

Deciding Where and How to Give

Peter Novick, a retired Software Engineer, is the volunteer grants team manager for TPRF. As the team's manager, Novick reports on humanitarian aid grants and provides information about grant procedures and accountability.

In addition to his other duties, Novick helps keep the grant program aligned with TPRF's strategic objectives while overseeing and coordinating the work of grant reviewers and grant managers.

TPRF: How did you become interested in volunteering for the grants team?

PN: I've been moving in this direction for a while—involvement with foundations, non-profit organizations, and philanthropy for many years. I started a small family foundation about 14 years ago, and I've been active in that ever since. I have helped a few non-profits get off the ground, and I'm on the board of a private school. A friend who served as TPRF grants manager and who knew my background invited me to serve as a grant reviewer. So that's how I first got involved with the grants team.

TPRF: What do you do in your role?

*PN: As the TPRF grants team manager, I oversee our three grants programs—Peace Initiatives, Humanitarian Aid, and *Food for People*. So far, I have spent most of my time in the area of Humanitarian Aid. I focus on three objectives. First, I make sure the grants team's goals and activities are aligned with TPRF's values and objectives. This includes long-term strategy, short-term goals, and day-to-day requests. Secondly, I ensure that we have staff, systems, procedures and documentation in place to accomplish our goals. Third, I look for challenges and also problems. If I see any current or potential problems, I take the necessary steps to correct them.*

TPRF: What criteria does TPRF use to select partners?

PN: We have a comprehensive form that our grant reviewers use to evaluate the organization and its grant application. We are continually seeking ways to expand and fine-tune the criteria, based on TPRF strategic goals, our working experience, and professional development.

Here are a few criteria. First, a grant application for aid must match one of our funding priorities—nutritious food, clean water, and eye care to prevent blindness.

We research the organization quite thoroughly, looking for evidence of stability, expertise, good reputation, solid partnerships, and the potential for an ongoing partnership with TPRF. Additional

criteria include, but are not limited to, financial management, including low overhead, creativity, and integrity.

One of the most important criteria our reviewers examine is impact. For the amount of funds requested, we look at how many people will be helped, in what ways, and for how long.

There is so much more, but I think this gives you a good idea of the process.

TPRF: What are some of the reasons for TPRF's success in delivering life-changing aid in a cost effective manner?

PN: It starts from the top. TPRF is an environment that values and promotes integrity, teamwork, compassion, creativity, quality, accountability, and making your best effort.

TPRF: How has your involvement with the grants team affected you personally?

PN: It is a transforming experience. Engaging in very challenging work; collaborating with other dedicated, wise and inspiring people; making the world a better place; helping to spread a message of peace—everything about it has been good.

**Photos Courtesy of Mercy Corps, International Development Organization (IRD) Compartimos Bienestar y Salud Para Los Niños Mayas, and TPRF Staff*