There is nothing more satisfying and exciting than being able to positively affect people and noble causes in this world. We are fortunate to be in the position to join the Giving Pledge and state publicly that the majority of our wealth will be contributed to philanthropy during our lifetimes or after we leave this world.

This was an easy decision for us. We have both been involved with non-profit causes for many years. Our oldest son of five incredible kids was born with neurofibromatosis (NF), which is a serious genetic condition neither of us had heard of until he was diagnosed nearly 15 years ago. We are proud to support the great people at the Children's Tumor Foundation (CTF), which is the non-profit group that is leading the fight against NF, as well as Children's National Medical Center (CNMC) in Washington, DC, the hospital where our son had major brain surgery six years ago and continues to receive their excellent treatment. We can't say enough about the many professionals at both institutions who dedicate their lives to treating, researching and curing this disorder. We can confidently state that without the selfless and motivated individuals at CTF and CNMC who make fighting NF their mission, our son would not be thriving as the happy and curious high school junior he is today.

Sometimes fate can deliver a bad card, but our family has learned from our experience that there can be many ‘blessings in disguise’ if you play the hand correctly. Had our son not been born with NF, we would never have known about the condition nor been in the position to help other kids also born with the disease. We feel honored to be able to give and help others in this world. It is truly a gift to give.

Wealth is created. If that wealth is all passed on to another generation, its benefits often are greatly underutilized, as those who inherit the wealth view their mission as one of maintaining it. The better path is one that allows wealth to be activated as a force to make the world a better place through endless avenues. Incredible examples of those choosing this path are Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates. Their decision to ‘activate’ their substantial wealth to benefit many people on this planet in a positive way has served as motivation for others with sizable capacity to direct their assets in a similar manner. It is highly impressive that they made this commitment. It is even more impressive that they did so in the public manner that the Giving Pledge requires. By taking the formerly hidden world of philanthropy and bringing it into the light, more and more capital will take its rightful place battling the vast array of serious challenges this world faces.

We both feel grateful that we can commit the majority of our wealth to fighting diseases like NF and other important work in the downtowns of Detroit and Cleveland where the bulk of our family of
businesses are based. At 50 and 44 years of age, we hope we are blessed with many more years to
develop our ideas around directing our wealth in a way that will maximize the positive impact on the
greatest number of people. Our dream would be for our kids to see this happen and actively participate
in the process.

It has been exciting more than words can express to live in this great country and start, develop, and
grow businesses. It will be even more exciting to deploy the wealth these businesses create to improve
our world, which we feel confident will be a much better place in the years and decades ahead.

Dan Gilbert   Jennifer Gilbert