

## PROFILE

Type: Family Foundation

System: GIFTS - Access Version

Modules: Accounts Payable Module

## Background

The DeVos Family Foundation arm of RDV Corp. was founded in 1969 by Richard and Helen DeVos, who still run their foundation, as do their four children who in 1992 each began running a foundation of their own. The program areas covered by these foundations span the range of philanthropy, from Community work to the Arts. These foundations are all run separately, each having its own set of contacts, and each reviewing proposals and giving grants separately. All the information is kept confidential within each fund, but kept in one GIFTS database. What this means for RDV's Sue Volkers, the Foundations Administrator, is there needs to be a simple way to keep lots of complex information separate and clear, while keeping everything at her fingertips. The solution she found was GIFTS.

## An easy organization tool

"With RDV, the giving history is kept separate because each of the DeVos families run their own foundation." Volkers says that each of the foundations gets an enormous amount of requests for grants each year, and without an easy way to keep track of these requests, much less what happens in the rest of the grant cycle, she'd be lost. "We have all our information just a click away. I don't have to look in any hard copies, past review books, or anything. It's just right there. I can't imagine doing my job without GIFTS. It would take two or three people to do it." Volkers says.

GIFTS keeps track of when a request comes in, how much it was for, where it is in the grant cycle, and what the payment schedule is. The DeVos family foundations even use it to manage their multi-year pledges, when payments are scheduled for years in advance. "It's a nice resource to have," says Volkers.

## Managing workflow - the first step toward success

Volkers often recommends GIFTS to other foundations, especially to individuals who are starting a foundation. "It can be so overwhelming. Just to manage all the paper involved in foundation work, often people don't know where to start. What can even be tracked. Using GIFTS puts a real process together to manage workflow."

Volkers uses GIFTS to keep track of individual foundation information, but also to generate reports. When Program staff asks for a historical summary on an organization, it's all at the touch of a button -- the organization's key players, dates of every request, every payment and every declination.

"It's such an advantage, whether you manage one foundation or more."

## Templates make it easy

Letter writing templates are also a huge resource for the DeVos Foundations. Acceptance and declination letters, as well as payment letters are all ready to be merged with the information stored in their database. GIFTS is even helpful at tax time. "It does a wonderful job of getting the tax information together quickly. The queries are easy."

Doing the administration for five different foundations is a lot of work, no matter how good your software is. But the work can be made easy. GIFTS will help you take control, so much so that five foundations doesn't seem like all that many to keep organized. "Other foundations ask us 'where do I begin?' The first thing we do is bring them to our computer."