Creating a Culture of Philanthropy

**Moderator:** Barbara Gross, Founder & Principal of BDG Consulting, LLC  
**Panelist:** Alyson Molloy Hussey, Director of Development, Silver Lining Mentoring  
**Panelist:** Susan Musinsky, Executive Director, Social Innovation Forum  
**Panelist:** Susan Lewis Solomont, Senior Advisor, The Philanthropic Initiative

What’s the ‘special sauce’ in creating a culture of philanthropy? Organizations with successful cultures of philanthropy make it a values-based strategic priority with fully engaged staff and board leadership. This all-hands-on-deck commitment is much more than the job of the development team. Our experienced, insightful panelists will share how cultures of philanthropy thrive and are compelling, relevant and celebrated by everyone within an organization. Audience participation will be encouraged in this session.

You’ll learn:

- How to engage your entire organization in creating a culture of philanthropy
- Roles/responsibilities/advantages to having non-development staff involved and fully integrated into building a philanthropic culture
- Whether large or small shop, what’s the long-term benefit of a philanthropic culture

**Topic:** Campaign/Major Gifts/Donor Relations

**Bios:**

Barbara Gross is the Founder & Principal of BDG Consulting, LLC, a firm specializing in development counsel to non-profits, especially those seeking more robust engagement and support from donors with significant philanthropic potential. Drawing on a 25-year career as a major/principal gifts fund raiser and strategist with some of the Boston area’s leading institutions, including Wellesley College, Phillips Academy/Andover, and Facing History & Ourselves, she has a well-earned reputation for providing the critical thinking, fresh ideas, and perspective necessary to build successful, sustainable development programs. Barbara coaches and supports clients to adapt a ‘big picture’ view, with a practical problem-solving approach and the right tools to be successful. She holds a B.A. from Bowdoin College, and is active with Women’s Lunch Place, The Philanthropy Connection and the Pan-Mass Challenge.

Alyson Molloy Hussey is the Director of Development for Silver Lining Mentoring, the only mentoring organization in the Commonwealth focused exclusively on the unique needs of young people impacted by the foster care system. Alyson is Silver Lining Mentoring’s first Director of Development and has helped to more than double revenue since she started in 2013. Previously, Alyson was a non-profit consultant with ESC New England and the Director of Development for the Hattie B. Cooper Community Center in Roxbury. She has also taught Resource Development for Non-Profits at Wheelock College’s graduate program of Organizational Leadership. She holds a B.A. from Providence College and a J.D. from California Western School of Law.
Susan Musinsky is Executive Director at Social Innovation Forum. With a wealth of experience in the nonprofit sector, Susan joined Root Cause in 2005 as Director of the Social Innovation Forum (SIF). In 2015, after 10 years of helping to grow SIF into a well-recognized and highly respected program, Susan co-led the spin-off of the program into an independent organization. In the newly formed entity, Susan works with investors (individuals and foundations) and nonprofit and for-profit social entrepreneurs to accelerate solutions to critical social problems. Among other experiences, Susan was Executive Director of the National Conference for Community and Justice's (NCCJ) Boston office, which grew threefold under her leadership. She has participated on many local boards, including serving as past chair of Congregation Beth El's Tzedakah Hevra group, and as a 10-year founding member of the Watertown Community Foundation’s Board of Directors. Susan thoroughly enjoys building community and connecting people, and her vision is to build a powerful network where funders and practitioners work together toward social change. Through her work, Susan has shown that social impact and social change do happen from creating purposeful, mission-focused communities.

Susan Lewis Solomont is Senior Advisor at The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI). She recently moved back to the United States after living in Madrid, Spain with her husband, Alan D. Solomont, the United States ambassador to Spain and Andorra (2009-2013). While in Madrid, she chaired the Women’s Leadership Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce and created the Women’s Leadership Network, a series that helped to shine a light on the role of women in Spain in areas such as entrepreneurship, social media, marketing, and corporate social responsibility. Solomont also chaired the U.S. Embassy’s Volunteers in Action program and is a member of the board of advisors for the Spain Start-up and Investor Summit. Prior to moving to Madrid in 2010, Solomont was a senior philanthropic advisor at The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI), a nonprofit consulting firm based in Boston that advises individuals, family foundations, and corporations on how to design philanthropic programs to create meaning and impact. During her more than 10 years at TPI, Solomont’s work focused on creating entrepreneurial and strategic approaches to private philanthropy, enabling corporate clients to develop new approaches to corporate civic engagement, and developing thoughtful, results-oriented approaches to charitable giving and community engagement. Before joining TPI, Solomont had an independent consulting company that worked with nonprofit organizations on issues such as governance, board relations, capacity building, and sustainability strategies. Earlier in her career, Solomont worked as director of corporate development for WGBH, the nation’s premier public broadcasting station, where she successfully raised more than $35 million annually for WGBH’s signature TV and radio programs. Committed to be an active citizen in the community in which she lives, Solomont has been a board member and lay leader of many institutions, including the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, the New England Aquarium (board chair, 1999-2004), the Women’s Health Initiative at Boston Medical Center (co-chair, 2006-2009), Newton Wellesley Hospital, the Berklee College of Music Valencia Advisory Board, the Citi Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Wang Center), the Commonwealth Institute, the WGBH Board of Overseers, the Boston Jewish Community Women’s Fund, and Temple Beth Elohim (building campaign chair, 2005-2009). Solomont has received several awards recognizing her community leadership, including the FEDEPE International Woman of the Year Award in Madrid and the YWCA Outstanding Women’s Leadership Award in Boston. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and a master’s degree in education from Tufts University.