

Donor Profile: Kathleen Bennett



Causes I care about:

I want my gifts to further causes that are personally and deeply important to me and my husband, Tom Malloy. We do not think these causes are more important than other worthy causes; they are simply the ones that touch us most profoundly: education, civil liberties, the environment, reproductive rights, and safety-net services in our local community.

For me, education was a lifeline: an escape from a difficult family with limited means and mediocre expectations for women. In founding and raising money for The Girls' Middle School, the independent school I started in Palo Alto in 1998, I created a school that combined the love of learning with high expectations for young women and provided amazing scholarship opportunities for low-income girls.

Currently I focus my time – mentoring, researching and consulting – and my philanthropic dollars on college success for low-income students, particularly undocumented youth,

whom I call “children without a country.” What brings joy to me is providing young people with the same sense of opportunity and hope that the University of California regents provided me when, years ago, they awarded me a four-year scholarship.

The change I want to create in the world:

At heart I'm just an old social studies teacher. The American dream permeates my vision.

What keeps our nation strong and vital is offering hope for the most vulnerable among us. My philanthropy underpins my vision of maintaining opportunity through education to those who are increasingly locked out by low expectations, rising tuition costs and inhospitable attitudes toward immigrants.

My most meaningful philanthropic experience:

Changing lives by encouraging the joy of learning and providing access to an otherwise unattainable education.