

# Giving that lasts: How business families strengthen Canadian communities

BY: JESSIKA MCQUEEN

**A**cross Canada, business families don't just build companies — they build *communities*. They give generously to causes close to their hearts, and their philanthropy is multifaceted: spanning healthcare, education, the arts, the environment, social services, and beyond. But more than its breadth, what defines their giving is its character — sustained, personal, and woven into the family itself. And the numbers prove it.

While charitable giving is declining across Canada broadly right now, business families are stepping up. A 2026 [Canadian Family Offices survey](#) found that 45 percent of high-net-worth families expect their giving to remain the same this year, and 50 percent plan to increase it. At Creaghan McConnell Gould, we know that for these families, philanthropy isn't a strategy. It can become a fundamental part of who they are.

## Growing impact, year after year

Giving can take many forms — from donations to volunteering or meaningful traditions. One example is CMG Partner Marty McConnell's family-run McConnell Classic golf tournament, which supports Campfire Circle by helping children with serious illnesses enjoy summer camp.

What began as a small fundraiser has grown into an annual event with over 150 players, three generations of the McConnell family involved, a dedicated volunteer committee, and strong participation from CMG employees as volunteers. This year, it raised over \$120,000 — enough to send 50 kids to camp for a week — and has surpassed \$1.8 million in total since 1994.

### On the significant impact that Canadian family businesses have on their communities, Marty shares:

*"In many cases, business families are a key pillar for their communities, particularly outside the major urban centers. With many larger donations, their giving is strategic and comes with the same accountability that they exercise with their business.*

*I'm reminded of the importance that these families play in our communities every day as I drive up University Ave and see the names of many of Canada's leading business families adorning the walls of our hospitals... This is just another example of how our business families are so important to the backbone of Canada's fabric, with the taxes they pay, the employees they employ, as well as the communities they support in giving back."*

## The legacy effect

Just as the McConnell Classic has become a decades-old, multigenerational tradition, Canadian business families are finding their anchor in philanthropy. The causes they choose to support are a reflection of what they value most as a family enterprise, and that shared commitment can help bring generations together around a common purpose, especially for those who might not be involved in the day-to-day of the family business, creating another opportunity to connect and contribute in ways that might interest them.

For Canada's business families, their philanthropic endeavours can become another expression of what they stand for and what's important to them. It deepens their legacy, strengthens their communities, and can define who they are across generations.



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### REFERENCES/FURTHER READING:

- Canadian Family Offices: [Many families to give more in 2026: Highlights from our philanthropy survey](#)

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