





FACES OF PHILANTHROPY:

“We give out of passion, because we know how powerful it is to have someone care about you.”

Young family helps students find success through higher education

When Gary Trujillo landed his first job on Wall Street 25 years ago, it was thanks in part to a persuasive recommendation from his mentor, L. William Seidman. Gary has never forgotten his kindness and generosity.

A fifth-generation Arizonan and first-generation college graduate, Gary has remained committed to extending the same opportunities he received to others in need. He shares this passion with his wife, Melissa, who is also the first in her family to graduate college.

In 2002, the Trujillos launched the Be A Leader Foundation, which helps develop the academic and leadership skills of students to prepare them for success in higher education. They also gave generously to the Roosevelt Education Foundation Endowment, a fund held at ACF to support a community technology center in South Phoenix.

“We’d given in the past to help kids pay for college, but we also wanted to have a personal impact on helping them get there,” says Gary. “Before asking someone to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, you must make sure they have boots.”

Now the parents of Alexander, 6, and Sophia, 4, the Trujillos hope their children will learn the joy of giving, just as they have enjoyed watching their own mentees help others.

“We know firsthand that by someone taking an interest in your life, you become a better person: better educated, more resilient, more understanding, more humble,” said Melissa. “So we give out of passion, because we know how powerful it is to have someone care about you.”

Melissa and Gary Trujillo (pictured with their children, Alexander and Sophia) founded the Be A Leader Foundation and give generously to the Roosevelt Education Foundation Endowment Fund at ACF to support the Roosevelt Technology Center in South Phoenix.