When it comes time to give back, most people are comfortable with the traditional approach to philanthropy — pick a charity, make a contribution and let that charity put its resources in the hands of those in need — but Bob and Robin Schwartz aren't most people.

In 2007, as Metropolitan Detroit's economic engine came to a screeching halt, the husband-and-wife team decided they needed to do more to give back — and doing more has become a full-time job.

"We were in a position to give back to our community," Bob says. "We saw so many people in need, and we spent a lot of time trying to figure out what to do and how we could accomplish these great visions of helping cure the world of all its ills," Bob says.

"We decided to concentrate on a specific area and realized the best way, as a private foundation, was to assist individuals directly. While most private foundations provide grant money to public charities to do their work, we wanted to help people trying to help themselves during economic emergencies, to provide a bridge to help keep them moving forward."

That was just the start of Bob and Robin's Here to Help Foundation, which has now doled out more than $3 million in emergency assistance.

"Once we decided on our focus, we started meeting with charities across Wayne and Oakland counties, introducing ourselves and asking what we could do to help their clients," Robin says. "Their social workers or employees go on our website, www.here-to-help-foundation.org, and apply on behalf of their clients for assistance, whether they need help with car repairs, furniture or paying utility bills, rent or security deposits."

Those in need are qualified by the IRS as "temporarily impoverished and lacking the basic necessities of life."

Surprising to some may be how many referrals Bob and Robin receive from Jewish agencies.

"We've done a lot of work with Jewish Family Service," says Bob, who also highlights referrals from social workers at Temple Israel and Yad Ezra.

"These are people who can continue to move forward but hit a bump in the road, a hurdle that could otherwise put them into a desperate financial situa-

Copyright © 2012, 2017 Jewish News.
Published by Detroit Jewish News, Inc.
48068

For more information or to donate, email info@heretohelpfoundation.org.