

Dan's Story

“For most of my adult life, my philanthropic giving took the form of donations to churches and synagogues or contributions to large organizations such as the United Way. I was always inspired by the volunteer efforts of my kids, who participated in Americorps and spent a year in Africa working for Kiva. But other than occasionally serving a Thanksgiving meal at a local shelter, I had never managed to become involved in a non-profit organization in any real or lasting way. This all changed when my wife and I moved to Boston from Columbus, Ohio, in 2008 and became involved with SVP.

As a newcomer to Boston, I found that SVP really helped me meet people, make new friends, and expand my network. But the greatest reward of my involvement has been the opportunity to truly engage with local non-profit organizations whose missions I believe in. When I came on board as an SVP partner and began speaking with our investees, I was thrilled to discover that many of the skills I had developed during my thirty years in the business world could be enormously helpful to those working in young, emerging non-profits. Getting to know the inner workings of organizations such as Boston Debate League and 826 Boston has enabled me to identify ways I can genuinely be of help—whether this be aiding in the development of a 3-year business plan or helping to re-engineer processes so they are more effective and efficient. As an SVP partner, I'm not just writing a check, stuffing envelopes or ladling soup, but drawing on my expertise in ways that are deeply beneficial.

Working directly with our investees' executive directors, I have developed personal relationships that have made my giving experiences all the more meaningful. In the business world, getting a monthly paycheck was the primary reminder of the value one contributes; since joining SVP, I have found it even more rewarding to see how appreciative people are every day for the value I add. And I, in turn, am grateful for everything I have learned from the non-profits I've helped out—perhaps the greatest lesson being how important sustained involvement is to success in any endeavor.

Last spring, after being part of a team conducting due diligence on potential new investees, I was asked to join the SVP board of trustees. This moment was more exciting to me than any annual bonus I've received in all of my years of employment. It made me realize what makes me tick: not just dollars and cents, but knowing that I am actually making a difference because of the skills and experience I bring to the table. As a trustee, I attended last year's annual SVP conference in Dallas, which drew over 130 people from across the United States and from as far away as Japan and Australia. I've been to many industry conferences over the years, but I had never been to anything like this conference. I felt invigorated to be part of a group of people that is so passionate about drawing on our experiences to make a difference in our home communities.”