



The **WHY THEY GIVE** POWER GIVERS

B.C. has many pressing philanthropic needs, including underfunded schools, overstuffed hospitals and myriad social problems. Meet eight prominent couples who are stepping up and giving back to the province that's made them the successes they are

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by LUCY HYSLOP

Take some 12,000 registered charities in B.C., add in a dearth of company headquarters and their accompanying larger share of charitable dollars, and it's easy to see why there are high demands on the province's individuals and smaller businesses to give. And give they do: from health care to arts, British Columbians each donated, on average, \$390 in 2012—some 44 per cent more a year than the national figure of \$270, according to Statistics Canada.

When you look at B.C. in a continental context, however, it's a different picture. The Fraser Institute's Generosity Index—measuring the percentage of tax filers contributing to charity and the amount they contributed—revealed in 2013 that B.C. ranked 51st (with New Mexico) out of 64 provinces and states, behind Vermont and just ahead of Louisiana. Some local philanthropists point to the U.S. estate tax, where a deceased person's estate is

taxed on any value above US\$5.34 million, as one reason why America's wealthy give more (Canada doesn't have an estate tax).

"I believe that if government wanted to encourage more philanthropy, a carrot-and-stick approach might work," says Michael Audain, chair of Vancouver-based developer Polygon Homes Ltd. and one of B.C.'s most significant philanthropists. "Levy a punitive death tax on, say, 75 per cent of assets but give a credit for charitable donations over the 10 preceding years."

For now, however, there are notable philanthropic powerhouses leading the way in donations and volunteering in the province. And while "The Power Givers" is not designed as an all-encompassing who's who of B.C. philanthropy, Audain and his wife, Yoshiko Karasawa—plus seven other charitable couples—show how they are cultivating a culture of giving back in the province.

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—Andrea Thomas Hill



Brian Hill + Andrea Thomas Hill

BRIAN HILL, CEO OF ARITZIA LP, AND ANDREA THOMAS HILL, FOUNDER AND CHAIR OF CAUSE WE CARE FOUNDATION

WHY THEY GIVE

“We both believe strongly in

helping others,” Brian stresses. “We believe it’s an obligation, given how fortunately we ourselves are able to live.” Whether that help is advice, money or resources, such as Aritzia’s recent Full of Heart initiative to raise

money for Cause We Care, the couple follows the approach of first helping family and those closest to them then working outwards.

Brian says his wife is “a big believer in giving back.” Andrea founded the first Run for the Cure, which raises money for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, in Toronto in 1992;

as chair, she was instrumental in taking it across the country in 1994 and sat on the CBCF B.C. chapter for five years after moving to Vancouver in 1999. Her husband explains Cause We Care emerged after observing the grim daily reality of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (Aritzia’s office is in Gastown). “The plight of single mothers living below the poverty line was a cause that really resonated with her.”

Andrea emphasizes the “staggering” statistics around child poverty—that with eight out of 10 lone-parent families in Vancouver being headed by females, 25 per cent of those are living below the poverty line. “If there is something we can do to create a brighter outcome for these families, then we want to try to do it,” she says. “For many, like us, we give for our own personal reasons. We don’t look for loud ways to publicize what we do on a personal level, and many others feel the same way. Everyone knows why it’s important to give back—if you can, you should. It’s pretty simple.” ■

THEIR CLAIM TO FAME

In 2007, set up the Vancouver-based foundation to help local single mothers and their children in need; gave \$100,000 plus to the charity’s capital campaign for YWCA Cause We Care House.