



CFC Supporter Story: My Cause, My Why

Manning Pellanda was devastated when he heard the news. His daughter, at 27 years old, had been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. “The best way to describe it is being completely gobsmacked in your head and in your heart,” he says.

It wasn't the first time that Pellanda's life had been disrupted by disease. “My mother died from breast cancer, which left a huge hole in my heart,” he says. “She went through unbelievable emotional and physical trauma that nobody should have to experience.”

Unfortunately, it doesn't stop there. Just out of college, a friend of his was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. “Her life, full of promise, resulted in no remissions and now [she's] completely bedridden and dependent upon caregivers,” he says. “I have felt helpless for years because they still haven't found a cure for MS.”

And recently, a close college friend was diagnosed with breast cancer and is currently undergoing chemotherapy.

These firsthand experiences motivate Pellanda to support medical research through charitable donations. As a senior policy advisor at Health and Human Services (HHS), Pellanda is able to donate to charities of his choosing through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). It's one of the largest workplace giving campaigns in the world, running from October through January. Through the CFC, federal employees are able to choose from thousands of vetted charities to donate to or volunteer their time at.

In 2016, Pellanda was a loaned executive for the CFC of the national capital area (meaning he was “loaned” by HHS to work on the CFC). Though he isn't involved in the same capacity this year, Pellanda says he's there in spirit and support, as the CFC is a key way for him to support the causes that matter most to him.

“Those contributions are needed to do the things that we can't do, but care deeply about,” he says. “I can't find a cure for breast cancer or multiple sclerosis or type 1 diabetes, but I can donate through my monthly payroll deduction to help make that happen for the people that I love, and all the others that I don't even know. It takes teams of brilliant minds to do research, and research cost money. It is what I can do to support the eventual cures and eradication of these debilitating and feared diseases.”

We dive a little deeper with Pellanda in this Q&A to learn more about his passion for supporting medical research and the annual CFC.

What keeps you motivated to continue your donations toward medical research?

I am motivated by selfishness. What I mean by that is that the people I love that are negatively impacted by diseases that don't have cures are the people that I don't want to lose. I don't want them suffering. I want them to have their lives back and to fulfill all their dreams without any suffering. I am motivated by reading about the medical research that is taking place in the areas of cancer, MS and diabetes, and the commitment of those minds, greater than mine, that are searching for the same things I am.

Why do you think it's important to donate to charitable causes?

We never know when we might be faced with a crisis within our community and will need the assistance of a local charity. We

never know what Mother Nature is going to throw at us, or any unexpected situation that impacts our lives. Hopefully that will never happen, but what about those that can't take care of themselves and need help from a charity?

I also let people know that just because I donate through the CFC doesn't mean I have stopped donating through my church or that I can't still volunteer my time at a food bank or homeless shelter. People tend to think it is one or the other, but it isn't.

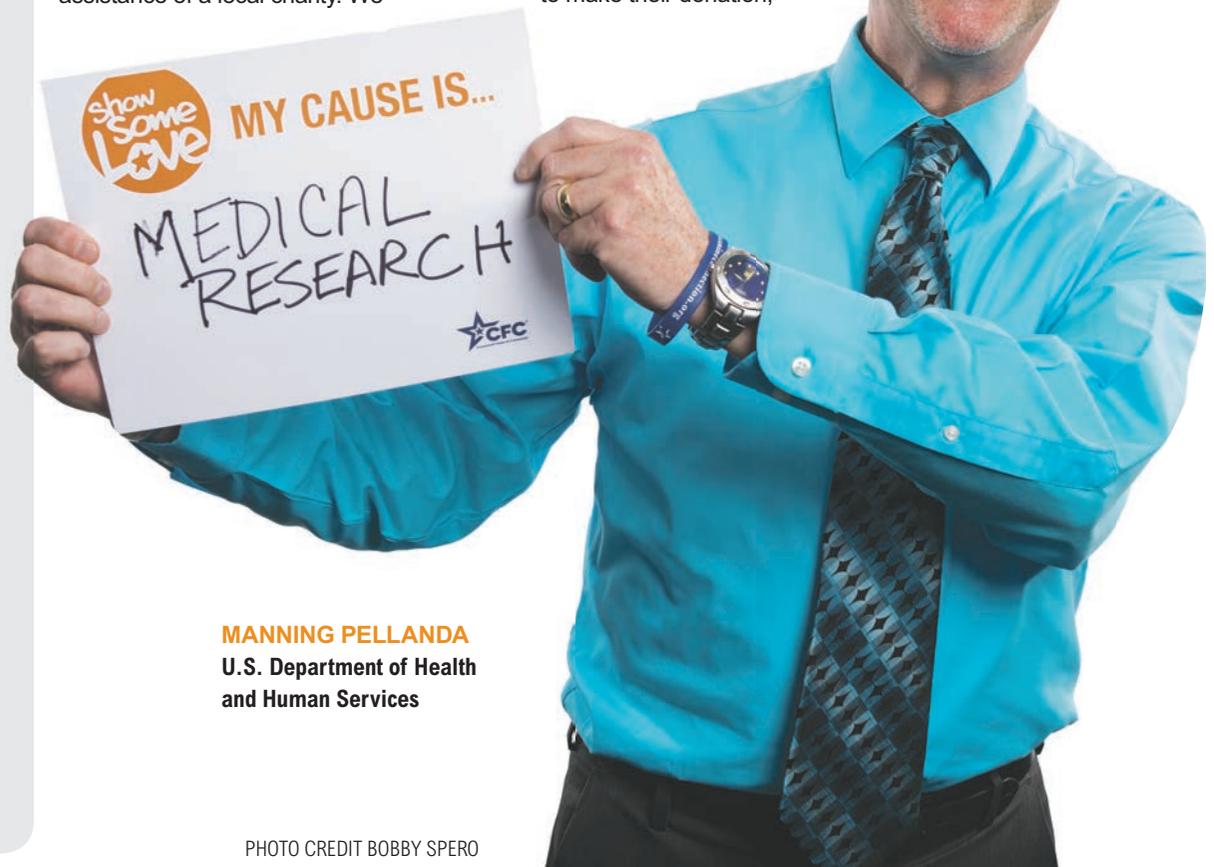
A donation of even just one dollar makes a huge difference. We help ourselves when we help others, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

For those who are new to charitable giving, how would you advise them on which cause or charity to support?

If someone isn't certain where to make their donation,

I would ask them what they are passionate about – what are their hobbies or concerns – because it is most likely they will find what they are looking for within the CFC charity guide, either locally or somewhere in the world. Even though I don't live in the town where I was born, I still donate to a charity there, and I do that through my CFC contribution. It doesn't have to be just local. That is the beauty of the CFC – it is worldwide, and we can help others and ourselves when we donate.

Story by Tara Shubbuck



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