



January 2013 John Weeks Integrator Round-up: Philanthropy

Murdock Trust in \$220,000 award for NCNM's Helfgott Research Institute

The National College of Natural Medicine [announced on December 10, 2012](#) that it received a \$220,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust for the renovation of [NCNM's Helfgott Research Institute](#) and Community Education Center. The release notes that this grant is the largest NCNM, founded in 1957, "has ever received from a private charitable foundation." The Institute, directed by [Heather Zwickey, PhD](#), was established in June 2003 with a donation of \$1.2 million from Don Helfgott, the co-founder of Inspiration Software, based in Beaverton, Oregon. The release notes that in addition to this grant, NCNM has received "a number of other sizeable donations" for the research building project. These include \$198,000 from the Meyer Memorial Trust, \$700,000 from Bob and Charlee Moore, co-founders of Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods, \$100,000 from the estate of Violet Beebe of Coeur d'Alene and \$100,000 from the estate of Marjorie A. Gage of Portland. The last two were grateful patients of NCNM natural medicine practitioners. The Murdock grant is an outright cash award of \$65,000 as well as a conditional matching grant of \$155,000.

Comment: Congratulations to NCNM, to Zwickey, and to NCNM's president and fund-raising lead [David Schleich, PhD](#), for this success. As a sometimes seeker of philanthropic support for integrative health projects which, like NCNM, are not led by non-MDs, I am aware of the glass ceiling that still exists between most mainstream giving and these institutions. Schleich is right to note the historic important of the Murdock gift, breaking through this glass ceiling. It is notable that both the Murdock and Meyer trusts focus on the Northwest, as is Inspiration Software, where the value of naturopathic physicians, NCNM's main work product, is well-known. People often give to people, particularly in a context of historic prejudice and second-class citizen ship. I have found that colleagues in conventional academic medicine whose institutions are strewn with large dollar donations sometimes just don't get this.