

CONTACT FUND



Triskeles Foundation: Personalized Philanthropy

Triskeles Foundation is a national donor advised fund based in Pennsylvania. Their size fluctuates depending on gifts received and charitable distributions made at any one time, but in the past two years they have ranged in overall size between \$3.5mm and \$7mm. In addition to the funds that they steward, Triskeles also advises on other charitable funds held elsewhere which range anywhere from \$10mm to \$50mm funds. In the last two years, Triskeles distributed about \$1mm from their donor advised funds annually. The gifts, from their current 56 accounts, ranged in size from about \$15 to about \$400,000.

Triskeles makes distributions to nonprofits across the country, though some have international connections to Haiti, South America, Eastern Europe and Russia. They also do some direct gifts to charities in Switzerland and England. Grants range in programmatic area, but include: sustainability, environment and ecology; education; poverty; health; research; mind-body-spirit; progressive film; social action, women and gender issues and race equality.

What makes Triskeles different from other national donor advised funds?

There are three key features that make Triskeles different from other donor advised funds. The first is the unique boutique approach they take to new donors and how they invest their donor advised funds. Typically, donors will have no more than a handful of choices in how they want to invest their donor advised funds. At Triskeles, staff is eager to work with each donor, if there is interest, to align their investments with the donor's interests. Triskeles seeks to integrate the interests of the donor to create an investment strategy with financially sustainable products that are connected with the donor's philanthropic interests.

The second feature that makes Triskeles different from other donor advised funds is its openness to small donor advised funds and funds opened by youth. Triskeles believes Donor Advised Funds are great teaching tools, so they will accept a small starting balance while a young person or a small non-profit builds it up before making a charitable distribution.

Lastly, Triskeles's management fee, which falls somewhere in the lower part of the field, has supported Triskeles's youth programs. There is a values connection to the fee structure at Triskeles and to what those fees go to support. You can find out more about Triskeles's youth programs at www.triskeles.org/youth.

A portion of donor advised fund dollars was selected by a donor to be invested in Contact Fund. What was that process like from discussion to investment?

For donors who are active and want to engage in connecting to the investments in their donor advised fund, Triskeles has several conversations with them to assess their interests. This particular donor was very interested in impact investing, poverty alleviation and local (NY/NJ) issues, among other things. In conversations with Triskeles, the donor participated in several educational discussions where options that would meet the donor's cash needs, pacing of gifts and overall contribution to the fund were presented by Triskeles staff and Triskeles's money manager. After the donor spoke with her financial advisors, the donor then enthusiastically supported several investment options, including Contact Fund. For the donor, Contact Fund's values, structure and risk/return profile were a great fit.

Before any option is presented to a donor, Triskeles builds a knowledge-base of potential investments that would be aligned with their donors' values. This is an ongoing research and education process so that Triskeles can best meet the needs of their donors. Triskeles and its money managers, then does extensive due-diligence on the options and the Foundation's investment committee takes the options through their due-diligence process. After a donor has been educated about their investment options and has discussed the alignment with their values, the investment committee makes their final decision of whether to approve investment opportunities that might be especially noteworthy. In the instance of the Contact Fund investment, Triskeles took about one year to get to know Contact Fund before considering it an investment option.

How does an investment in Contact Fund support Triskeles's mission?

From a values perspective, Contact Fund is very much aligned with Triskeles. Triskeles's tagline is "Practice Aligned with Purpose." Contact Fund supports on-the-ground needs that are real and pressing. Its values are local, sustainable, poverty alleviation and positive enablement for people to improve their lives. Neither organization is satisfied with the status quo and we are positively moving forward sustainable solutions and engaging like-minded individuals.