May 9, 2014

We gained our wealth young. It was unforeseen, but not – in the time and place we live in — entirely uncommon. Like others, we’re not ready to become full-time philanthropists. We like our jobs. We’re dedicated to our colleagues. We’re raising a family. But we don’t want to wait for decades to put our money to good use either.

So we simply got started, and we shaped our philanthropy to fit our lifestyle. We searched hard for one underlying issue where, over time, we might be able to make a difference, and where that difference might stick. On a planet where half the population doesn’t fully participate economically, socially, and intellectually, we chose girls’ education in the developing world.

Since 2006, our Echidna Giving Fund has supported this critical lever for the well-being and prosperity of emerging nations. We’ve been learning along the way: how to find and trust the experts, how to plan not just our philanthropic money but our philanthropic time, and to how support the most impactful, innovative, and promising work possible.

We look forward to a day when philanthropy moves to the center of our lives — maybe careers done, certainly children grown. On that day, we’ll look back and be grateful for the years of learning and giving behind us. We’re glad that we’ve begun now. We’d like to see others join us.

Craig Silverstein and Mary Obelnicki