

Michael H. Staenberg
March 26, 2015

The Gift Pledge appealed to me on so many levels. Of course, I enjoy supporting the organizations that are important to me, but I also firmly believe that giving to local nonprofits is good for our community and for our region. Philanthropy makes St. Louis a better place – not just today, but for years to come.

A native of Omaha, I've lived in St. Louis since 1983, having moved here for work. I wouldn't live anywhere else. We've got a great park, a great zoo, a great baseball team, outstanding universities, extraordinary medical resources and neighborhoods with real character.

I used to give anonymously, but about ten years ago, I realized that the spirit of giving is contagious. If you give and encourage others to do the same, tremendous things happen. That's what appeals to me about the St. Louis Gift Pledge. I'd like to see as many people as possible participate, be recognized, and feel a part of a "team." This community has been good to so many of us, and I believe we should give back to it! A \$5,000 donation can literally change lives.

I remember my father, who died at 39 when I was 13, discussing with me the importance of giving. His parents came to this country via Ellis Island and were helped tremendously by the generosity of others. During these conversations, he would encourage me to give at the synagogue, if I had anything in my pocket – even if it was just pennies. I believe that no one becomes successful, without help of some kind. Now, it's my turn to lend a hand. I want to do my part.

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About Michael: Previously co-founder and principal of THF Realty, which became one of the largest real estate development firms in the country, Staenberg now spends his time working and pursuing his philanthropic interests, which include kids and education.