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How we give

A LOOK AT HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE ON THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WE PROVIDE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Every year, Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities (LATLC) and Orange County Trial Lawyers' Charities (OCTLC) make a difference in our communities, focusing on children, education, survivors of abuse, persons with disabilities, and homelessness. We do this through volunteer service and financial support.

Much of our work is hands-on service activities. They are as simple as preparing and serving meals for those in need, to building low-income housing. You can visit our websites to find local opportunities. The majority of our volunteer projects are family-friendly and we hope you will join us!

We look today at how decisions are made on the financial support we provide in Southern California. LATLC and OCTLC are known as "pass-through" non-profits: what we raise is what we give away each year. Fundraisers like last month's OCTLC Roast of Eric Traut and the upcoming LATLC Summer Soiree (July 22) provide the majority of our direct funding.

LATLC has supported over 120 partner charities since we started in 2006. OCTLC already partners with nearly 70 local organizations in just three years. The grants we are able to give out depend on YOU and the support of our generous donors.

For LATLC, annual grant applications are open between August and October. Each of the nearly 100 applications LATLC receives each year is then extensively reviewed by at least two Board members who serve on the 12-person Partner Charity Committee. (*Shout out to Megan Klein and Daniel DeSantis who have co-chaired LATLC's Partner Charity Committee for the past few years and do a phenomenal job leading the committee!*) The committee then meets, decides which applications should be presented to the entire LATLC Board of Directors, and then agrees on recommended grant amounts. The Partner Charity Committee then presents its recommendations to the full board, who then vote to approve the grants. The total amount LATLC directly donates to partner charities each year depends on how much is raised and has varied from under \$100,000 to over half a million dollars.

In addition to traditional grants, LATLC supports the community through direct-giving events like *Comfort & Joy* holiday giving in South Central L.A., *Day of Dignity* for the unhoused in Hollywood, and the *Great Tryke Giveaway* we hosted last month with OCTLC. LATLC also provides direct monetary support to the community through our college scholarships and youth sports programs.



For OCTLC, when deciding which charities need help, we are a little less formal than LATLC as there is no application process thus far. The board selects charities it likes and wants to create a "partnership" with. The charities are vetted to ensure that they are quality charities where most of the money goes to the cause (rather than overhead and administration). Often Charity Navigator will be used to determine the percentage of the dollars donated that go to the cause of the organization. Another critical part of the process is ensuring the monies will be used in Orange County and that the recipient charities' purpose fits within OCTLC's Mission. Once the vetting process is complete, a letter is sent with a check to the charity explaining who we are and what we do.

We strive to build a beautiful partnership where we can work together on volunteer opportunities and collaborations in the future. OCTLC will sometimes ask charities if they have a specific need at an upcoming event. For example, if there is an adaptive tennis clinic coming up for children diagnosed with autism, we can pay for the signage or provide scholarships for some children to attend a clinic. We have a lot of flexibility, which makes donating money easy and joyful. Sometimes for a "30 days of giving" month, the OCTLC board will decide to select 30 different children-focused charities, such as Boys and Girls Clubs. Other times, the monies will be sports and fitness themed, still others housing or combatting domestic violence related. The need is great, the options are plentiful and the gratitude tremendous.

OCTLC is also thrilled to bring checks to our partner charities when we do an in-person event, like crafting at Unlimited Possibilities where we donated \$5,000 in November at a volunteer event. Or, Habitat for Humanity home build, where we donated \$5,000 and volunteers to assist in building a home. Sometimes OCTLC brings the big money to a lawyer event benefiting a single charity, like OCTLA's annual Top Gun Award event where \$10,000 has been given to A Walk on Water and Operation Helping Hands.

Winston Churchill once wrote: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Whether you give financially, or give your time, this is what life is all about. LATLC and OCTLC hope you will join us in "giving back" and continuing to make a difference in our community.