

Works of Wonder



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Legacy of Caring

When Eddie Thompson talks about philanthropy – the love of people – on this page, surely he could have Dr. V. R. Alla in mind. Let me tell you his story.



Berlinda
Tyler-Jamison

When Dr. Alla came to the Quad-Cities nearly 30 years ago – fresh out of medical school and full of desire to help people – he remembers being welcomed into the area with open arms. The Quad-City community needed a nephrologist committed to dialysis patients who rely on machines to clean their blood so they can live. The community supported him, and in turn, Dr. Alla supported the community.

How? By providing patients of the Quad City Kidney Center with the latest technology and equipment to support their comfort and quality of life. By creating a warm family atmosphere for patients who must spend three to four hours a day, three times a week, hooked up to the machines. By holding annual picnics for his patients and his patients' families, which his own entire family, most of whom work at the Center, also attend.

Additionally, Dr. Alla responded to a critical need. When it became apparent that some of his patients were choosing to shorten their lives by not going on dialysis, Dr. Alla asked them why. They said that the commute – up to two hours, round-trip – put too great a burden on family members who not only had to drive them, but also wait for the lengthy treatments to be completed, three times a week. So Dr. Alla began establishing clinics in outlying communities. Today, eight Kidney Center clinics serve patients within a 60-mile radius.

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Three generations of Allas, including patriarch Dr. V. R. Alla and grandson Rishik (center), gather at Trinity College to present \$500,000 to the Foundation. When asked why they chose to make such a generous gift, the family agreed: they want to help care for the Quad-Cities well into the future. Read more in Berlinda's letter at left!

Exploring the Passion to Help

Ask Eddie Thompson, estate planner for Trinity Health Foundation and CEO of Thompson & Associates, Nashville, why he cares so deeply about philanthropy. He'll push back from the table, shift his weight and sigh. It's not that he doesn't want to talk about it, but it's hard, and he's bracing himself.

"My reasons for caring as I do have changed," Eddie says. He looks like a linebacker with thinning hair and wire rim glasses. His voice is low.

"Three years ago, we lost our only grandson (in Nashville, Tenn.)," he says. "Elijah had a genetic defect that was undetected, and went from playing normally during breakfast – we were at McDonald's – to dying 12 hours later. We were stunned. He was only nine months old."

The need to give

Eddie says Elijah's death changed his thinking about why people give. The reasons are complicated, he says, and particular to each person, but include a component of need. That is, *we need to give.*

"We were so grateful to the hospital staff for their compassion that we needed to somehow thank them," Eddie says. "We tried to give them a gift in Elijah's memory, but their response was, 'We were just doing our job.' I thought about that for a long time afterwards. Yes, they were doing their job, but we had a need to give back to them."



Eddie Thompson

Eddie and his family ultimately decided to make a significant donation to the foundations of Iowa Health System affiliates, including Trinity Health Foundation, in Elijah's memory, and feel good about that. Elijah's life will mean something to people beyond those who knew and loved him.

Love is the key

If you look up "philanthropy" in the dictionary, you'll find it comes from the Greek *phil* (to love) and *anthropos* (human being): love of people. Eddie says we learn – and teach – that lesson at home.

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Berlinda cont'd.

As the next generation of Allas begin to take their place at the Center (Rakesh is the chief operating officer, Rajesh is a nephrologist, and Suresh will return when he completes his nephrology residency in three years), it's clear that the caring with which the Center was founded will live on.

Indeed, the Alla family guaranteed their legacy of caring when they gathered on October 17, 2008, at Trinity College to present the Foundation with a \$500,000 gift for nursing and community education.

This is a transformational gift that will support the Quad-City community in perpetuity. And it came from the bottom of every Alla heart. You hear that when you listen to Dr. Alla talk about his patients. Because to him, they aren't "just patients." They're extended family, and the love among them is mutual. And that love – the love that Eddie talks about in the story to the right – is what led the Alla family to commit such a prodigious act of philanthropy.

We will feature more on the Alla family in our Annual Report. In the meantime, if you see them, please add your voice to the Trinity family by saying, "Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts."

Blessings,

Berlinda Tyler-Jamison, President

Reflection on uncertain times

Times are tough, but they're not uncommon. Since 1929, there have been 16 bear markets – including the one we're in. A bear market is defined as major stock index drop of 20 percent or more during a one-year period.

Bear markets generally last about 15 months and the average decline on the S&P is usually 33.5 percent according to InvesTech.

Remember, every bear market has experienced a recovery!

- Frank Stepp,
Thompson & Associates

Passion cont'd.

"I watched my dad mow the lawns of people who couldn't mow their own every week," he says. "And he used to buy up old bikes, fix them and take them to the kids at an orphanage eight hours from home. He taught me love in action. That's what my family did following our own tragedy. We responded with love, in the tradition of the Trinity Health Foundation's family of donors. It's all about love."

Today's realities

Although everyone is concerned about the economy, ironically, this may be the greatest opportunity in a decade to transfer assets to heirs, Eddie notes.

"Current interest rates and federal discount rates are tremendously favorable to this shifting right now," Eddie says. "Another excellent option that many people don't know about concerns their social capital (money that has to be used by society for the good of society – it will be collected as a tax unless otherwise specified). It should be redirected, before death, to charities instead of the IRS. That way, you keep the money at home in your own community, working for the programs you value. Doing this provides an excellent tax advantage to your estate and your heirs as well."

Eddie says he hasn't seen a change in charitable intentions as far as estate gifts go, despite the economic uncertainty of the past few months.

"I've recently completed 95 meetings with donors, and only one person said the economy was changing his charitable intention," Eddie says. "Remember, people don't give because they have money. They give because they have values. Our donors know this is a short-term situation, and they know the need for donations is ever higher in health care. People need help."

Trinity's Disco Ball



Michael Freda



Cheri and Gerry
Bustos



Mary and Roy Lagerblade

Dance fever hit downtown Davenport on Nov. 1, at our first annual Disco Ball. Go-go boots, big hair, paisley tops and disco tunes made it a night to remember!