



## INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE KWAK – OCTOBER 10, 2011

*Our State of Generosity*, a project of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy (JCP) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), and GVSU Libraries’ Special Collections & University Archives present:

An interview with Christine Kwak on October 10, 2011. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and interviewer for *Our State of Generosity*. Recorded during the Council of Michigan Foundations’ Annual Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan . This interview is part of a series in the project, *Our State of Generosity* (OSoG). OSoG is a partnership of scholars, practitioners, and funders from four institutions – the Johnson Center; CMF; MNA; and MCSC – that collectively form the backbone of the state’s philanthropic, voluntary, and nonprofit infrastructure. OSoG’s mission is to capture, preserve, analyze, and share the developments, achievements, and experience that, over a period of 40 years, made Michigan a State of Generosity.

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Abridged: The following interview has been edited to assist readability. Extraneous verbal pauses and informal personal conversation not related to the topic of Michigan philanthropy have been deleted. Footnotes to the transcript have been added clarifying any factual errors in the memory of the person interviewed.

Text of the interview questions are as asked. Individuals interviewed have had the opportunity to add or edit their answers in order to provide their most accurate answers to the questions. For these reasons, the edited transcript may not exactly reflect the recorded interview.

**Kathy Agard (KA):** You were involved with MCFYP, CMF, and the Commission...

**Christine Kwak (CK):** So MCFYP, before I even came to Michigan; I was involved through the National Youth Leadership Council and we ran the MCFYP camps together, remember? The MCFYP summer camps; CMF; I have primarily been a program officer and various subcommittees that might have come up; MNA program officer; and then the Michigan Community Service Commission – a commissioner, 6 to 7 years.

(KA): Chris, the first thing, I think, would be to help set a context around MCFYP. Let’s talk a little bit about the Michigan Community Foundations’ Youth Project. Can you talk a little bit about what was

happening [00:02:00] with the whole idea of youth empowerment and the transition to youth assets at the time and just kind of capture that point in history about what was happening.

(CK): Absolutely... I was in Minnesota when I came in touch with a movement that was popping around the country and became aware of it. I was actually in graduate school, studying to be a clinical social worker (and I will get more into this later when we talk about my journey) but I was really focusing on... I had a strong commitment to young people, but focusing on it from a clinical perspective on children with families. I was leading groups around self-esteem, children of divorce, and children from violent homes. I started noticing out in the streets that there was something happening in terms of more activity starting to build in which young people were no longer the recipients of help from adults but they were [00:03:00] beginning to stand up and become a part of the solution. In Minnesota I was involved with a group called the Twin Cities Youth Policy Forum and we began tapping into that and it was a policy forum that was focused on youth workers and youth serving organizations. We would hold forums that would bring about 200 people together, and what we noticed was that suddenly there was this flip happening around young people as actors instead of victims, young people as assets instead of needy recipients, people were focusing on assets instead of focusing on the deficits of what young people needed. I remember we had buttons, “Youth as resources,” and we began really stepping into what was happening around the country and what was the beginning of the youth service movement in the late ‘80s. It was at [00:04:00] that time that I was connected to two organizations, the Search Institute — which was led by Peter Benson — and Jim Kielsmeier, who founded the Youth Leadership Council.

It was while I was in graduate school, I led the Twin Cities Youth Policy Forum that Peter and Jim had co-created. That was when I got a sense, there was this movement — and I eventually came to work for the National Youth Leadership Council — and that was when I became aware — we thought we were progressive in Minnesota but Michigan was actually further down the road than we were as a state. That is when I ran into you, Kathy, and so many others that were not only just talking about young people as assets and resources; you were really starting to put some firm stakes into the ground around it. That was my first introduction to the Community Foundations’ Youth Project, which to me was one of the [00:05:00] stellar projects around the country because it was doing two things. One, it wasn’t just talking about young people being in the driver’s seat but it was actually giving them the power and the decision-making that comes with the distribution of resources. It was a powerful statement as to how much young people were trusted by the people here and how much responsibility they could take on. To me it was a premier, early out of the gate, stellar program that really showed the power of what young people could do.

(KA): I think the first time we met was in summer camp, Spring Hill, and I consider that to be a transitional moment in my own life, that simulation that you ran that day. Could you talk a [00:06:00] little bit about experiential learning and the power of simulation in young people helping the young people that was resource allocation?

(CK): Basically, this was an actual experiential scenario that involved real life activity that we invited participants to become a part of. We put people into various groups — actually, it’s much akin to Survivor these days, 15 years later — where we created very short-term teams who had obstacles to overcome; everything to getting across a lake with just a couple of inner tubes when you had a group of



12. At the [00:07:00] National Youth Leadership Council we firmly believed that the best way to learn something was to experience it.

Another important piece of that work then was to bring in a social justice lens. So basically, we felt very strongly in the case of the Michigan Community Foundations’ Youth Project, if young people were to be giving money away, if any of us step into the power and the privilege of distributing resources, it is really important for us to understand what the implications of that are and also what the realities are around poverty, social justice and injustices that are out there. We crafted this experiential activity and I remember some of the key parts that had to do with it were basic... Every group was always given a series of tasks in which there wasn’t enough. There weren’t enough boats, there weren’t enough inner tubes, there wasn’t enough food and much like Survivor today, [00:08:00] each group would have to figure out how they were going to deal with that lack of resources. It brought out a tremendous amount of soul-searching, a tremendous amount of tension, there were creative tensions that were intentionally put into the group; asking people to really think about the impacts of decision making. Who received, who didn’t? How did a group behave in terms of how they dealt with not enough resources? They were creative scenarios that people were put into and I think that at that time, you’re right Kathy, it really provided an opportunity for young people to not only experience something kinesthetically, it also facilitated [them] to ask a lot of questions that have to do with resources—who has, who doesn’t—and allow people to experience something that perhaps they hadn’t in terms of [00:09:00] inadequate resources.

(KA): You came to Michigan and got to know the Michigan foundations and youth projects a little bit more. Can you describe a little of your insight about those projects and the difference they may have made for young people and the State of Michigan? Both the community foundation development and youth project development.

(CK): My basic sense was the signature program at that time was the Michigan Community Foundations’ Youth Project for youth. I thought that was the strength of it, was that [00:10:00] you had one organizing principle that was used around how you would engage young people. You had principles around who would be engaged, how they would be engaged, how long. You had principles around the role of adults and their relationship to young people. I think the real strength was that there was one solid, large program that the foundations in this state, including the Kellogg Foundation, made the wise decision of resourcing well and thinking well out into the future. That was very unusual. I hadn’t seen anything like that around the country and surely hadn’t seen it in Minnesota. There could have been choices to invest in a number of different programs and I think there was great wisdom in really putting all of your values, your assumptions, and a unique program into one umbrella.

(KA): [00:11:00] From your national perspective, and maybe talking a little bit about Learning in Deed, can you talk a little bit about the role that Michigan and Michigan philanthropy has played in the whole youth service-learning movement and getting it institutionalized?

(CK): The Michigan Community Foundations’ Youth Project brought youth philanthropy to the forefront on the national and international arena. It really did. There was a lot happening around youth service back



in the late ‘80s and into the ‘90s. When I came to the foundation in 1993, we had done a lot of investing in youth service programming but we hadn’t done much in this area of youth service-learning, of young people learning their academic subject matter while they were getting deeply involved in their communities. So our team, at the time, decided this would be a [00:12:00] place that we thought had potential and we would invest more into it. So what happened, I think in terms of Michigan’s contribution, was you had this strong youth philanthropy program already and our team at the Foundation decided we would invest more squarely into service-learning. We saw it as having potential, it was perhaps lagging behind the broader youth community service movement and we thought we could make a difference. So we invested a targeted effort in an initiative called Learning in Deed in which we addressed issues of visibility around service-learning, of research, of field connectivity and collective action in the field.

I think what I saw happen in Michigan was that the Michigan Community Youth Project seized the rising knowledge and interest in service-learning and combined it with the youth philanthropy to [00:13:00] make a very powerful curriculum, Learning to Give, and again you didn’t see that kind of combo much around the country. There were a few other organizations doing it but again, not with the focus... I think we have a signature theme here, that there was a focus of really gathering resources and putting them behind one key effort. Just as the Michigan Community Foundations’ Youth Project had been a lot of energy and a lot of clarity and focus around one idea, Learning to Give became that also. And in keeping that kind of focus and the kind of momentum that was being built, I believe you made a contribution very much to the national and international fields. Now, Learning in Deed crafted this commission (led by Senator John Glenn and a bunch of other notables, governors across the country, Buffy Sainte-Marie, local [00:14:00] researchers) and I believe what we were able to do was to really bring some attention to the notion, of the potential of this notion of service-learning. I think we were also able to really put some money behind gathering researchers who were studying it, getting them to be more connected and then finally working with practitioners in the field who would be able to get more strategic about how they were educating, how they were developing curriculum, and what their own agenda was.

(KA): With these four big infrastructure organizations that have such good relationships, what is it? [00:15:00] From your perspective, why if you were giving advice to another place, about trying to build this kind of collaborative infrastructure organizations in the state.... Why do you think it works in Michigan?

(CK): I think it is a couple of different factors and it has to do with consistent leadership. Many times in other states — I have watched in the national community service movement — the states who seemed to have made the most progress were the ones whose leaders had stayed in the game, and stuck with, again, some simple ideas, and stayed with things long enough, and thought about sustainability early enough to be able to build some [00:16:00] kind of foundations that could weather the individual storms. I think we had a set of one of those perfect storms, in a good way. We had leaders who worked well together, who saw eye-to-eye well enough that they could begin thinking long-term about legacy. You don’t see that often. There is a certain appreciation for legacy in this state that I haven’t seen in other states and there is a mentality of people willing to give up some of their own personal opinions in order to unite with others,



to build some things that will outlast them. It is the good to great piece; it’s the cathedral building concept.

I think we had a phenomenal group of leaders at that time who have been cathedral builders. They have said, “We are going to do our part in laying a foundation that will outlast any one of us.” [00:17:00] It is a particular mentality and I think it is a storm of leaders, plus we were also in the height of opportunity when it came to the nonprofit sector, came to the service movement, came to the various governors. I think people were smart in this state around really being open to working with each governor, because we have switched parties over the years, but really doing that proper outreach to build strong relationships. Having the Service Commission being led by the first lady or the first gentleman was a very smart move. I think that people have been strategic here, far more strategic and connected than I have seen as a commissioner with other states across the nation.

I also want to say I think it has made a big difference to have... I don’t want to underplay the Kellogg Foundation’s role in terms of its ongoing commitment. Out of my 18 years at the foundation, [00:18:00] a good 15 of them were involved in being a program officer devoted to these kinds of infrastructure issues and I think we had a set of trustees who understood the importance of building infrastructure, who understood the importance of seizing the moment with the leadership, with the external context. We had an unusual department called Philanthropy and Volunteerism and that ongoing commitment of funding and building this infrastructure, I think, was a critical point in having this happen.

(KA): The other thing I have been impressed with was not only the money commitment but the fact that you all sat on the board – you were actually willing to get into the game, willing to roll up your sleeves with us and so can you talk a little bit about that ethic of being out in the field as well as funding.

(CK): [00:19:00] As long as I have been at the Kellogg Foundation, I have found a great wisdom from our leadership that understood that money alone is not enough and that we actually have a commitment to investing many parts of who we are into our investments and that currently plays out now. We invest financial resources, we invest human resources, we invest our connection to networks and actually I have often thought about that when I look at my history as a program officer. For me personally, a lot of it has been in spawning new networks, in gathering people together, and even now when we ask grantees, “What is the most important thing we can do for you?” Over and over and over again they say, “Get us together, bring us together. We so need to, but the press of everyday matters keeps us from connecting.” [00:20:00] I think our Foundation has held a longtime commitment to creating networks, supporting networks and then we are also increasingly committed to sharing our knowledge. We could go a lot further in this direction, we sit on a lot of knowledge but we are wanting to contribute more and more. I think the consistency of program staff who have been involved in Michigan, they brought that knowledge that we had the privilege of having view to when we sat on these boards, when we developed relationships with key players. Finally I think our reputation helped, having the Kellogg Foundation get in there and stick with this issue of the nonprofit sector, the service sector, the philanthropy sector; I think that made a big difference just hanging in there and bringing who we were and all that we represented.

[00:21:00]



(KA): What do you see has been the qualities of leadership that have been expressed by the key leaders who have helped all of these organizations to develop and talk a little bit about their use of power.

(CK): I think that, again, it was a perfect storm of a unique set of leaders, in the right places at the right time, connected to each other. It actually is just great field strategy. I don't know how intentional it was. I believe it was a way of doing things here. I believe it was a personal commitment to the players involved. It was how they got things done in Michigan and it's a testament to how much was done [00:22:00] in the last 15 years or so. So I believe that if you take a look from just my perspective, at that time our CEO was Russ Mawby, Dottie Johnson on our board, Joel Orosz leading and creating the whole Philanthropy and Volunteerism team, Kyle Caldwell, yourself Kathy Agard and the various roles that you played. Kyle has hung in there, building infrastructure in this state for a tremendous amount of time so when you take a look at...Rob Collier...some of the players that were in play when I came to the state, are still in the game and that is very impressive. They are still making things happen, every single one of you. You can't underestimate the power of commitment [00:23:00] over time.

When I have examined the investment that the Kellogg Foundation has made, having been there for as long as I have been there and I ask what has made the difference, one of the things I have come to see is that the reality of commitment over time is crucial. Foundations can't expect to make deep lasting change in two or three years. If you are serious about something, you have to really set your sights on where you are going, put some boundaries around it so you don't stray too far or get spread too thin and then stay in the game for a good 10 years before you start really seeing some changes. But the combination of leadership, people being in the right positions, at the right time, working together, and all of you—all of us, including myself as a program officer—I believe we are likeminded and we were clear about where we wanted to go. [00:24:00] When someone came up with a brilliant idea that might help move where we were at further along the lines, people lined up and supported each other and you can't underestimate that.

I also think, when you said about power, I think people...I think every single person I have mentioned was very strategic about how they used their power in order to move forward a bigger goal. A lot of times you have organizations that pull against each other around an issue because they want to create their own niche. What I saw was people in this state did a great job of getting behind one idea—and they clicked off several of them in about 15 years—getting behind one idea and pulling together around it, a bit like a team of horses versus a series of individual riders. That is quite unusual and I think it has really yielded results.

(KA): Anything else regarding [00:25:00] the history that we haven't talked about yet?

(CK): The only thing that came to me really wasn't history but it was the sense of asking a question around who is up next, and what is up next, and what is the thinking that has gone into that, really? I think it is a question that we all need to be thinking about. In doing all this phenomenal work, have we created the conditions and circumstance for the next set of leaders who are coming up to be able to gain from what was done before, to learn the wisdom of what was done before, and to act collectively the way our predecessors have [00:26:00] and our current leaders.



It is a question, I think for me, are we really reflecting the whole sector. I have been paying attention to leadership now in the state so maybe I will have an opportunity to raise this question. As I have studied leadership, we did a scan across the country taking a look at what is going on with leadership and there is a gap that I have seen. The boomers are staying in longer and perhaps the criticism from those underneath the boomers is that not enough energy has gone into really preparing, working collectively with, and thinking about rather than doing the work, but *who is going to take the mantle when I let go*. It is not an issue that is specific to Michigan, [00:27:00] but I think it is an issue that is upon us all. Anybody that cares about whatever movement you are in, it seems to be a typical oversight. So what I would challenge our state to do, in this particular subject – ask the questions of who is up next, what is up next and what can those participants, those leaders who have built what has happened – what will they do in terms of contributing to that next up.

**Susan Harrison-Wolffis (SHW):** As Kathy said, things have morphed from the [00:28:00] traditional history book to a many-pronged project and one of them we thought would be really good is to write some profiles about the leaders and people who have made things happen and that is my job and I will be asking some personal questions talking about how you got into philanthropy both as a career and as a volunteer. But why does it take 10 years to see results?

(CK): It is an observation. Just by surveying a lot of different projects, five is too little, seven is okay, but 10 is when — and I have talked to other colleagues in philanthropy — but 10 is where you start seeing more return on investment. [00:29:00] It varies, I mean I am talking about dealing with larger efforts, bigger movements, but I would even say that when we reinvested, anteed up our investment in service-learning, when we talked to a lot of the leaders in the service-learning field, many of them said it was Kellogg’s longstanding commitment to the service movement and the service-learning that really kept things moving forward, so for me it is a key ingredient. Five clearly isn’t enough, 10 is getting in closer. Hard for philanthropists to think about that... Somewhere between five and 10 is where you start seeing some impact.

(SHW): Tell us a little about yourself and why you chose philanthropy, if you did choose it, why philanthropy, [00:30:00] why social work.

(CK): I didn’t choose philanthropy, philanthropy chose me; one of those accidental wonderful experiences. I was actually a youth development professional and involved in youth camping; I was very involved in young people and the whole notion of getting young people out into nature to better understand their relationship with nature. I had an undergraduate [degree] in environmental studies, wilderness education, designed an experiential undergraduate myself where I was out in the field two out of my four years and had some very crucial, pivotal experiences around how I believe people learn. That was a backdrop for when I began running youth camps and realized that when people [00:31:00] came to my camp — they were in northern Illinois — when they came to my camps, when they unpacked their clothes, they also unpacked their lives. So I learned a lot about cutting my teeth on how important community is in terms of creating experiences for people – because it wasn’t just young people, we had families involved, we had teenagers involved – how important community is and the support of



community for people to take the risks to more deeply understand themselves, to become vulnerable and then to transform themselves. It was that backdrop that then led me...as people unpacked their suitcases and their lives, they also unpacked their problems and that was when I realized I really wanted to learn how to help people solve their problems more effectively.

I went to the University of Minnesota, decided to choose social work because I believed it was the most broad span degree. I had looked at [00:32:00] psychology degrees, counseling degrees; these were all things that taught me about how you could support people in solving the problems of their lives. I chose social work in Minnesota because I wanted a broader degree and to be in a pro-social environment. I wanted to be in a state that had very progressive social policy. That was very much to their Finnish, Norwegian roots that were brought over to Minnesota, very pro-social, very social oriented. While I was there, I started doing internships and work after my graduate degree — I was doing clinical social work with children, youth and families — I started noticing while I was leading groups with young people, again, about death in their family, violence in their family, whatever life was bringing to them... divorce, self-esteem [00:33:00] issues, adoption... I noticed that while I was sitting around talking to young people about their lives, while I was running these youth policy forums, I was watching young people who were discovering who they were by engaging with their communities. They weren't doing this in a unique...in kind of a vacuum, they were out in the community and as they were giving and getting engaged to the community, they were radically changing how they saw themselves and their community was radically changing how they saw young people. My final assessment was this was far more transformative than the groups that I was running.

So this notion of, if you allow people to get into their community — experience, engage — more transformation was possible than sitting around and talking about [00:34:00] whatever it was that was on their minds. I took a job with the National Youth Leadership Council — I realized that doing individual therapy wasn't changing things enough; I began understanding that I really was much more of a systems thinker – I didn't quite realize it but it was my beginning of understanding that — I took work for the National Youth Leadership Council where I could have a national lens. [I] ended up being hired to manage a million dollar Kellogg grant around K-12 service-learning back in 1990; and over three years I managed that grant, again learned more about community building, learning more about collective action with a group of players across the country that were very diverse... a Native American man down in New Mexico, leaders out in Boston and the Massachusetts area as well as Washington. We all came together and said what do we want to move, very similar to what Michigan was doing, leaders [00:35:00] coming together and saying what is the agenda, how can we be strategic. It was after three years of managing that grant that I got a call from Joel Orosz who said, “Would you consider putting an application in?” I found out it was Stephanie Clohesy, who I had worked with in Iowa, had just come out of the Kellogg Foundation and had put my name forward. I began my set of multiple visits to the Kellogg Foundation and then eventually was hired by Joel [Orosz], working with a small team to build this new area called the Philanthropy and Volunteerism programming area.

(SHW): What is that job?



(CK): The Kellogg Foundation has always had [00:36:00] a commitment to young people. I believe Joel and his colleagues in what was called the Youth in Education programming area started noticing this bubbling up of this service movement among young people. They began getting more requests for grants, organizations called Christmas in April, the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), the Corporation for National Service was being formed. Norm Brown, our president at the time, was asked by President George Bush Sr., to be a part of creating something called the Points of Light Foundation. So again, there were a number of confluences that were happening that was turning the Kellogg Foundation’s attention in this direction. That is often how it works – we see what is happening out in the world based on the tone or the content of the requests we are getting.

We noticed that happening around philanthropy [00:37:00] by and for communities of color. There was a period where suddenly we started getting these requests from organizations that were working on building culturally-based funds within foundations or community foundations. That was another example of *huh, what is going on here* and we started learning more about that and crafted an entire body of work now called Cultures of Giving. So Joel Orosz, I believe, after having made some grants around this youth service activity that was starting to pop up around the country, I believe he had enough conversations within the building, with leadership to bring in some more expertise [00:38:00] (myself and another program officer were hired to bring in some expertise around this area, those of us who had been working in it) and to go ahead and create a body of work in which we would be funding it. We didn’t know then that it would become a fourth leg of the foundation stool at the time but we built quite a big portfolio then, really funding a lot of these new efforts that were happening across the country.

(SHW): Is there something that happened in your own youth, in community building or community awareness that sent you out into the wilderness to begin with, the camping experience?

(CK): Yeah, there really was. My parents were quite unconventional. My mother was a school teacher and my father was a farmer, but every summer they both could step away from the farm and [00:39:00] the classroom. They would get a map and draw a big circle around the country up into Canada, a little bit down in to Mexico and we would spend a month as a family traveling around the country, seeing the world. By the time I was 12, I had been to 42 of these United States and I had been exposed to so much of the grandeur of this country. We stayed at the national parks when there weren’t very many people there and we were exposed to all kinds of educational activities. It was by being able to see our nation, and to meet so many different people, and to go into Mexico and to go into the little Mexican church, and to go up into Canada and climb up the steps of the cathedral in Montreal on our knees (because that was the local tradition). It actually, I think, built a fire in me for experiential education [00:40:00] and for understanding how crucial the wilderness and the out of doors are.

So that led me to get involved in youth camping and I think I understood how important youth experiences are. What I heard in my camps all the time, how I got into community, was that I directed these camps, I was involved with these local camps for a good seven or eight years I saw how year after year young people would come back and they would tell me over and over again, “I get to be here, who I cannot be at home.” It built a fire and a passion in me in terms of understanding how crucial these early experiences are for young people. I still have camp staff that are all connected on Facebook, campers that



connect up to these early formative experiences. I ask why are these all so formative and what I came down [00:41:00] to thinking is that it is so much about acceptance, love, community, belonging within the context of an environment like a camp. So I think it is these youth development perspectives, these youth development experiences that really shaped my commitment to making sure that we have opportunities for young people to grow and contribute with support and acceptance of community.

(SHW): It would have been so easy to just have had those experiences for yourself and kept those and not created something to show other people and that kind of gets to the comment you made about this generation not preparing the next generation for leadership. What kind of advice would you pass on, what lessons have you learned specifically from your philanthropic work [00:42:00] that you would like to pass on to the next generation of leaders...?

(CK): When I was at the Kellogg Foundation, many times we would have Jane Addams Fellows from Indiana University; many young people would come through the Kellogg Foundation and meet with us as program officers. Many times I would be asked to do informational interviews with young people in their 20s usually, who are exploring careers and it will get me back into my original story of how did I get into philanthropy. They would say, “I want to be a foundation program officer. What do I do?” I would say to them time and time again — and I just had an informational interview with another young woman probably about a month ago asking the very same thing, 25 years old, trying to find her [00:43:00] path — and my theme that I say has not changed over the last 15 years and it reflects my own experience. One is I never intended to get involved in philanthropy – it was never on my radar screen. In fact, I had hardly interacted with program officers myself. What I did take the time to do and what I was blessed with mentors, and employers, and other key influencers in my life – was that every single one of them around my path, at least I found and I held on to them, were the people who helped me find my passion. They helped reflect to me what was it, what were my gifts to give? What was I good at naturally? I think when a person can get in touch with that and stay in touch with that and shape their work life around it, there is a [00:44:00] fire and a passion that gets mixed with the experience and with the knowledge that we each gain over time. It is when you get that combination that you become a very powerful actor in the world. I think that how I got into philanthropy is I was just passionate about what I was doing and it was just fortuitous that I was in the right place, at the right time and someone to manage a Kellogg grant was needed, and I did that work, and that there was a need at the Kellogg Foundation and I said yes, we both said yes. So my advice is always do what you love, pay attention to not only your work but to the broader field of what you are engaged in and then let philanthropy find you, because it will.

(SHW): What is next for you? On your horizon?

(CK): [00:45:00] I am actually thinking very much about this leadership question and it has found its way on my plate at the Kellogg Foundation; but I have been around long enough and I am still at the Foundation so I can really bring some sense of history and long view to the issue. I think what I am passionate about is this issue of when we create something and when it is put in place, what will happen after we step away. What is our responsibility to those who are working in the younger generations, everyone who is connected, how do we gather people together to get more collective around what needs to happen and to think generationally about what will happen? I think our leaders here in Michigan



thought well about the long haul and I think I am pretty passionate about [00:46:00] how do we get people, collective enough, networked enough, and thinking not only forward but what is going to happen after each one of us steps away – how are we preparing those coming after us so that the same effort and energy and supports are there for their passions going forward?

(SHW): Anything else personal that I haven't touched on?

(CK): I would like to add, I haven't stated it directly but I think when it comes to the leadership piece and I think in my own life journey, I think what brought me to the social work perspective was that [00:47:00] I was raised in the middle class family, maybe lower middle class, we were raised on a farm, we were 90% self-sufficient. I think it was probably my Catholic upbringing as well as my parents agrarian ethic that on a farm and when you live in a rural community, it is very much a part of life that if one farmer needs help, everyone goes over and helps. It's the thinking when you talk about the Amish barn raisings, when you live in rural America that is how you survive. I think that ethic combined with the social justice lens that I received from a bunch of young radical nuns when I was in high school, has influenced me to always ask the question of who are the haves and who are the have-nots and what is the responsibility of those haves [00:48:00] to those have-nots.

I think these are crucial questions to ask as we move into what is an ongoing recession, that some have already called a depression because it is felt very unequally right now, and I think we in Michigan have a strong responsibility. We have been called the canary in the coal mine around this particular recession; and I think we could do better than we are even doing around thinking about the economy and who is it affecting and how is it affecting whom. So at the Foundation we really have placed a high emphasis on racial equity, so you ask who are the have-nots, who has and who doesn't? What are the various prejudices and institutional biases that we can sometimes take for granted, institutional racism, and [00:49:00] how do we make sure we really weave this into our consciousness as we move forward? I haven't brought that out but I think it is a crucial agenda for Michigan. I think we have a long way to go in it and I think it is our personal challenge. For those of us who continue to keep building the infrastructure, I think we need a very particular focus on weaving that into what we do.

-End of Transcript-

