

## **Director's Message**

By Dale Mitchell

DVG is concluding its 15<sup>th</sup> year serving the grantmaking community in southeastern Pennsylvania, and what a dynamic and frequently challenging time it has been. This past year, and I'm sure for the foreseeable future, our sector faces difficult issues and tough choices. Continued global turmoil and terrorist threats; the downturn in the stock market, resulting in the loss of billions of dollars in foundation assets; corporations struggling to justify charitable investments when shareholders are not receiving dividends; the diminishing of trust and confidence in our major institutions, including nonprofit organizations; and federal, state and local governments faced with staggering deficits; all coupled with significantly increased needs, are forcing each of us to refocus and prioritize our efforts, and transform the way we carry out our work.

DVG has and will continue to work to minimize the impact of these challenges for our members, and in turn their grantees. As I indicated in my opening remarks at DVG's 2002 Annual Conference, these times require energetic leadership, creative new strategies and a commitment to working in partnership to achieve the results we all seek. What DVG is best at is creating a knowledge exchange and the weaving together of networks of grantmakers and others around communities of interest – enabling people to learn from one another, capitalize on the skills and resources of their peers, and broaden their perspectives and visions. There is no doubt that grantmakers want to be more knowledgeable and engaged in their giving and community relations than ever, and DVG is committed to providing its members with those opportunities and assisting them in making informed choices.

Highlights of DVG's past year included our Annual Conference with the greatest number of attendees ever (see story on page 2); a Critical Dialogue with Paul G. Vallas, CEO of the School District of Philadelphia, which resulted in the creation of a working group of DVG education funders; a program for corporate members entitled "Tips for Managing Your Corporate Giving in Challenging Times"; numerous Skills Building Workshops on such topics as "Evaluating Nonprofits' Financial Statements"; a Planning Workshop for Family Foundations; and another on "Managing Foundation Portfolios, Grant Budgets, and Operating Costs in a Down Market"; and the creation of a new DVG affinity group for our Health Conversion Foundation members. Other highlights included the continued enhancement of DVG's extensive resource library, and the redesign of our website, which will be launched early in 2003, and will provide members and the broader community with valuable resources, and in-depth knowledge and information about our field. And I'm proud to say, our peers recognize DVG as a leader in regional associations of grantmakers for its exemplary staff knowledge and leadership.

As DVG begins its new year, we are deeply committed to ensuring our members receive maximum value for their investment in us – we know this is more important than ever.

DVG's staff and board wish you, your families and loved one a joyous holiday season and a new year filled with hope and optimism.