

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Ellie Frey Zagel

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This is episode 20 of *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. Today we're talking about engaging the next generation in family philanthropy with Molly Stifler. Enjoy.

Welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. A podcast for multigenerational family business leaders who want to become the leader they were meant to be. If you're ready to learn how to develop your own authentic leadership style, successfully lead your family business and create your own lasting legacy while still honoring theirs this is the podcast for you. I'm your host, Ellie Frey Zagel, family business leadership coach and third-generation family business leader. Let's get to it.

Well, hello there my friends. Welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. I'm so excited that you're here today. Today I am speaking with Molly Stifler who is a director of the Stifler Family Foundation. And you're in for a real treat, just to kind of back up. I am interviewing people from the panel that I moderated at The National Center for Family Philanthropy's forum in San Francisco in October. I am interviewing the panelists on engaging the next generation in family philanthropy.

Specifically having conversations about how adults get engaged in family philanthropy. So, Molly was engaged in her family's philanthropy a lot sooner, I think she talked about at age four. But as an adult she really had to advocate for her place in the foundation. And she talks about that story in this podcast episode. So you're in for a treat as I mentioned. She adds a lot of value. We talk about how she was prepared in childhood but also how she prepared herself to be an excellent director and trustee.

She talks about family dynamics. We all have family dynamics and how to navigate them when you're working with family and there can be some challenges. And she does share a lot of challenges that she faced and advice that she would give others who are considering engaging in the next generation and their family philanthropy. Or those who want to get engaged in family philanthropy. So enjoy this amazing interview with the beautiful

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

and talented Molly Stifler. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. Alright, take care, talk to you soon.

Ellie: Hey, Molly, how are you?

Molly: I'm good, Ellie, how are you?

Ellie: I'm so good, thank you so much for being here today. I just want to start off like I start off every single one of these podcast episodes with the question, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Molly: So my name is Molly Stifler. I am a trustee and the director of the Stifler Family Foundation. We're based out of Brooklyn, Massachusetts. I live in Cambridge which is right next door. I am 31 years old and my parents are my co-trustees.

Ellie: Awesome. So today we're talking about getting engaged and staying engaged in family philanthropy. You and I were just on a panel at the National Center for Family Philanthropy's Forum out in San Francisco. It was super, super fun. This is kind of following up that kind of conversation. So how are you prepared to be in your family, to do philanthropy with your family?

Molly: It was a lot of fun by the way and it was great meeting you. So I guess by saying how I was prepared, I'll talk a little bit about my engagement and the chronology of how I got engaged. So I can remember my first site visit, I think I was five years old. My parents got me involved extremely, extremely young which is a great way to prepare somebody to be involved. There is no age that is too young to involve your family, your kids, the next generation.

So my parents are extremely passionate about what they do. They were both scholarship students growing up. My dad was the child of a young, young single mother and he was the first recipient of a scholarship at his school in Maryland. And so they kind of made it their life duty and mission

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

to give back, to give the same opportunities that were given to them, to other people. And those values were instilled in me. So I think instilling that passion in your kids however you can is a good idea and like I said, starting young.

So moving in to actually a little bit older than that, my siblings and I, we did a site visit as kids to a local homeless shelter. And it turns out as we were talking, we figured out that we were the first people to ever do a site visit with them. And it turned out that they just needed \$1300 or something to print out some pamphlets so that people can know where the local resources are and stuff like that. So it was a very straightforward situation and we wrote them that check.

Ellie: How old were you, do you remember, Molly? I think that's just so fantastic.

Molly: Yeah, it's nuts. I think I was in middle school for sure, my two siblings are older than me. And I think that was the only site visit the three of us ever went on together. But it definitely sticks out in my mind. I eventually took on an advisory role, project manager when I was in college. I also interned at one of the non-profits that we had supported and then I became a junior trustee in 2016 which is the year I graduated.

I studied recidivism in college and the health outcomes of pregnant incarcerated women. So that kind of gave me a lens through which I saw some of the work that I did. I ended up working very closely with an organization that does help deal with recidivism, now I'm on their board. But that was an interesting way to get involved. And then eventually in 2019 I became a trustee like I said, along with my parents, and then I became our first director in 2021.

Ellie: Do you think your work in non-profits, professionally I think you said you served on their board, do you think that helps you become a better trustee?

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

Molly: Absolutely. I would always recommend to people to join non-profit boards. I would say the biggest reason being that it helps, first of all, equalize the playing field a little bit especially when you go in and just ask them, "How can I help?" Don't go in with any presumptions of how you can be a savior or how you can help them but just really listening. And that's exactly how I approach all of the non-profit boards that I'm on. And I get a great response. There's always things that we can help with. And it's much more collaborative that way.

Ellie: I think board work is really, really important as well to learn how to be the best trustee we can be. How many boards do you serve on?

Molly: I'm a board member on three organizations and then I'm the chair of the advisory board on a fourth organization.

Ellie: Okay, that's fantastic. What advice would you give to people who are starting to think about getting involved in their family's foundation and maybe they don't yet serve on boards and they don't necessarily know how to go about doing that?

Molly: I think if you're from a family foundation, boards, non-profits will pretty much always be looking for some sort of expertise. One of the ways that I help would be doing matching grants, so helping galvanize the board members to each increase their giving or make sure that they are giving because our matching grant is contingent upon 100% board participation.

Ellie: So, wait, Molly, let me clarify it actually. So the foundation will give a matching grant based on board participation, is that what I understood?

Molly: Yeah, so contingent upon 100% board participation will match dollar for dollar all of the money put in by all the board members.

Ellie: I love it, I've never heard that before, that's so fantastic. Obviously I've heard of matching, we do a lot of matching, but never based on board participation, so good. People can get involved through their family foundation, finding their expertise or their passion and joining boards, you're absolutely right, boards do want expertise, they do. I don't know. I've

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

always been really lucky, people have wanted me on a board not just because of my last name but it doesn't hurt to have a last name to open doors, then I can – I say that very bluntly and then you have to prove yourself of course.

Molly: Of course, and that's absolutely true. Foundation members do bring a different perspective as well as we're usually a minority on a board. And I think sometimes we'll have experience with fundraising etc., or even connections and those are valuable assets that we'll bring to a non-profit board. And the other thing I was going to say is really you don't just have to bring your funds to a board. A huge thing that we do is working with non-profits hand-in-hand and providing expertise whether I have experience in event planning, whether it's helping with that kind of thing.

Doing whatever we can to help them replicate their model or scale up, increase capacity, all of those kinds of things are ways we try to give back to those boards as well.

Ellie: I find that that is one, volunteerism, actually going deeper within an organization is one of those things that the book, *Generation Impact* by Michael Moody and Sharna Goldseker, really highlights. We as the next generation, Gen X, Y, millennials. We really want to give in a different way than our parents. We like to give to the same types of organizations, just how we give is guest dollars. But maybe our dollars as you mentioned is more matching, or there is some volunteerism, or there's some strategic planning. There's just so much more than just writing a check.

So that is pretty cool with that example. Is there any other advice you'd give somebody who is kind of looking to get engaged in the community?

Molly: I would say also finding mentors in the non-profit field, I have mentors all over the place. I really look for mentorship, it's not like everything they do has to be something you emulate. But I find mentors in all different kinds of people, especially around little specific things that they'll do. So I have mentors in the non-profit field quite a bit. And I just as a young person who is involved and I'm always asking questions, I'm

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

always learning. I think of myself as a learner so much more than anything else.

Learning directly from those people who care so much about the work that they're doing is a very valuable way to increase your impact because then you know beyond the needs of the non-profit. But you just know how to work more collaboratively with those people. And that's been a very valuable experience for me.

Ellie: I love that you're bringing up mentorship because I think it's something that you spoke very passionately about on our panel presentation. And not very many people in my opinion talk enough about mentorship. It's difficult. What do you do with mentors? How do you engage them? How long is the engagement? It just becomes, people get very overwhelmed thinking about mentorship. I know for me, I didn't have very many mentors. I didn't have any female mentors for the majority of my life which I desperately wanted.

So how in your opinion, how do you find mentors or how did you find mentors and how do you stay connected? How do you actually have a symbiotic relationship?

Molly: I find it best to just be informal about it. I don't necessarily officially ask, "Will you be my mentor?" But I make it clear that I have a lot to learn from them. And staying engaged with them, I'm not hesitant to reach out and ask for help, ask questions, ask for verification, because people are pretty much always willing to help especially like I've said, getting involved at a younger age and being the next generation.

I think being honest about your needs or questions, and really making it clear if you need to, how they can be helpful to you, I think has been a big one for me. I haven't had somebody not be willing to help, honestly.

Ellie: And I love that you started off this conversation about mentorship as from a learner's perspective. I really think that that mindset, I am a learner, I don't know what I don't know and I have a lot to learn from you. I like to

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

think of I have a lot to learn from everybody, it doesn't matter who is in front of me, there's always something that I can learn. But to get yourself into curiosity and then from there it's asking questions, listening to powerful, open, humble space that I know has really served me well and it sounds like that's something that is also serving you well.

Molly: Absolutely.

Ellie: Okay, fantastic. So this is so good. So joining boards, getting mentors. Let's switch a little bit to kind of your story and how you became involved formally in your family's foundation. And that was something, you're the only employee, right?

Molly: I'm our only employee and our first employee.

Ellie: Okay. So talk a little bit about that.

Molly: I think there are some people who could probably relate to this but it's such a niche area to be navigating as a next gener, or just as a person in general because we don't have typical work environments. I would say there was a lot of advocacy on my part. We, like I said, we're a very frugal foundation. We never have spent money on – we buy our own plane tickets to conferences. We get our own hotel rooms with our own funds. We don't feel comfortable, well, the tradition of the foundation has not been feeling comfortable with spending funds not on program related items.

I think since I've taken a leadership role, we've been a little bit more comfortable, for example, paying for a plane ticket with the foundation funds because it's completely reasonable or hiring a consultant for a day to help us. I would say, yes, advocacy was a big part of it because when I became a trustee in 2019, that was after I had kind of gotten other work experience and really proved my interest by just getting involved with discretionary grants and other forms of involvement and putting the hours in on a volunteer basis.

So I was an unpaid trustee, both of my parents are unpaid trustees. And then I kind of just naturally slowly started taking on more responsibilities

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

that a director position would be taking on. And I did end up, I just advocated for my pay because I said, “I want this to be a role that I can actually do without worrying about funds or needing another job to supplement income.” So I think after many, many conversations about this, that were not always easy talking about funds, I think that they recognized the need for a director and just wanting to honor my desire to be engaged.

And I have to say, it was even for me, it wasn't an easy process because on the one hand I felt guilty about even asking to get paid. And I felt guilty about feeling, well, do I deserve to get paid here just because my parents aren't paid for their work? But then reconciling that feeling with knowing my own value, my expertise and my worth. I took on their values of, I really don't feel comfortable for the most part spending funds on non-program related things, although like I said, we're becoming more comfortable with those small items.

But to actually be a paid staff person was a big leap and I still to this day reconcile the getting paid with recognizing my value.

Ellie: But I like that you do have these beliefs about yourself, that you are value, you are adding value, you are worth getting paid. I've been having these conversations a lot with people about yes, you may not need to get paid, or you may not need to get paid a lot. But there's some sort of respect element. If somebody off a street, I say off a street, that's not necessarily what I mean but if somebody applied for this job you'd have to pay them.

So there is something about – and by the way, in every single family foundation, when the family gets paid they're not getting paid an exorbitant sum, it's usually way under market. So it's not usually this amazing wage, that may have happened decades ago but it definitely no longer happens, at least not in my experience. But there is some sort of a respect aspect, I'm respected enough that they pay me for the value that I add. How do you fall on this?

Molly: I agree actually. I think my parents, especially my dad, they're not easy sells. So I think just the fact that they recognize my value to be paid

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

was a huge step for me just in terms of feeling like I've earned the responsibility. I have earned their trust in a big way. That was a huge milestone for me even though it's actually a lot less than what we would pay someone 'off the street' like you said. Again, recognizing my worth, really advocating for myself.

Ellie: When I talked to you before, I don't know if I ever asked you about, because some of the words that you use are words that I use as a coach. And I think you've had coaches before or some mentors that we're able to help you kind of with some of these decisions or is this something that just comes naturally to you, kind of understanding your worth and your value?

Molly: I worked with a coach actually. I do have a woman that I look up to completely and I trust implicitly. I guess I should have mentioned that before. But, yeah, they can act also as a little bit, not as a mediator but maybe a moderator and literally a coach in terms of having some of these conversations, these difficult conversations with family members around money. I wouldn't recommend, unless someone feels totally comfortable with this but I wouldn't recommend trying to tackle this all on your own, especially when the topic of money is involved.

Ellie: I'm so glad that you brought that up, Molly. I completely agree. For our family it's worked way better when we have a third party that isn't part of the family to really be able to help us navigate pretty much anything, definitely money. But even we use consultants to help us figure out what the third generation wants to work on. Even though we have really, really talented people within our investment committee, and our trustees who could probably do every bit as good a job. But just having that outside person just really has helped us keep out of the fights.

I want to go back to something because I think this is really interesting. You advocating for this position, you also have two other siblings, are they involved at all on the board level or anything?

Molly: They are not involved on the board or really in a professional capacity at all. But the invitation is always on the table. My parents named

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

it The Stifler Family Foundation for a reason. They very much want the next generation to be involved. Whether they are involved or not we always honor their interests and desires in terms of funding, we'll honor those. And like I said, the invitation is always on the table.

Ellie: I love what you just said, Molly, because that is something I also haven't heard. If people aren't engaged as a trustee, I have never heard anybody talk about how you could still honor people who are not yet ready to get involved, or don't want to get involved formally. But they do still have passions and do still want to give to non-profit organizations. So do you do this through discretionary or do you actually do some main grant making based on their interests?

Molly: I'm trying to think what we've done in the past. I know my sister worked closely with an organization, I think it dealt with homelessness in one of the gateway cities around Boston. And I think it was maybe a bit, definitely multiyear grants but it could have been a little bit of a larger grant. I think I should just preface that answer though with that a lot of our grants are discretionary grants, we start very small. And then we usually many times will do multiyear grants.

We always do for the most part unrestricted unless it's for a specific project that we're working hand-in-hand with them with. But we do start small I would say, it's pretty typical to start with – we even do some \$500 grants, 2500 is pretty common. We would really not start with a \$10,000 grant and we'll tend to work our way up to that.

Ellie: Okay, that's really good feedback. I just think that's really cool that even though they're not trustees or not necessarily formally involved, they still have access to discretionary, they're still able to or the foundation still supports them in they're giving. No, that's pretty fantastic. The good news is though you didn't have to advocate for money with your siblings.

Molly: I think it could have been a little bit weird bringing my siblings into it simply because they aren't paid. So it was more of private discussions with my folks.

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

Ellie: Yes. No, that's again, bringing up money with siblings, it's uncomfortable enough to talk about it with your parents sometimes but it can also be uncomfortable to talk about with your siblings.

Molly: Yeah. I think the only people it's harder to talk about money with than my parents would be my siblings.

Ellie: So we talked a little bit about how you were prepared, how you had to advocate for yourself to kind of get this job, you're the first and only staff member. What are some of the challenges that you have faced, kind of getting to this position? Just so other people can maybe learn from, we don't know what we don't know. So we want to kind of share some things like, okay, watch out for this, you might have to navigate this. Are there any of those challenges that you'd be willing to share?

Molly: Sure. Well, I think one thing that I talked about already was the frugality of the foundation, just advocating for myself and that pay was a big challenge. I think also just navigating that frugality in the sense of proposing projects that aren't explicitly program related. So we actually just after 21 years of being in existence, our foundation just launched our first ever website.

And I think that was something to advocate for as well because I saw the value in terms of I thought of the website as being a vehicle through which we could have a similar vocab in terms of how we talk about our values, how we talk about our mission etc., who we fund. We already knew our values and I think we're all totally on the same page about that. But I wanted it to be a way for us to really come together around that and it ended up totally being that as well as a way to highlight our non-profits.

And tell the story of the foundation, just about where my parents came from and why the foundation is so important to us and is a duty in terms of how we live our lives.

Ellie: I would love to know that conversation. What did your parents, what were your parents thinking about having a website, what were some of their

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

arguments? I think you explained, I think your vehicle to kind of be in alignment with values, and mission, and the story, and just kind of a way for the family to come together. I think you said it so beautifully. Why didn't maybe they want to have it? Why didn't they already have it?

Molly: Besides just the finances about it, we are extremely informal as you may have picked up on already. So we didn't really have the bandwidth to do a long term project like this. But something we all struggled with was visibility. We weren't sure at all how much we wanted to have our names out there for the public to see. Although at the end of the day, our 990s are public, all of ours are. So I've heard that websites can be a way to just level the playing field in terms of transparency about who we are, who we fund, here's how you can contact us.

So I think I also struggled with that. I really like the privacy that we have, especially, I am so conservative when it comes to my position, even some of my closest friends don't know that I work for my parents ultimately. I'll tell them I work for a couple who amassed a fortune and they have a foundation and I help run that foundation. But I think a lot of us struggle with that piece of having to describe working for our parents and the potential ideas of nepotism that can come up, or even just people knowing we're wealthy.

Especially in dating, I don't want people to know about the wealth. And having a foundation, when people Google, that's going to come up, so especially with my last name being with the foundation's name. So I think that was definitely something that was difficult for all of us.

Ellie: That's a good challenge, it is real especially when you're dating and people make assumptions and judgments. And they may or may not be true. My dad always said to me, "You could have a really wealth foundation and very not wealthy trustees." And we heard some of those stories even in our panel in San Francisco. So it is a real thing. So I think that that conversation around how much visibility do we want, I mean that could be navigated very simply by not listening to board members.

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

I mean nobody's going to know you have a foundation or website unless you tell them. It's rare that people are going to even find out about it.

Molly: Yeah, unless they Google me but we purposely had our web designers not do an SEO, Search Engine Optimization. So hopefully we'll be on the sixth or seventh Google page anyway.

Ellie: Right. That's a good point, and dating, that does happen. Also what other challenge? I think that's a great challenge that you brought up by the way, thank you.

Molly: Sure. Some other challenges I would say is being the first staff member and also I'm the first next generation to be involved. I didn't have a lot of guidance, since I'm our first director I feel like I'm writing my job description as I go and there's not a lot of guidance from the board I would say in terms of what exactly I should be doing. And as a result of that, my job is very self-accountable and very self-reliant. That's another reason why I rely on those mentors so much to help give me some guidance around my role. That's definitely a challenge.

And I think being the younger sibling as well, not having older siblings where I can work hand-in-hand with and shoot ideas off of. That just isn't how we operate as much as I would want it to be. So not having a strong way to connect with other people, those conferences are my favorite thing because that's how I get connected with my peers and other young family foundation leaders because we're few and far between. You don't just find us everywhere because of the niche way that we operate. So I would say that that's a challenge, yes.

Ellie: And also we're super private, so it's not like most of us are out there. It's not like most of us will have a podcast or something. So I'm teasing, but yeah, it is really important to find peers so you don't feel alone. And I think that's even when you were talking about your siblings. It would be so much, I mean better, I don't want to put words in your mouth, to have family members that you can talk about this and use as a sounding board. So I

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

can see that's a challenge. And then also you're talking about and have peers to be able to talk to on a regular basis about this who really get it.

Molly: Yeah, absolutely. I would say just a big challenge that I have would be the family dynamics piece. I know every foundation has family dynamics, whether they're willing to talk about them or not, it's just the reality. And I find it very difficult at times navigating my professional role with the personal role because I feel like with the foundation I always need to be wearing my professional hat. But I work with family and I can't just separate out how I feel personally about a comment or a situation with my professional role.

So it's a constant sense of navigating. And I think when I'm dealing with a situation where there might be mental illness involved for example, I don't think you're dealing with people who are in their best way and people who might be suffering. And that hurts me personally, just it hurts me and as much as that hurts me, it just really is difficult for my parents to see people suffering. And all I want to do is help but at the same time I can't and I can't make someone be involved or I can't make somebody act the way I would want them to in order to be a partner to me.

So I think I'm still dancing around it, I think everybody wants to do around this stuff. But I think it's important for me to at least express that so that people know if you're dealing with family dynamics you are not alone. And I wonder if there are more resources out there for it, just for people who are trying to navigate a professional role within a family structure. And I don't know. If you have recommendations, let me know but I don't know of any.

Ellie: I had a woman on who deals with actually addiction but she did a podcast kind of talking about this very thing. How mental illness, we talk more about it in the form of addiction, how it affects the entire family. And there are so many times, Molly, that people call me and say, "Can you help my sibling? They're in and out of rehab, but they're [inaudible]." And then unfortunately that's not the work that I do. The work that I do is actually

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

working with a leader who is wanting me to work with their sibling because the work that I do, you have to buy into it.

And oftentimes with a mental illness, that's not my training and oftentimes they're not able to really buy into the coaching work that I do. So it's a really interesting dynamic. I'm so glad that you brought that up because yes, every single family does have dynamics. And there's so much, and I don't know if you're seeing this more and more, but I am seeing this unfortunately in my own family, friend group and community. This mental illness piece during COVID, now we're kind of coming out of COVID is very front and center.

As a philanthropist, well, I'll just say that in one of our last meetings we really talked about funding more in the mental health space especially for our kids. Because more and more kids, middle school kids, and elementary school kids are ending up in the ER threatening to do harm to themselves. And it is just really devastating. And anyway, I'm going to climb off my soapbox in a second. But we don't talk about this enough. And speaking of duty, I feel like it's part of my duty, it's part of how can I help when it comes to helping our kids in their mental health, keep healthy as possible?

Even though they're isolated, everybody's struggling, things aren't as usual, their parents are struggling so their support structure is struggling. Just we're all in a bad way. So I'm so glad that you brought up mental illness and family dynamics because we can actually talk for hours on this. We were just talking about mental illness but we didn't even talk about the family dynamics when jealousy comes in. Or when one sibling thinks that they should be running the foundation instead of the other sibling. So there's just a lot that can come into play when it comes to with working with your family.

Molly: Yeah. They say addiction is a family disease and it is totally true and another reason that it makes the professional work hard when everybody's suffering like you said. And then also that jealousy piece, whether it's a challenge. I think also being the youngest child, I think there is some of

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

those dynamics as well of sort of having to be even more intentional about proving myself, not proving myself necessarily to people and trying to tell them why it is I have to be here but just doing the work, even harder to just show my worth.

Ellie: A lot of the work that I do has been with multigenerational family businesses, I mean my non-profit work, with my friend group, with coaching. And what they often talk about is kind of this form of reverse nepotism. If you are family you have to work harder to prove yourself. So often that means in family business that you show up first for everybody, lead last. You get paid less oftentimes, it just is, it's real, this idea that you have to prove yourself, it takes place everywhere and not just family foundations but also family businesses out there.

For those listening who are wanting to either get engaged, or actually let's take it because I think you've given so much value when it comes to getting engaged in your family between finding a mentor, doing some board work, proving yourself over, and over, and over again, there's a lot of things that you shared. What would you tell the parents? If the parents are listening to this, what advice would you have if they didn't engage their kids in family philanthropy?

Molly: I touched on this before but there is no age that is too young to involve the next generation, not professionally necessarily. But just in getting their interests honored or bringing them on site visits, showing them what the foundation is about because I think it can be a shock when someone's an adult and suddenly they're expected to learn the culture of a foundation or learn who we fund, and why we fund them, and what are our values. I was brought up in this so it really is just like second nature to me.

I would also say at least well, for our foundation we have an extremely broad mission statement. We fund the education, the arts, social justice, small grassroots organizations are a big one, science and research, the environment is another huge one for us. They're probably the biggest one for us. The reason I say that though is because with us, with our

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

foundation, my parents really wanted to emphasize the family part of it. And I think there's no worse way to engage people or, almost force them to be engaged in areas that they're not passionate about.

My parents wanted to make sure that whoever wants to be involved would have their passions honored and be able to delve into whatever area we want to help out with. So I think one of the most important things parents can do for the next generation is keeping that broad mission statement because with my parents, the emphasis on family foundation was just as big if not bigger than what our actual mission is.

I think more than anything they want the future generations to be involved in their sense of family legacy of duty to give back regardless of what the privilege is down the line, that's just as important as what we actually fund.

Ellie: That's really interesting because I'm often asked that question, Molly, about how do I engage my kids if they're just not interested in the work that we do? And so what you just said is that your parents were very intentional and they kept it broad for a reason so that would never be an issue.

Everyone can find their passion within the areas that you just mentioned is what I just heard. Most people talk about the opposite.

Molly: Yeah. It's a lot of what I hear as well. And for the life of me I cannot, I mean I can understand why people narrow it down, for sure. But that's just not the culture that we operate in.

Ellie: Any other advice you would give?

Molly: I would just say be patient, be patient, whether people are involved right away or it takes a long time, just hang in there and be patient and always have hope. Because if the next generation can be involved in something as wonderful as that a foundation can be, just stick with it. And do what you can to involve those people. I would recommend not putting strong restrictions on involvement in any capacity.

Ep #20: Early Engagement of the Next Generation of Family Philanthropists with Molly Stifler

Now, I know there were strong restrictions on my professional involvement and how long it took me to advocate to get there but I was involved and in love with the work that we do way before I was paid to do it.

Ellie: I think that's so beautiful. Thank you so much, Molly. I love the idea of patience both from the parents as well as the kids because sometimes we need to be told to be patient as well as the next generation. So I really appreciate all the amazing, amazing wisdom that you shared during this podcast. Is there any final words that you have?

Molly: Yeah. I would say join non-profit boards, ask how you can help, find your mentors no matter where they are and hear the speech not the speaker. So just find how people can help regardless of who they are or what sector they're in. Really honor the passions that you have because that's going to drive you more than anything. Fight for your place in the foundation, even if it's not given to you, just stick with it and hopefully that tenacity would pay off in the long run no matter what the situation is on the foundation.

Ellie: Gosh, what a great summary, Molly Stifler, thank you so much for being on our podcast today. You are amazing. Thank you for all of the work that you do in this world.

Molly: Ellie, thank you for your inspiration and for what you do, and I was so happy to be here. Thank you.

Well, there you have it. Thank you so much for listening to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. If you've enjoyed today's episode, be sure to share it with someone who needs it. If you'd like more information about family business leadership development, please visit successfulgenerations.com. I can't wait to connect with you again next week, until then.