



INTERVIEW WITH KARIN TICE – October 8, 2012

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 Karin Tice on October 8, 2012. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and KA for *Our State of Generosity*. Recorded at the joint conference of the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Michigan Nonprofit Association in Dearborn, 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.

Preferred citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should use the following credit line: Interview with Karin Tice, 2012. "*Our State of Generosity*," Johnson Center Philanthropy Archives of the Special Collection & University Archives, Grand Valley State University Libraries.

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): So, Karin, hello. Good morning. [Laughter]

Karin Tice (KT): Good morning.

(KA): Would you start by just kind of telling us about your general involvement with all of the projects in the Michigan philanthropic community? It's been what – twenty-five years? Three years?

(KT): Not quite that long. Over 20 years though. [Actually, it has been 25 years.]

(KA): Over 20 years, yeah. And how have you – what has been your role with all the projects?

(KT): My role has been to evaluate a wide range of initiatives. I started with the Council of Michigan Foundations, with the Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project [MCFYP] back in 1991 and have evaluated probably a good dozen or more projects for CMF; and then also with Michigan Nonprofit Association, we've evaluated a number of projects of theirs as well. I've had the opportunity really to follow in a very formative way and also to capture outcomes of a wide range [00:01:00] of the infrastructure-related projects over the years.

(KA): Did you have any idea when you took that first job what this is [laughter] going to turn into?

(KT): No idea. [Laughter]

(KA): Your life's work, right?

(KT): Right.

(KA): So, can you tell me just briefly your involvement with CMF, MNA, the Michigan Community Service Commission and the Johnson Center? If you've had a formal role with any or all of those infrastructure groups?

(KT): My role has been through FERA, which is Formative Evaluation Research Associates. I've been the lead evaluator on the Michigan Community Foundation's youth project on a number of spin-off grants that came about through that project; and then with Michigan Nonprofit Association, a number of their projects early on and even currently. For example, the Cultural Arts Alliance in Detroit and [00:02:00] also with the Dorothy Johnson Center, we've been the evaluators for their infrastructure and sustainability grant with the Kellogg Foundation.

(KA): So really everybody. You've been in the mix with the whole gang all these years, right?

(KT): Also, the Michigan Community Service Commission – I was the evaluator on the very first grant when it was first starting up and they wanted to understand how well it was working and document the model. It was innovative and new in the country.

(KA): Why don't we start with what you found out from your work about the Michigan Community Service Commission.

(KT): Kathy, I couldn't find that report. I don't remember. [Laughter]

(KA): Oh, that's the one. That's exactly what [\[obviously you\]](#) can say. Next time we talk, we'll put that [laughter] on our list. So then, MCFYP would be the next one that you have on your list [00:03:00] [\[set\]](#) that you'd like to talk about, right? Okay. So let's talk about – I'd mentioned that we talked to Jim [McHale] on Friday. We actually talked about you and [laughter] so he was remembering when we put out the RFPs that it was interesting because we had this whole internal debate about do we go with



statistics and numbers people or do we take the risk of working with a crazy anthropologist from Ann Arbor. [Laughter] Tell us about both your involvement and then also what you have learned over watching them all these years.

(KT): I remember that interview as well, Kathy. I think that most of the evaluation that was happening in the state was very quantitatively focused, and this was a very innovative project. I think you and Jim both recognized that this kind of community work is very messy and that perhaps [00:04:00] an anthropological approach would be valuable.

I started off as the lead evaluator back in 1991 and I remember going to the first summer youth leadership conference – and I'd like to talk more about that a little bit later. Some of the outcomes – I've really seen the infrastructure in the state grow both at a very local level, but also the infrastructure at the state level with the Council of Michigan Foundations being the intermediary. There's also been spin-offs at the national and international level that I can tell you a little bit more about later.[Laughter]

(KA): Okay. We'll just stop it right there. Do you want to go... where would you like to go?

(KT): I have more things to say about [outcomes].

(KA): Okay. Let's go ahead and go with it.

(KT): [00:05:00] Sure. So one of the outcomes – as I said, I evaluated a number of the different spin-off efforts – has been to really build the capacity of community foundations locally, but also of the Council of Michigan foundations as an intermediary and as an organization that could support those local organizations. It happened in all sorts of different ways when the community foundations increase their asset levels.

One of the stories that I remember putting in one of my reports was a community foundation that had very few assets and was literally keeping their receipts and their documents, paper and pencil, in a shoebox. As they grew and had a million dollars in [00:06:00] assets, that didn't work so well. That story repeated itself – not to that degree, not all community foundations were keeping their receipts in shoeboxes – but I think that's symbolic of the fact that the community foundations grew and their capacity needed to grow with them. That feedback you took to the Kellogg Foundation, as I recall... they [then] supported FIMS, which was a financial management information system for the entire state. It was a collective way to increase capacity.

Another example would be the policies and practices [capacity-building], another grant that occurred. The other example that I remember very clearly is that when we started, there was one track for training for all community foundations. [From] some of the [00:07:00] evaluation, one of the things we learned was that there needed to be multiple tracks for multiple different staff members. So you went from training and opportunities just for CEOs to opportunities for program officers, financial staff and really the wide range of community foundation staff.



The other thing I like to talk about is the youth piece. Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project did two things, Kathy. It created a pipeline of current youth leaders, and that occurred both at the local, state, national and international levels. One of the things that we found in our longitudinal study was [00:08:00] that approximately 95 percent of the young people were giving back. They were also giving of their money – which for very young people, they were giving significant amounts. I believe the average was about \$700.00, which for young people in their teens and early 20s is a lot of money. They were also serving on nonprofit boards. We did a longitudinal study and looked at them 10 years after they left MCFYP, and 26 percent were serving nonprofit boards and community foundation boards. One of the outcomes of all of the MCFYP was that the young people actually helped to change the law here in Michigan so that younger people could serve on nonprofit boards. [00:09:00] So they have done that.

In addition to a pipeline of leaders, I think of many people. I think back to that initial summer youth leadership conference, because many of the people who were there became the leadership in philanthropy throughout the state. I'm thinking of Sam Singh. I'm thinking of Jim McHale. I'm thinking of Chris Kwak, who was one of the trainers and became one of the program officers that then was involved in some of the work. Kari Pardoe, who was, I believe, 14 when she started on the Michigan Community Foundations' statewide board and she's now the Learning to Give [00:10:00] director, which is pretty impressive.

There've been young people who are taking leadership positions in their communities. Some young people actually started youth philanthropy initiatives in other places in the country. They wanted to continue to be involved. They went to their community foundation and found that there were no opportunities for young people to be engaged, so they created them. That's been true for a number of people across the country.

(KA): How many people are you still following here?

(KT): We're not currently following the young people. No, I think that would be an incredible opportunity.

(KA): Yeah. We should ask Jim again for some money to do that. It would be nice to circle back and pick someone and [00:11:00] because I think you did that once, five years ago? Ten years ago?

(KT): In 2003, we followed them...

(KA): For – did you have [\[Crosstalk\]](#)?

(KT): ... we followed them for a period of 10 years. The last look was in 2003.

(KA): In 2003. Gotcha, yeah. You came in to this field pretty cold. Were you surprised by what you found over the years?



(KT): I was. You know, I remember the first evaluation design workshop and we asked – and you were one of the people in the room – to think and write down “In your wildest dreams, what would success look like?” I actually found those papers a couple of years ago, I’ll have to look for them again. Even in your wildest dreams, you had no ability to imagine the ripples and the effects that this initiative would [00:12:00] have throughout the state, but also throughout the world. One of the things I haven’t talked about yet is the fact that I think MCFYP really started a paradigm shift in how young people were viewed in the state. When MCFYP started, young people – and this was part of a larger movement, it wasn’t just MCFYP – were really viewed as problems to be solved.

What MCFYP did was to put resources into young people’s hands and give them an opportunity to be assets and to develop, create positive change in their communities. I think that was profound. For example, we did case studies in a number of [00:13:00] different communities (in the Upper Peninsula, in Battle Creek, in Ann Arbor) and we asked people not just in the community foundations, but out in the community what changes they were seeing.

The board members early on, and some of the community people, were very skeptical about young people having money to give away, to grant. They were worried they were just going to fund parties and basketball events. What they found was they were taking on very serious issues like teen suicide, dating, sex, issues that adults weren’t willing to look at. The young people were willing to at least open them, discuss them and engage with them. [00:14:00] I remember in one community, people said that before the youth council started, nobody engaged young people in decisions in any of the youth-serving organizations. Now, nobody would take a single step without engaging young people. That’s significant, and that’s happened throughout the state in many communities. Maybe to a lesser degree in some, but the fact that there’s that shift is pretty profound.

(KA): You’re one of the few people, Karin, who got inside the youth committees when they were meeting, and I think the young people trusted you. Can you tell us a little bit about what it was like to be a grown up at one of the youth committees maybe early on when they were trying to figure all this out?

(KT): It was interesting. The dynamic between youth and adults really started to shift in those committees [00:15:00]. I remember early on, the initial model was 50/50 – half adults, half youth – and that didn’t work very well. Adults were on a learning curve; they needed to learn to listen, to step back. I can remember community foundation program officers really grappling and struggling with *what does that mean? How do I be an adult, and yet let the youth lead?* It was an interesting dance between the adults learning to step back and the youth learning to step up. Both needed to happen.

I remember one story of a youth council that did not feel like the adults were being listened to and wrote a very strong letter to [laughter] their youth advisor. I interviewed him and I remember he [said he] was [00:16:00] trembling. He wasn’t someone who interacted with youth; He didn’t have any kids of his own. Finally, he thought, “Well, I better just go talk to them.” They sat down, and they had this wonderfully rich discussion and really talked openly and honestly. I was impressed with the risk taking both on adults’ part and also on youth’s part to talk and engage.



(KA): Before we leave this topic, was there anything else about the summer camp that you wanted to mention? I talked both with Chris and with Jim about it. For me, that camp was really a life-changing experience because it was so emotionally powerful. I don't know if you remember the onion and the [laughter] – you know, they ran a whole bunch of simulations, the National Youth Leadership Council. What are your recollections of going to summer camp the first time?

(KT): One of the things [00:17:00] I remember very clearly was getting into various watercraft – from canoe with paddles, to a canoe without paddles, to a rubber tube. People were divided up into groups, and then we had to go through this whole simulation where, in essence, there were people who had and people who did not have. It was very powerful for everybody involved, and to have that sort of shared experience created relationships that continue...

(KA): I remember Rob [Collier] bouncing around inside of one inner tube. He was in the have-not group for that particular one. [Laughter] So let's finish with MCFYP. What else is really important to get on the record about MCFYP? It's been your longest running project.

(KT): Yes.

(KA): Probably it was the fundamental one that's underneath everything else. [00:18:00]

(KT): Do you want me to talk about – are we going to talk about why it was successful?

(KA): Yeah, why don't you? This would be a good time.

(KT): This would be?

(KA): Yeah.

(KT): And do you want me to talk about the spin-offs?

(KA): Yes.

(KT): Okay.

(KA): You can also – we have the time to do that...

(KT): All right.

(KA): ...because I'm going to shift topics.

(KT): Okay.



(KA): So, Karin, why don't you talk about the success of MCFYP [laughter] and what the spin-offs have been?

(KT): For the youth piece, the spin-offs have been amazing, just amazing. One of the things that happened through MCFYP was there was a lot of attention paid to and dissemination of what was being learned. Between Rob and young people going out to speak – they spoke all over the country. The Michigan Summer Youth Leadership Conference invited [00:19:00] people in who were curious and wanted to learn more about this whole model. Kellogg funded evaluation, and it was used really throughout the process both as a learning tool, but also to document the outcomes and to share those. I published many reports documenting the model, the outcomes and what we learned.

In 2003, there were 30 other states that had youth philanthropy initiatives. There are at least a dozen countries – and probably more by now, because every time I talk to people from around [00:20:00] the world I keep hearing, “Oh, we've started the youth philanthropy initiative in our – and we read your report.” It's really amazing. From South Africa, to Northern Ireland, to Australia – the entire country of Australia has youth philanthropy initiatives. As does Canada, all the community foundations in Canada are engaging young people in philanthropy.

(KA): And other successes or other...

(KT): Other spin-offs? I think the community foundation leadership has had a huge impact nationally and even globally, I would say, on the community foundation movement. Things like [00:21:00] Michigan Ventures, which supported the engagement of professional advisors in community foundations and developed a whole series of materials. Those [materials] were shared around the country with other community foundations that didn't have a Kellogg to support that work. Michigan took a very lead role in developing standards for community foundations nationally and was very involved. Donnell Mersereau spent a lot of time internationally and served on Wings, which was the international umbrella organization for foundations. There was a whole subgroup for community foundations. So Michigan has really been involved at all sorts of levels.

And one of the reasons I think [00:22:00] that was so successful, Kathy, was because they came not with a model and not with a set of rules for implementing a model, but more with an openness to share the guiding principles and to say, “Here's what we've learned. It may not work where you are. You're going to have to figure out how it looks in your context, but here's what we did. Here's what we learned. Some of it, we did well. Some of it, we didn't do so well.” But a real willingness to share very honestly and openly, maybe not everything, [laughter] but most of the things that we had learned.

The Global Fund for Community Foundations was not a direct spin-off, but an indirect spin-off. I was actually the evaluator for that initiative, as well as Wings. [00:23:00] Another key project that I haven't yet mentioned is Learning to Give. That was a huge spin-off recognizing that if young people are going to become engaged in philanthropy, they need to start earlier. They need to start in elementary school and start to learn about those principles, learn what a nonprofit is, and learn what a foundation is.



(KA): Yeah, good. I want to shift them and ask you (because you're kind of headed down this road) – this isn't the only evaluation work that you all do, so you've been involved with lots of other projects as well. I'm curious about trying to get at the nature of leadership or the culture that has been established in Michigan, how that has happened, if it can be replicated, what it looks like, what the behaviors look like. You've been in this really [00:24:00] amiable position and that you have been both outside of it and that you didn't have program management responsibility, but you have also been inside it so you also know all the characters and relationships. Can you talk a little bit about the nature of the leadership in Michigan? I'm thinking Russ and Dottie and Rob – you know, the whole gang that has been involved over the last 20 years.

(KT): I think one of the great gifts all of those people have brought to the state is the ability to make other people feel important and engaged. I know this has certainly been true for me, personally. There is a belief that you can do it and also an expectation that you will do it. Both, I think, are important.

One of my favorite stories that I think really speaks to [00:25:00] the leadership and the servant leadership in the state is – I was at a conference, huge conference room. There was a panel of funders. Rob Collier was at the front of the room with a very distinguished group. It was three in the afternoon, people were tired and fading. The hotel staff brought in huge trays of freshly-baked cookies [laughter] in the back of the room. Well, people were too polite to get up and go to those cookies, but you could tell [laughter] everybody was smelling them and wanting them. So Rob said, "It's cookie time." Now, he could have asked the hotel staff to pass around the cookies or he could have invited people to get up and get the cookies; but what he did was he walked to the back of the room, he picked up the tray and he served every single person in that room.

I think that really speaks [00:26:00] to the leadership and the fact that leaders modeled rolling up their sleeves and doing the work. They spent – I remember you spending hours on the road and Rob and Dottie going to communities, sitting down with people at kitchen tables or in Dunkin' Donuts or wherever you could meet and really talking with people and understanding their communities. That's very different than being a positional leader and coming in and telling people what to do. There was a real spirit of engaging people in the work and also that everybody was important, everybody had a role to play. I think that was something that was very special in Michigan.

(KA): [00:27:00] Do you think that it has helped in the relationships between these four big infrastructure organizations? Why do you think that we're not at war with each other? The natural inclination of the positional leader is to take their job and build it as big as they possibly can. People here tend to sort of look out after each other. What do you think is happening there that the Commission and, you know, the CMF and the Center...?

(KT): I think there's a willingness to sit down and have some difficult conversations, as well as to have some fun together. I mean, you all really enjoyed each other, [laughter] but I also remember you having some difficult conversations and being willing to disagree and to figure out where to go with the work. I'm thinking particularly of Michigan Cares which involved Council of Michigan Foundations, [00:28:00] Michigan Nonprofit Association, community foundations, United Ways and Volunteer Centers, as well as



the funder, Kellogg. I remember one day very clearly, we were all in a room together. Chris Kwak was in the room as the funder, which was not usual. People were talking about what they were learning in their communities, and one community was having a terrible time and they said so. They said to Chris, “You know, I wonder if we should even give the money back because we just can’t seem to talk to each other in our community.” I thought Chris was very insightful. She said, “You know, change takes times. Give it a little more time. Stay with it.” That community turned out to be the one community that made the biggest leap, but it took [00:29:00] them a while because they had to work through some issues.

(KA): You’re speaking to one of the areas that I’ve also been interested in, and that’s the fact that a lot of the people we’ve been talking to have played multiple roles. Sometimes they’re board members, sometimes they’re the staff members, sometimes they’re the funders, and sometimes they’re delivering the cookies. Have you observed some of that, and can you comment about how people have managed these multiple hats?

(KT): I think that people have been able to manage the multiple hats because of the real authenticity of the relationships. It’s true, people have moved around to different roles, and I think those relationships and that networking and that ability to see things from different angles [00:30:00] has been a real plus. One of the things that I think both the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Michigan Nonprofit Association have done really well over the years is provide opportunities for networking and for people to share with each other – share their knowledge with each other and their frustrations – just to share and get to know each other and the work in each other’s communities. That doesn’t always happen at conferences and such.

(KA): If you were coaching another state or a young person going into the field, what would you take from what you have learned in watching them being part of all of this that you might say, “Okay. Here are the three things that you could do if you wanted to try to move down Michigan’s road as a model or here are the three skills that you need to have as a leader?”

(KT): Are you talking about leaders or...

(KA): Yeah.

(KT): ...or are you talking about developing a model or...?

(KA): I’m talking really about what an individual in another state might [00:31:00] be able to take out of this and say, “Okay. I need to have coffee with people or I need...” You know, what specific kinds of things could people do in other states who may not be living in the same kind of cooperative model? It’s a trick question, Karin. [Laughter] I just went down this road myself.

(KT): No.

(KA): Yeah.



(KT): A couple of things come to mind. One is to work across silos, which I think the state has done, is still working towards, and continues to grapple with. It's not always easy to work across silos. Another thing would be to sit [00:32:00] down with people in the community and have a cup of coffee, get to know them... talk to them. I think a third thing would be to recognize that everybody has something to bring to the table – I'd like to tell you a story. [Laughter]

This story is from my perspective as an anthropologist and also speaks to the next question. I remember being at the very first MCFYP-CMF conference where young people were invited to attend. I remember being in a room with a circle of people; Jim McHale was leading the session. Most of the people at the conference, except for the young people, were older white men – [00:33:00] very well-dressed, very distinguished, all in suits. Jim asked people to stand in a circle and he started one of his youth [laughter] dancing icebreakers. I remember the look on those men's faces. There was this moment of hesitation and silence because it was definitely not the culture that they were accustomed to at a CMF conference. Then I remember somebody kicking their foot forward, and smiles spreading across faces and people starting to dance and enjoy themselves. That, I think, was a turning point for this state in terms of the culture of philanthropy. And I look now, I think about philanthropy, I think about the Center for [00:34:00] Arab American Philanthropy that did not exist back then, I think of CMF conferences. A good example is when MNA and CMF combined their conferences – grantmakers, grantseekers.

So, a bringing together of groups across different silos. At the conferences – you see men, you see women, you see people of different colors, racial and ethnic backgrounds, you see young people and old people. There's been a real shift. I think to the extent that people can, invite others who are not usually at the table. That would be a piece of advice I would give.

(KA): Thanks. So with our time that we have left – we have about only 15, 20 minutes and we have a lot of ground to cover. I do want to invite you back...

(KT): Yeah.

(KA): How about if we go this direction? How about if I asked you what else [00:35:00] you want to make sure to share, if you have any other stories? And then I want you to talk a little bit about your own history.

(KT): Okay.

(KA): So let's start with what else – when you were thinking about coming in today, what else did you want to make sure that we get into the mix, knowing that we'll meet again to talk about some of the specifics? But what would be really tragic if we didn't capture from your experience with all of this?

(KT): I might need about 10 minutes to... [Laughter]

(KA): That's all right. We got...



(KT): ...review my notes. [Laughter]

(KA): So yeah. [Laughter] Because you have lots there, right?

(KT): I think the shift that I just talked about from philanthropy as exclusive kind of milieu to something that's inclusive, that's accessible to people in communities, that people can be part of. Certainly, the community [00:36:00] foundation model lends itself to engaging people in the communities. I think there's more work to still be done in that area, but now we have an infrastructure. There's no county here in Michigan that does not have a community foundation to support it and to be a vehicle for people to give back to their communities. I'm seeing all sorts of very creative funding models that are spinning off of that. There's one in Ann Arbor where they have joined together – the United Way, county government and the community foundation – to try and move the indicators for young people and elders in the community. So that would be one thing.

[00:37:00] The partnerships between the nonprofit sector and philanthropy I think is another thing that has been very key in the state. I believe leadership has been fairly intentional about creating opportunities for funders, for nonprofits and even for evaluators. I remember a conference that was joint between CMF, MNA and the Michigan Association for Evaluation. That's starting to play out in Battle Creek as well right now, where multiple groups are coming to the table to grapple with issues. The other thing I want to make sure and say – this conference focuses on collective impact. Our keynote speaker is going to be talking about it. I think MCFYP and that early work, and the work in the state around philanthropy [00:38:00] has really focused on collective impact, even before it was a buzz word or a term that people were talking about. The idea that *it wasn't about your organization, it wasn't about you*, it was about *trying to move and create positive social change and high quality living conditions for all people in the state*. Michigan has been very challenged [laughter] in that area, but the leadership in the state has never ceased to look at the possibilities instead of just the problems.

(KA): One of the things I'm writing about is that there, to me, is a sense of sort of fearlessness and – and *a it's never been done before, so why not*. It's like, *it's never been done before. So what? So, you know, we'll just go do it*. [Laughter]

(KT): So we better start, [laughter] and we better start now.

(KA): That's a true [00:39:00] reflection, you think, on the state?

(KT): Absolutely. And it goes to what I was saying before. There's an expectation on the part of the leadership [laughter] in the state that not only we can do it, but we will, and that you can be involved and you better start now.

(KA): Yeah, right. Get it done [Laughter]. Good, good. So then let's move a little bit to your stories because I want to capture that while I have you here alone (and with Peter and Karl). [Laughter] So tell us – Bob Payton is the one who coined the phrase Philanthropic Biography. So what I really want to get at is, you know, who you are. You came at the work as an evaluator – you wandered into the field. So much



for the rest of us, you know, we all just sort of wandered in from somewhere else. So tell us a little bit about your personal background and then a little bit about how you came to this work and why you're not bored and, you know, what does it mean to you?

(KT): I remember [00:40:00] when I was a child, we used to go visit my great aunties in Chicago with my grandparents. My family has Brethren roots – the Brethren are very focused on service. As a child, we used to drive to the wealthiest neighborhoods and the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago. All during this ride, there would be this ongoing conversation about politics, about social issues, about the inequities between the wealthy and the poor and what needed to happen to change that – and I thought everyone did that. [Laughter]

(KA): [Laughter] Surprise?

(KT): Surprise. So my father worked at the World Council of Churches. We lived in Switzerland for many years (about five years when [00:41:00] I was a child), so I think that has shaped my understanding of the world. I was an undergraduate in Friends World College, which is an international, experimental university. You take social problems as the basis for your curriculum, and you work with nonprofits, in essence, or grassroots groups that are working on those issues in alternative, experimental ways.

So I've been interested in community development for a long time, I've been interested in social change for a long time. I spent many years in Central America, both in Guatemala, Panama, and Mexico. One of my connections happened a few years back. When I was 14, I was on an exchange program [00:42:00] and I went to Oaxaca, to a very small tiny town and lived with a family. I didn't know any Spanish and they didn't know any English.

Why I'm telling you that is many years later, I had an opportunity to go back and do a case study of the Oaxaca Community Foundation through the International Youth Foundation Evaluation that FERA was doing at that time. To be able to go back – my life just circled around – and give something back professionally to a community that had given me so much as a young person was quite something.

Another connection that I didn't make until fairly recently is [that] as a young person, I received one of the NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] youth grants. I wrote a proposal, went through the whole process and become a grantee. [00:43:00] So I guess I was involved in youth philanthropy fairly early on.

My background is in anthropology. I got my PhD from Colombia, and lived in New York City for many years and then came back to Michigan, which is home – Michigan is home.

(KA): Did you remember making the decision to go into anthropology? How did you – why did it call your heart?

(KT): When I was in Latin America, I had thought about being a doctor. I was interested in medicine and actually worked with a barefoot doctors program there. What I realized was that you could give kids all



the medicine in the world, but if they were going back to the same social conditions (if their families didn't have enough land to feed them and they [00:44:00] didn't have the proper nutrition), nothing was going to change. What I realized is that applied anthropology and evaluation, too, are really vehicles to further social change and to start addressing some of those conditions. That spoke to me, and I realized that that was I'd been interested in all along.

(KA): So you have a name for it.

(KT): I had a name for it.

(KA): So you have children.

(KT): I do.

(KA): Have you tried to pass on this tradition? And if so, how have you tried to do that?

(KT): I started early. I brought my daughter, Katherine, when she was three months old to the first Summer Youth Leadership [laughter] Conference and actually involved her in a number of MCFYP events as she was growing up. We've [00:45:00] spent time as a family volunteering; we worked on developing a children's wet meadow. My kids were very involved as very young leaders, starting in preschool and [laughter] taking on increasing responsibility as they've grown up. I'm happy to say that my daughter is now interested in [the] nonprofit sector, particularly in Latin American studies. She's going to be looking at immigration issues on the border this spring.

(KA): She's in college now?

(KT): She's in college.

(KA): Okay. Interesting. Good, good.

(KT): Yeah. And my son is in engineering. He's just starting; he's a freshman at U of M. He's interested, too – I took him to Guatemala last February with the Appropriate Technology Collaborative. So now, [00:46:00] he's excited about not just engineering, but about using it for social good and creating solutions for people who don't have access to many of the things that we have the privilege to have access to.

(KA): So anything else that you want to make sure we've – we need to wind down now because of the change – but anything else you want to make sure that we get on the record that has come to you while you're talking about your background? It's been quite a ride, isn't it? Did you have any idea [laughter] when you started this?

(KT): No. [Laughter] I did not know what a community foundation was when I began this work in [laughter] 1991 and now, as I drive through the state, I can tell you stories about every community I pass.



I know the people, I know the history. I guess [00:47:00] the investment both in terms of – I want to just say that the investment of not just money, but also knowledge and social capital have created an infrastructure that's sustainable.

You have endowed resources in all the communities in Michigan and you have youth-endowed resources. So it's not just an initiative. It's a sustainable initiative, and it really puts resources in the hands of young people and in the hands of community members that they didn't have before. It creates an infrastructure for people to work together in their communities to create positive, social change.

(KA): Super. Thank you. We could go on for days and I think we should. I mean, I actually think we need to get you back. Next time you're in town, [00:48:00] we'll make sure to – and maybe another hour or so.

(KT): Okay.

(KA): And as you're thinking about this on your drive home, think about what you want to make sure that we capture next time too.

(KT): Okay.

(KA): You're just one of those people like Russ and Dottie that have seen it all. It's not that you have a narrow view. You have depth on all of it and – yeah.

(KT): It was really quite a challenge and, you know, I feel like I bounced around a bit, but...

(KA): No. We're going to take clips from it.

(KT): ...there were so many different levels I could have spoken to and...

(KA): Right.

(KT): ...you know, I'd...

(KA): We'll – we'll get at those. Luckily, we've got a couple of years. So... Okay.

(KT): Okay.

