



“In our own lives, here in the world, we all have an opportunity to do ‘good things’ on a daily basis for others and to do them in an unselfish manner... For me, managing the stewardship of charitable giving is a moment-to-moment dignified responsibility of a truly high calling in human affairs and human relations.”

VIRGINIA G. PIPER

#PiperTrustMoments

Celebrating 20 Years of Moments


JULY 20, 2019
#PiperTrustMoments, 3rd Edition

One of the Trust’s longstanding programs is the [Piper Fellowship](#), which provides nonprofit leaders with the resources to participate in self-designed “professional development sabbaticals.” Piper Fellowships enable nonprofit leaders to strengthen their skills and explore new knowledge that they can take back to the organizations they lead and serve. To date, the Trust has selected and invested in 76 Piper Fellows who are part of this enduring network.

[Desert Botanical Garden](#) has been the recipient of four Piper Fellowships over the years, the first awarded to the organization’s executive director, Ken Schutz. With the summer months being the time when nonprofit leaders can apply for Piper

Fellowships, we think it’s an ideal time to feature Ken’s observations about how Piper Fellowships, combined with other support from the Trust, have helped the Garden grow and flourish.

I’m certain you’ll be inspired by Ken’s interview and encourage you to learn more about the transformative opportunity of Piper Fellowships—[applications are now open](#) for the 2019 class.

Warmly,

 Mary Jane Rynd
 President and CEO

GRANTMAKING SPOTLIGHT

KEN SCHUTZ OF DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN



Ken Schutz at Desert Botanical Garden’s Fund the Farm, 2018.

“CEOs need to take time to step back, recharge their batteries, and think about the big picture,” said [Desert Botanical Garden \(DBG\)](#) executive director Ken Schutz, who applied for a 2003 Piper Fellowship that included study in Mexico to develop his language skills.

He emerged with more than rudimentary Spanish. “It was the first time I realized that nature and plants have their own universal language that doesn’t require human language,” he said.

Returning to DBG, Schutz used this new perspective to go beyond translating trail signage. “Half of the Sonoran Desert is in the U.S.; half is in Mexico. We share and interpret the same thing biologically, but there are different stories to tell about desert plants. We are trying to adopt a more multicultural worldview,” he said.

It wasn’t the only impact Piper Trust would have on the Garden. Schutz’s perspective also fostered creative approaches to further the Garden’s mission. After the Garden’s first blockbuster Dale Chihuly exhibition in 2008-09, DBG recognized a need to explore how to accommodate more visitors.

A grant from Piper Trust enabled DBG to create a circular space that simultaneously offers more parking and a new venue for collaborative cultural offerings, such as performances by Ballet Arizona. The Garden’s renowned plant sale and other special events also take place in this area, which is known as the Event Plaza.

“This multipurpose space has generated so much more income than we projected. The impact continues year after year in enhanced revenue and self-sufficiency,” Schutz said.

Looking ahead, DBG recently unveiled a strategic plan that integrates and fine-tunes what the organization has built. “The concept started at a Garden board retreat that was supported by a [Piper Trust Good Governance Fund grant](#) five years ago,” Schutz said. Rather than focus on another fundraising campaign, the Garden will focus on sustainability.

“We take care of the environment through our collections and will continue to ramp that up,” Schutz said. Additionally, the Garden will emphasize economic, environmental, and social sustainability, as well as branding and communications.

“I strongly encourage the nonprofit leaders in our community to consider how this special Fellowship can enrich and strengthen people and organizations—my Fellowship gave me a whole new perspective on my life and my work.”
 —Ken Schutz

Schutz has been at the Garden since 2001, so he’s had a long-term look at Piper Trust’s impact on the community. “The Trust invests in people, not only through the Fellows program but through ongoing trainings for boards and staff members,” he said. “The rigor with which they conduct their due diligence allows them to be innovative and bold in their grantmaking. They’re in so many places, making things better. Piper Trust invests to make change.”

[View Ken Schutz Video](#)

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A SPECIAL VIRGINIA PIPER MOMENT



Virginia Piper (center) and Dr. Arthur D. Nelson visiting the Virginia G. Piper Special Care Unit at Scottsdale Memorial Hospital—North (now HonorHealth Scottsdale Shea Medical Center), 1984.

Virginia had a lifelong habit of mind—what she didn’t know, she eagerly learned. Her work ethic was renowned in the community and it became clear that Virginia Piper’s investment in a cause meant that the individuals and organizations had been thoroughly researched and vetted. Her reputation as a philanthropist inspired others—one saying, “If it’s good enough for Virginia Piper to invest in, it’s good enough for me.”

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ABOUT

Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust supports organizations that enrich health, well-being, and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County, Arizona.



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