When it comes to philanthropic impact, size isn’t everything. Significant monetary gifts understandably garner high visibility. They can transform communities and shift the trajectory of an organization’s future.

But as we celebrate seven-figure philanthropy, it’s important to recognize that smaller gifts can move the needle just as powerfully. In fact, most charitable gifts are modest. According to 2017 IRS data, the average total charitable deduction was $5,308. In California, the average person who reported giving to charity donated an annual total of $5,845, in most cases representing support for numerous organizations and causes.

Gifts at more modest levels can be just as effective as larger gifts, provided there is sound strategy behind them. A savvy philanthropic investment to prevent loss of housing, or rapidly address more than 570 charitable funds and have granted more than $650 million in partnership with generous donors and families over the past 30 years—we’ve seen high-impact philanthropy across the spectrum of gift size, and in the process have noted several areas of impactful giving that don’t depend on the number of zeros involved.

**All Together Now**

The African proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” is especially true in philanthropy. To amplify your impact, find a team, share knowledge and pool resources. For instance, OCCF’s Impact Philanthropy Group is made up of charitable-minded professionals who join together each year to give strategically to a local issue of their choosing. Members of the group contribute $1,000 each year, which is then matched by OCCF’s board, creating an annual granting pool of $60,000—$60 times each person’s individual contribution. After 10 years together, the group is nearing half a million dollars in collective giving, which has supported the work of 44 Orange County nonprofits—achieving a combined impact that would be impossible to achieve alone.

**Find the Tipping Point**

In Orange County, one chronically homeless person generates annual costs to our community of more than $100,000, according to a comprehensive University of California-Irvine study. However, if that same person is placed into a supportive housing environment, those costs are cut in half. These individuals report 88% improvement in their quality of life and make all the difference for the nonprofits they support.

For example, Sailing Fascination Foundation (SFF), which helps Special Olympics N.E.S.T (Nurturing Exceptional Students Together) ($1,300 per student), 50 students ($60,000—60 times each person’s individual contribution. After 10 years together, the group is nearing half a million dollars in collective giving, which has supported the work of 44 Orange County nonprofits—achieving a combined impact that would be impossible to achieve alone.

To learn more about the ways you can make an impact, contact Shelley Hoss at (949) 833-8373 or shelly@ocbj.com.