



IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE IN NEED, THERE ARE THREE BASIC WAYS TO GIVE: TIME, TALENT OR TREASURE. TIM AND TRACI HARRISON HAPPEN TO BE DOING ALL THREE.

Tim and Traci Harrison have served many nonprofit and community organizations in numerous roles over the years, and they consider this service to be part of their family's legacy and purpose. As they teach their children about the many ways families, couples and individuals can give, they're also carrying on a giving spirit established by the families they come from.

Tim's father Lou, for instance, not only encouraged his children to give back, but set an example through service to organizations like Lions Club and the YMCA. His father's dedication and his gratitude for the opportunity to make a difference in his community left a lasting impact on his children, Tim said. And as an adult, he's adopted a similar philosophy about giving back.

"Giving back is a form of gratitude for what you've been given in life," Tim said. Today he's the founder and CEO of Harrison Financial Services, a wealth management company. But in the late 1990s he was a young man from modest means working on his bachelor's degree in accounting at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) while holding down a full-time job. A scholarship aided him in sustaining his efforts.

"It was really helpful and it made a difference. It made me feel like other people were willing to invest in my success," he said.

Now he believes it's his turn to empower others.

"If I had to narrow it down, I think it's just helping people get a hand up—not a handout, if you will—in life and helping them take that next step," he said.

Volunteering as a team

Traci Harrison (formerly Sayers) graduated from UNO with a bachelor's degree in international business in 2000. Although her and Tim's time at UNO overlapped briefly and they both were in the business program, they didn't have classes or activities together ("At least we don't *think* we did," Traci said.). They met outside of college and married in 2003.

They recall volunteering together for the United Way early in their relationship, the first of many joint efforts. "We've been involved with the Salvation Army, as a couple, for years," Tim said, explaining that they've put in time as chairs and committee members for various projects like the D.J.'s Hero Awards, the Red Kettle Run, the Tree of Lights Campaign, and most recently, the William Booth Society.

They've served UNO both together and separately on scholarship and alumni boards and the 2009 centennial celebration. Another common cause is childhood cancer, also a cause championed by Harrison Financial Services and the entire Northwestern Mutual family. The Harrisons have been part of Sammy's Superheroes advisory board and raised money through various events for the Leukemia & Lymphoma society, Children's Hospital, Pediatric Cancer Network, The Kim Foundation and other groups.

Individually, they've donated time, board service and support to organizations as diverse as Iowa Western Community College, JDRE, Catholic Charities, Boy Scouts, and Completely KIDS.

"These causes are mostly based on education, giving people a hand up in life, and providing opportunities that others who have had misfortune in life may not have had otherwise," Tim said.

The next generation

Ten years ago, the couple founded the annual Tim & Traci Harrison Scholarship at UNO. Applicants must be enrolled full-time in the College of

Business Administration; have a concentration in investment science, finance or accounting; demonstrate financial need; and have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or greater. Preference is given to candidates who are working through college, like both Harrisons did.

"I needed a hand up in life in college myself...and I was able to use this opportunity to create what we have today. Sometimes one thing, one opportunity at the right time can make all of the difference. We want to pay it forward and spread this gift with others," Tim said. The Harrisons have met past scholarship recipients and are enjoying seeing them launch careers and serve the community.

The couple's daughter Lauren and son Blake, now 14 and 12, have not only learned about giving back through their parents' example, they've personally helped out, too, by ringing bells, collecting food items, stuffing backpacks, cleaning up park grounds, even selecting and wrapping presents for an "adopted" family during the holidays.

"You start off small when they're younger," Traci said. "I think they enjoy it, and I think they'll eventually find their own things to be a part of."

"For families, giving is teaching the next generation gratitude and to serve others," Tim said. "But it is often things like writing a nice note to someone who needs a few kind words or giving someone a compliment; these things are easily taught but go a long way in teaching kids the gift of gratitude and kindness that once learned is a lifelong learning that never goes away."

In good company

The Harrisons' personal philanthropy and community service is echoed in Harrison Financial Services, which has a long history of giving back. The company engages and supports its employees in a variety of giving activities for many causes, like granting time off for board or committee service and other volunteerism, providing financial support, and even hosting fundraising events in which employees can participate.

"Tim's work team is just as involved. We all have different interests, and we try to all support each other," Traci said.

The company also supports the nonprofit community through its work. Seven clients are foundations, and Tim Harrison and Director of Financial Planning JoAnne Reynolds both carry the Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy (CAP) credential.

"A lot of our clients are leaders in their community and we're helping them be stewards of their own wealth. In that role it's sometimes vetting organizations—knowing how to select a good organization, getting inside and seeing how things are either well-run or not so well-run—that's helpful in helping people make better decisions with their own money," Tim said. "That ties in to what we do on the business side."

Tim often says that giving is "viral" in a good way and that good works spread good from one to many.

"Our purpose at HFS is 'To Help Families Live a Better Life, Legacy and Community.' Our purpose in our philanthropy is the same; they completely align and my business allows us a way to synthesize what we do in the community and to share our purpose with others," Tim said. "It should be built in to the way we look at our responsibility to the community. If everyone did their part and everyone gave back some, the world would be a better place. . . People are naturally good and want to do good, but sometimes they just need to see a model of what good can be done, and they often follow the lead and eventually lead themselves."



TIM AND TRACI HARRISON