

NEW GOSPEL OF WEALTH / THE FUTURE OF PHILANTHROPY

## Public-private partnership: a new model for lasting impact featuring Jennifer Loving and Chuck Robbins

Chuck Robbins, chairman and CEO of Cisco, and Jennifer Loving, CEO of Destination: Home, discuss how their public-private partnership model is fulfilling its mission to end homelessness in Santa Clara County, California. Moderated by Rebecca Cokley of the Center for American Progress.

This video is part of a collection of conversations with leaders, thinkers, and activists from philanthropy, business, the arts, tech, and beyond outlining bold visions for the future of philanthropy.

### **Transcript begins.**

[Public-private partnerships: a new model for lasting impact. Jennifer Loving, CEO, Destination: home. A middle-aged white woman with long hair. Chuck Robbins, chairman and CEO, Cisco Systems. Trustee, Ford Foundation. A tall white man with short brown hair, wearing a pink shirt and dark suit. Rebecca Cokley, Founder, Disability Justice Initiative. A redheaded little person wearing a flower print black blouse and yellow herringbone tweed skirt.]

**ANNOUNCER:** Please welcome Jennifer Loving, Chuck Robbins, and Rebecca Cokley.

[applause]

**REBECCA COKLEY:** So, Jen, what's your backstory in this space?

**JENNIFER LOVING:** I have been involved in homelessness since I was a little child. My uncle was a fire-and-brimstone preacher in Venice Beach and had a big church in the '60s and '70s and let anybody stay there who needed a place to stay. So I grew up seeing that that seemed relatively normal. If somebody doesn't have a place to go, they would go to Uncle Fred's and they would sleep there. And, as I got older and understood, really, the roots of homelessness and injustice, I got much more involved in—first, running shelters... Um, any good or bad thing, as it relates to homelessness, I have probably done—taken over hotels, you know, organized big things outside, massive shelters. And now, though, finally, for the last, um, seven or eight years, a real effort around a systemic reduction of people that are outside. Rebecca: What have been the challenges in making this partnership that you all have work, and what have been the resources that Cisco's been able to really bring to the table, um, to be so hands-on in the mission of this work?

**CHUCK ROBBINS:** Well, we started with—we donated \$50 million last year, and, uh, and we just gave \$50 million. And, um, the biggest challenge for us is getting other businesses to

actually get engaged on issues that, ultimately, aren't directly beneficial to their business, right? One of the problems, I think, with corporate social responsibility over the last 50 years is that CEOs want to take and talk about all the great things they're doing, but if you really dig into everything they're doing—including us—you can draw a line from whatever corporate social responsibility effort there is and benefit to your business. We have a crisis in Silicon Valley around housing, in general, I mean, and we're—I'm trying to tell my peers, we live in an unsustainable community, and if you can't draw a line from a healthy community to the success of your business, then you're just, you're just missing it.

[applause]

**JENNIFER LOVING:** \$50 million is a lot of money, right? That's a lot of money. And it's certainly the most amount of money that I know of being, like, freely given. When you're talking about solving problems for the most vulnerable, the poorest, the people that, basically, um, no one is generally trying to solve for, you need flexibility. You need to be able to use money in a way that is not traditional. Right? And so, you know, when banks are lending or loan pools are lending, they evaluate risk—and, of course, that's important. But sometimes you have to be able to take risks that are not traditional. Over the last four years, we have permanently housed almost 8,000 people.

[applause]

**CHUCK ROBBINS:** And 92 percent of them remain housed.

**JENNIFER LOVING:** And these are people that have been in our streets in Silicon Valley for years and decades, literally decades. These are people with severe cognitive disabilities, with mental health disorders, with issues that affect, frankly, the entire population—right?—no matter what your socioeconomic background is. But when you have no money and no safety net, those problems occur on the streets, and so they become exacerbated. So, when Chuck gave us the money, he did two things that were so important. One, he already mentioned, but—he gave it to us. And the reason that was important was—there's not one nonprofit or one entity solving homelessness. Homelessness is a massive humanitarian crisis that has multiple owners—a city, a county, a housing authority. There's—it requires a systemic collective impact approach, and we have that. But what we didn't have was private money that could be used really flexibly. So we have this bond and we're able to build housing, and we're in the middle of building 120 projects over 10 years. We have 19 projects in the ground in two years already, which is really pretty good for Silicon Valley, in terms of how expensive everything is. We're using the money from Cisco to be competitive in the market with market-rate developers, tie up land, make these projects go faster. Your money has been a part of seven of those 19 projects so far, and we're just getting started.

**REBECCA COKLEY:** Thank you so much, and thank you everybody here today.

**JENNIFER LOVING:** Thank you.

**CHUCK ROBBINS:** Thank you.

[applause]

[New gospel of wealth. What does #GenerosityToJustice look like to you? Ford Foundation dot org forward slash new gospel.]

**End of transcript.**