

## Youth and Conservation: The Holy Grails of a Young Billionaire Couple's Giving

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IS AMONG THE SHETHS' CAUSES. PHOTO: VOLODYMYR BURDIAK/SHUTTERSTOCK

We've written before about the philanthropy of billionaire Robert F. Smith, 55, founder of Vista Equity Partners. Fund II Foundation, of which Robert Smith is founding director and president, is rapidly moving money out of the door, having given at least \$200 million so far.

But what about Vista's younger billionaire co-founder, Brian Sheth?

Well, with a \$2 billion net worth, the 42-year old and his wife Adria are making donations through their Sangreal Foundation. The couple's giving appears to be on the rise, too. Earlier this decade, the foundation's grantmaking was in the half-million range. In the most recent fiscal year available, around \$1.6 million went out the door.

Given the wealth that's waiting in the wings, here, it's worth taking a closer look at Sheth philanthropy. What motivates these two donors? Where are grants going? And what might lie ahead for the couple's giving?

Brian and Adria are both University of Pennsylvania graduates, and prior to Vista, Brian worked at Bain, Goldman Sachs, and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell. Adria worked in technology for a time, and now serves as president of the Sangreal Foundation.

The foundation has a detailed website, though it prefers to seek out organizations with which to partner. The charity supports select nonprofits through its children and conservation initiatives. Sangreal, by the way, draws its name from the quest for the Holy Grail, where in some versions, the Holy Grail is referred to as Sangreal.

The foundation supports a range of educational and youth organizations, and states that by "supporting groups that do everything from preparing American students for college to building new schools in Africa, the Sangreal Foundation is helping children around the world prepare for full, healthy lives as members of our global community."

The Sheths, via Sangreal, have supported places like St. Stephen's Episcopal School Emerging Scholars Fund, Helping Hand Home for Children, Austin Children's Shelter, and Miracle Foundation, an organization that helps India's orphans.

While Adria seems to take the lead in the couple's youth and education work, Brian focuses on conservation. Yes, he is yet another Wall Streeter with a passion for environmental protection. The story here goes back years. Sheth is the son of an Indian immigrant who worked at the Department of Environmental Conservation. What's more, his best friend growing up was Dr. Wes Sechrest, who eventually founded Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), an Austin, Texas-based organization that works to protect the world's threatened wildlife and habitats.

And wouldn't you know it? Sheth serves as chairman of the board of directors of GWC, which the family strongly supports through Sangreal. Other grantees include Fundaeco, a nonprofit that works in conservation and sustainable community development in Guatemala and Central America; ProAves, which focuses on the study and conservation of Colombian biodiversity; and Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, which works in public education and conservation.

In a recent year, the Sangreal Foundation also directed some \$500,000 to the GRAMMY Foundation. This is no ordinary music grantmaking, though. Sangreal actually funds an initiative called Saving the Planet with Song in partnership with The GRAMMY Museum and The Recording Academy, which "utilizes the core concepts of music to teach children at the elementary, middle and high school levels throughout the United States about the importance of conservation and the critical role that biodiversity plays in all of our lives."

One other thing: The University of Pennsylvania serves as an important site of the Sheths' giving and some of this work includes supporting athletics, particularly track and field. Adria Sheth was a Penn 4x400-meter runner. A few years back, the couple gave a \$1 million gift to endow the Betty J. Costanza Women's Track & Field coaching position, the first time a women's varsity coaching position at Penn was endowed in a woman's name. As Adria puts it, "it's important that we get behind establishing women's sports. It's also a tribute to a pretty incredible woman who began the program and dedicated her life to bettering the lives of women athletes."

The Sheths have plenty more wealth that may yet be directed towards philanthropy and the good news is that they appear to trying to be stay ahead of the curve in giving it away.