel  
Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow

**Kim Zalent**  
Director  
Public Education Program

*third column  
top to bottom*

**Aya Barnea**  
Staff Counsel  
Polikoff-Gautreaux Fellow

**Betsy Lassar**  
Policy Analyst

**Susannah Levine**  
Senior Policy Analyst

**Deborah Johnson**  
Receptionist

*fourth column  
top to bottom*

**Marissa Manos**  
Administrative Director

**Ellen Elias**  
Director of Development

**Viviann Jones**  
Finance Manager

**Adam Gross**  
Director  
Affordable Housing Program

# 2010 Contributions

January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010

## Individual Contributors

### \$10,000 and above

Sheldon Baskin and Judy Wise  
Steven and Priscilla Kersten  
Robert B. Lifton and Carol Rosofsky  
Hoy and Patti McConnell

### \$5,000–\$9,999

Lucy and Peter Ascoli  
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Frances Kao  
Susan and Richard Kiphart  
Landau Family Foundation  
Frances and Elliot Lehman  
Paul Levy and Mia Park  
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Bettylu and Paul Saltzman

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Dolores Connolly and Daniel Casey  
Richard H. Driehaus  
Gary Elden and Phyllis Mandler  
Klaff Family Foundation  
Betsy and Scott Lassar  
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Cinda and Fred Axley  
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Nick and Katie Brunick  
Myron M. Cherry  
Jackie and Donnie Dann  
Scott Denman and Carolyn McGuire  
Gary and Deborah Edidin  
Anne H. Evans  
Daisy Feidt and Berenice Tow  
Malcolm and Judith Gaynor  
Paul C. Gearen  
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Merle and Barry Gross

Ronald and Audrey Grzywinski  
Harriet Hausman  
Jackie and Peter Holsten  
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Laurie and Bruce Kaden  
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Stephen V. King  
Howard Learner and Lauren Rosenthal  
Paul Lehman and Ronna Stamm  
Josh and Ricki Lowitz  
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Ronald S. Miller  
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Jerry Newton and David Weinberg  
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Lynn and Max Schrayner II  
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Lois and Harrison Steans  
Robin Steans and Leonard Gail  
Heather Steans and Leo Smith  
Kallolini and Sanjay Tailor  
Sarita Warshawsky  
Robert and Marie Weissbourd  
Brenda and Marc Wilkow

### \$500–\$999

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Vicki and John Bitner  
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Alan R. Brodie  
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Camilla Hawk Diaz-Perez  
Michael and Laura Dockterman  
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Iris Krieg and James Hardy  
Alison Liguori  
Lauren Moltz and John Clement  
Rami Nashashibi  
Wendy and Walter Nathan  
Moira and Michael Pollard  
Dede and Tom Reedy  
David S. Ruder  
Lowell E. Sachnoff  
David A. Sherman  
Roberta and Howard Siegel  
Alan and Linda Swimmer  
Thomas Thorne-Thomsen  
Nicole and James Woldenberg

### \$250–\$499

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Myles D. Berman  
Susan Campbell  
Cody and Deborah Engle  
Sunny and Paul Fischer  
Laurie and Brian Fitzpatrick  
Henry Ford and Roseanne Durril  
Harry and Jean Gottlieb  
David Grossman  
Joyce and Richard Hirsch  
Doris B. Holleb  
Craig Horwich  
Ruth P. Horwich  
Doris and Robert Jones  
Barbara and Dennis Kessler  
William J. and Catherine Kirby  
Bernard Kramer and  
Jill Weinberg  
Susan B. Larson  
Lucy and Ken Lehman  
Harriet Levine  
Abby and Jonathan Levine  
Shana Lowitz  
Paul Metzger and Sarah Bradley  
Zoe and Abner Mikva  
Erika Poethig and Ray Sendejas  
Hon. Toni Preckwinkle  
Victoria and George Ranney, Jr.  
Eugene I. Ross  
Robert A. Roth  
Anthony and Jane Rothschild  
Joan and Jim Shapiro  
James and Marybeth Stewart

George Surgeon  
Courtney and Alex Weil  
Kristine B. Westerberg  
Nadine and Richard Woldenberg  
Ann S. Wolff  
James and Katherine Zartman

### Up to \$249

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