



# Philanthropic Advisor

*A Guide to Charitable Giving  
for Professional Advisors*

The Boston Foundation 



## Philanthropy in Practice

### Amalie Kass

#### Giving the Gift of Fun

Amalie Kass—mother, grandmother, historian, author, teacher and philanthropist—has done many interesting things in her life, but few have enchanted her quite like her latest project: the carousel that will open on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway on August 31st.

The Greenway was still in the planning stages when Amalie, an admirer of Rose Kennedy, decided she wanted to contribute to its development as a park. “I didn’t know anybody at the Greenway, so I asked the Boston Foundation to put me in touch with the right people, and that’s what they did in a very nice way,” she says. When Greenway officials took her on a walk through the future park stretching from the North End to Chinatown in 2010, something caught her eye.

“When we walked by the site where we had a rental carousel, she stood there and kept saying, ‘Hmmm, a carousel,’” says Linda Jonash, the Greenway’s Director of Planning and Design. “Wouldn’t it be amazing to do a carousel that was planned and integrated into a park?” The rest is history.”

Growing up in Baltimore, one of Amalie’s favorite activities was perching on the wooden carousel horses in Gwynn Oak Park as they flew up, down and around. When she became a mother, she took her own children to the historic Flying Horses carousel on Martha’s Vineyard. So it may have been fate that led her to use her Donor Advised Fund at the Boston Foundation to become the lead benefactor of the fanciful assemblage of native creatures that now graces the Greenway.

From the start, Amalie was clear about what her patronage should support. “Her initial mission statement was that it should be enjoyable for the

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***“The Boston Foundation knows its way around the community and is doing wonderful things for it.”***

—Amalie Kass


children,” says Jeff Briggs, the Newburyport-based designer, sculptor and art director for the carousel. “That was the overriding message: for the children of Boston.”

Amalie, who once taught history in the Newton schools and who has authored two books of nonfiction, insisted that Greenway staff consult the city’s children about which animals should be featured in the carousel. So the planning staff helped 8- and 9-year-olds in four Boston schools brainstorm and draw animals that they glued onto Popsicle sticks and mounted on a carousel model. “She really influenced the outcome because she wanted to reach out to the kids in the Boston Public Schools to make sure they had input,” says Ms. Jonash. “She said, ‘You adult designers need to go talk to the children—your clients.’ She said that and the light bulb went off for all of us.”

Eventually, creatures native to the sea, land and air of Massachusetts were chosen, with Amalie weighing in strongly in favor of the grasshopper. She liked the historical linkage to the weathervane that has topped Faneuil Hall since 1742. She also delighted in the turtle, modeled after the 90-year-old Myrtle the Turtle at the New England Aquarium.

The whole process “has been very much of a dialogue versus Amalie just writing a check,” says Ms. Jonash. “She really appreciated Rose Kennedy’s model as a mother, and her values as a woman, and that was what precipitated her interest. She had no connection with the Kennedy family personally, but she had tremendous admiration for Rose Kennedy personally and particularly as a mother.”

“If you could come up with a perfect donor who is so generous, kindhearted, and smart, it would be Amalie,” says Jodi Wolin, the Greenway’s Director of Development. Always modest and understated, Amalie did not want the carousel named for her, choosing instead to dedicate it to the memory of her late husband, Malcolm Hecht, Jr.

“I’ve been very fortunate as a child” she said, “and so have my children, but many are not, and I wanted to do something that would be fun for the children in the Boston area for quite a long time.” 

## About the Boston Foundation

The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston’s community foundation, is one of the nation’s oldest and largest community foundations, with net assets of close to \$900 million under management. It offers charitable giving vehicles known as Donor Advised Funds for those who have \$10,000 or more to invest. Gifts to a Donor Advised Fund are generally tax deductible (50 percent of adjusted gross income for cash and 30 percent of AGI for stocks and real property) and no yearly distribution is required. There is a small fee for administration and management.

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