

LEGACY CIRCLE HIGHLIGHT: Michael and Jacqueline Belote



Interview with Mike Belote

Tell us about yourself and how/when you were introduced to My Sister's House and their work.

At the time, I was a lobbyist in downtown Sacramento and worked across from the Capitol. I was introduced to My Sister's House by Gloria Ochoa. We worked together when she was a consultant for the Senate Judiciary Committee and she was on the board at the time, and very well regarded by the Asian and Pacific Islander community. She asked me to get involved.

I initially got involved as a donor and was later asked to consider serving on the Board. I did this for some years and found My Sister's House to be a compelling and wonderful group and issue.

What motivates you to give to My Sister's House?

I think about this a lot. There are so many worthy causes: children, animals, climate... you name it; there are unlimited worthy causes to support. I sometimes think it's a little bit random how you end up with a certain group.

With My Sister's House, I was impressed by the unique nature of the cultural issues involved in domestic violence, one example being the isolation among members of the Asian and Pacific Islander community (of which I am not a member). I thought it was so compelling that people could end up in the Sacramento region--or even in the US-- without the support and with these issues of shame. It was an interesting and uniquely impactful way to make contributions that had a *direct* impact on people's lives that you may not otherwise hear about, especially as a non-Asian or Pacific Islander person.

Besides making a contribution, how else are you engaged with My Sister's House?

I did serve on the board for a number of years and I hope that I brought a different perspective. For me, it was a fascinating experience; there are so many Asian/Pacific Islander organizations that My Sister's House interacts and collaborates with.

Being on the board was a great learning experience for me and I probably got more out of it than I contributed. I learned about the variety and diversity of the Asian/Pacific Islander community and how each Asian/Pacific Islander group has different needs and different issues. I learned how much you can do for people with the sort of holistic approach that My Sister's House brings to providing services. Lots of organizations give away money, but My Sister's House provides the employment and legal services that people really need support with.

I also helped bring up the idea of Legacy gifts to the organization's charitable options. We are in the midst of one of the greatest transfers of wealth in world history. The idea is to provide a painless way of making a contribution that outlives our mortal lives. I worked with Darrel (Woo) and others who established the Legacy Circle program.

How do you envision your gift commitment supporting/impacting the clients we serve?

I would not presume to know how best to dedicate resources. In my view, that is for experts, like Nilda and others, whom I trust, to do the right things with the resources. I will not be here, so I trust the organization to put the resources to good use. I have always felt that My Sister's House runs efficiently and effectively. Whether my contribution supports something that is training-based, housing-based, or other, I don't give a lot of thought to it. I trust the structure of the organization and the people to use the resources as they see fit.

Why should others join the Legacy Circle?

There are so many ways to give of yourself, whether it's your time and your talents--or what lawyers would call "inter vivos"--or a legacy gift for when you are gone. Again, the prospect of moving on from this mortal life may not be painless, but the way of contributing that way, *is*. It is something that allows you and me to be present in a sense after we are gone. There's a certain comfort in knowing that some part of me will remain in this world through a gift that provides someone with help. It is a painless way of perpetuating your role in the world after you are gone.

There are so many worthy recipients of charitable giving. But, My Sister's House is unique in so many ways in terms of their effectiveness and the cost-benefit. It spends the money on *services*. They have active, efficient, and effective allocation of resources where they can do the most good. You can trust My Sister's House to do the right thing with the contribution. When people are thinking about the various ways that they can make charitable contributions and to whom, whether they are a member of the Asian and Pacific Islander community or not, My Sister's House is an organization you can feel good about and you can trust, so I would urge people to consider it.