



REFLECTIONS from Marvin Schotland

Finding Gratitude Now

It's been a rather unusual experience working remotely these past few months, but like so many others, I've grown accustomed to it as we navigate through the pandemic. Because of the severity of COVID-19, I've become more sensitive to the fragility of life and have developed a much deeper sense of gratitude than ever before.

I'm grateful to lead a foundation that was able to completely pivot and redirect all of its institutional grantmaking this year — \$8.5 million in total — to our [COVID-19 Response Grants](#), as you'll read about



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in this issue of *Legacy Online*. It was only possible through the diligent work and innovative thinking of our staff, as well as the unanimous support of our dedicated Board of Trustees. This amount is in addition to the nearly \$4.5 million in grants our donors have directed to pandemic relief to date.

The Foundation's business involves constantly meeting with many people — staff members, donors, grantees, community leaders, and professional advisors, among others. Before the pandemic, we regularly hosted a variety of events and meetings. While we've attempted to replicate this experience via Zoom and our well-received [Online Donor Salon Series](#), I miss interacting with everyone in person.

I miss the camaraderie with every member of The Foundation's staff, but I'm deeply grateful for their enormous dedication to our business and their nimbleness since the pandemic began.

I miss meeting with our donors and discussing their passions, hopes, and concerns, but I am so thankful for how generously they have responded to vital needs caused by the pandemic and am grateful that so many have reached out to us to help them with all of their charitable planning needs. I miss connecting with our innovative grantees and feeling their palpable energy and enthusiasm as they endeavor to change the world for the better. Yet I feel so fortunate to watch them re-imagine their services in these most difficult circumstances.

Lastly, I'm enormously grateful for the good health and encouragement of those around me personally and professionally. For me, the silver lining of this pandemic is how family, friends, and colleagues — and our community and city — have banded together to confront this crisis.

With no end to the pandemic in sight, we all face a period of prolonged uncertainty. Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, a renowned Jewish scholar and professor at Yeshiva University in New York — and a recent speaker at our Online Donor Salon Series — observes that, when helping others during a crisis, *The act of giving is an expression of gratitude*. At The Foundation, we wholeheartedly agree. We know that the vital work we and our grantees are involved in, and our donors' generous support, will help us move toward better days ahead. ✧

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