

Kristin DeVoe-Talluto
CDAE Graduate Candidate
Research Proposal Abstract

Practicing Philanthropy:

A phenomenological inquiry of philanthropy as a transformative learning experience

The purpose of this study is to identify, describe and understand women's experiences engaging in philanthropy. This phenomenological inquiry focuses on two central questions: “What do women learn about themselves through practicing philanthropy?” and “What is essential for the philanthropic experience to be described as transformative?” Using extensive interviews with ten women from Vermont who were identified as “great givers who are also reflective practitioners”, the research will uncover how women describe their experience of thoughtfully practicing philanthropy over time. The specific aim of the study is provide a description of philanthropy as a transformative learning (Mezirow 1991) experience. This study addresses the gap in the literature regarding how individuals learn philanthropy and will provide a rich understanding of philanthropy as a lived experience. Possible benefits of this research include helping those working to expand philanthropic giving in Vermont to identify, plan for and provide resources and services to both seasoned and emerging givers. Additionally findings from this study could help philanthropists develop their own communities to support critical philanthropic reflection and personal growth and could possibly be extended to assist philanthropists and non-profits to collaborate within the theoretical framework of transformative learning.