



Corporations giving big money to Boy Scouts despite anti-gay policy

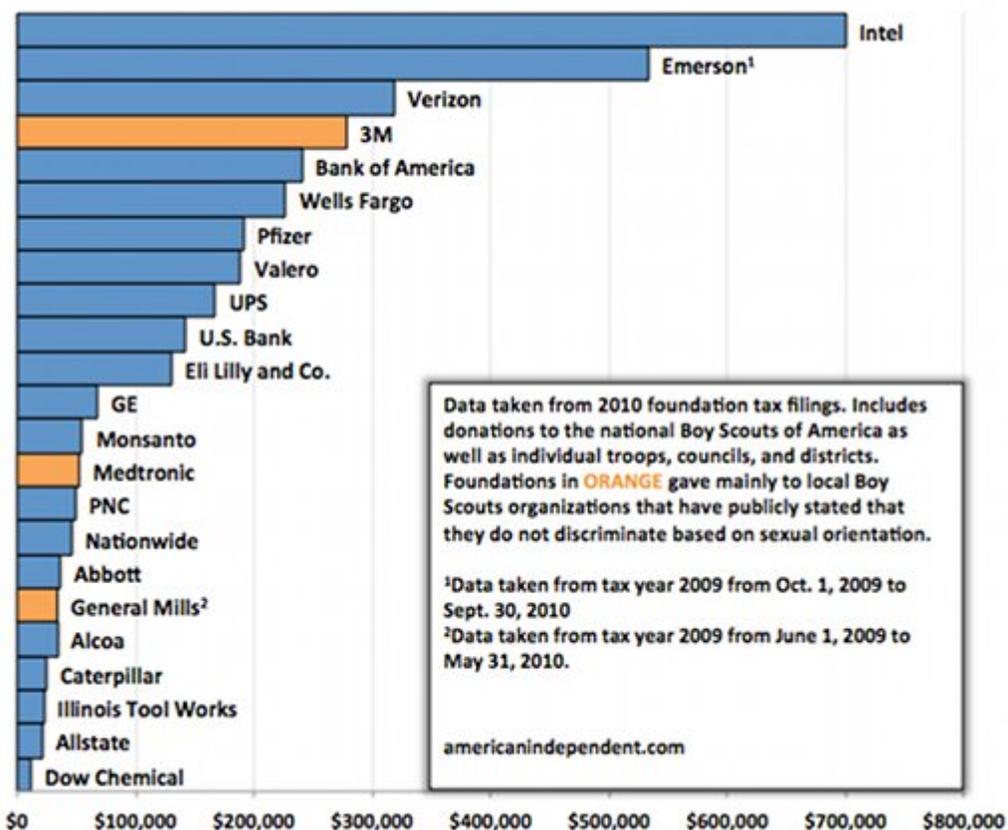
[Andy Birkey](#) | 09.18.12 | 3:00 pm | [Republish](#)

Corporate foundations have given millions to the Boy Scouts of America and its subdivisions in recent years despite that organization's policy of excluding gays and lesbians. Many of those same foundations have policies against giving to organizations that discriminate based on sexual orientation.

Twenty-three of the top 50 corporate foundations, ranked by the Foundation Center in terms of total charitable giving, gave at least \$10,000 each to the Boy Scouts in 2010, the most recent year for which data was available for most companies. Combined, they gave about \$3.6 million.

Many household names are among the donors. The Intel Foundation gave the most — about \$700,000 in 2010. The Verizon Foundation donated more than \$300,000, and big banks — such as Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank, and Bank of America — each gave more than \$100,000.

Corporate Funding of the Boy Scouts of America



Most of the corporate foundations refused to give definitive answers about whether they would continue supporting the Boy Scouts in the wake of the organization's announcement that it would maintain its exclusionary policy. But one company, UPS, told The American Independent that the policy would not impact its donations to the Boy Scouts, which totaled close to \$167,000 in 2010.

On July 17, the national Boy Scouts executive committee [announced that a secret 11-member committee](#) had decided to reaffirm the group's exclusion of "homosexuals." That group had been meeting since 2010.

The policy that was reaffirmed states: "While the BSA does not proactively inquire about the sexual orientation of employees, volunteers, or members, we do not grant membership to individuals who are open or avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the BSA."

The Boy Scouts have been kicking gay members out of the organization since [at least the late-1970s](#). In 1978, the group formalized its ban on allowing gays to have leadership positions in the scouts. "We do not believe that homosexuality and leadership in Scouting are appropriate," the policy stated.

The Boy Scouts [reiterated the policy](#) in 1991 after a gay scout in New Jersey came out on local television. That young man, James Dale, [later sued the organization](#) for discrimination, a case the Boy Scouts won at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2000. In a 5-4 vote, the majority of justices decided that the Boy Scouts' First Amendment right to "expressive association" allows the group to exclude members it does not want.

The policy excluding gay scouts was rewritten into its current form in 2004. The ban includes gay Boy Scout members, volunteers, and employees.



Zach Wahls, Scouts for Equality

Ahead of the July announcement, the Boy Scouts had come under increasing pressure to change the policy. In April, a voting member of the Boy Scouts [introduced a resolution](#) to change the membership policy at the National Annual Meeting.

In May, Jennifer Tyrrell, a den mother from Ohio who was ousted last spring for being a lesbian, and Zach Wahls, an Eagle Scout with two moms, offered the Boy Scouts National Annual Meeting a petition with 275,000 names urging a change to the policy.

Corporate giving

Corporate foundations are major donors to the Boy Scouts of America and its subdivisions, such as regional councils and local troops. The American Independent reviewed the tax filings of the top 50 corporate foundations as ranked by the [Foundation Center](#) in terms of giving during 2010. Twenty-three provided at least \$10,000 to the Boy Scouts; many of those same foundations also have policies that prohibit giving to organizations that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

These foundations had three methods of directing funds to the Boy Scouts. Some gave direct grants to the Boy Scouts. Some companies have a matching program and give a certain amount to an organization based on an individual employee's donation. At times, that program was through the United Way. Some foundations also gave through volunteer programs, granting funds to an organization based on the number of hours individual employees volunteered for them.

The Boy Scouts, which claim more than 2.7 million youth members and more than one million adult members, have a complicated organizational structure. The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America governs scouting across the country and provides support to 295 local councils, which oversee scouting in their geographic area. Individual scouting units (Boy Scout troops and Cub Scout packs, for example) are operated by faith-based, civic, and educational organizations.

Corporate foundations gave to every level of the Boy Scouts infrastructure, though the bulk of the donations appear to have gone to regional councils and individual local troops rather than to the national headquarters.

A few Boy Scout troops and councils have publicly stated that they are refusing to comply with the national Boy Scouts of America policy of excluding gays from the organization. (In the past, the national organization has reportedly threatened to revoke the charters of Boy Scout entities that violate the policy.) In some cases, it was unclear to which Boy Scout entity the foundations gave. For example, the Wells Fargo Foundation's tax documents only listed "Boy Scouts of America" with no additional information.

Most of the corporations contacted by The American Independent would not directly say whether the Boy Scouts' affirmation of its discriminatory policy would impact grant funding. The UPS Foundation, however, indicated there would be no change in the in its grant-making. UPS gave around \$167,000 to various Boy

Scout entities in 2010, including [\\$100,000 to the national organization](#) and \$30,000 to the Boy Scouts' Atlanta Area Council. That council confirmed to TAI that it follows the national policy on sexual orientation.

In a statement to TAI, UPS International Public Relations Manager Kristen Petrella said the Boy Scouts' decision to affirm their policy excluding "open or avowed homosexuals" will not change the company's funding choices.

"This decision has not and will not impact The UPS Foundation's decision to provide funding to BSA although we evaluate each funding request on an individual basis," said Petrella. "UPS has always supported and will continue to support youth development. A large number of UPS employees were involved with the Boy Scouts in their youth and some of them continue to serve as scout leaders today. UPS believes in supporting organizations with which its employees are involved."

Petrella noted that the foundation has supported LGBT groups. "UPS believes in supporting all aspects of diversity. We support dozens of organizations regardless of race, gender, gender identity or sexual preference such as the Human Rights Campaign, and Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. In 2011, The UPS Foundation funded diversity-related projects totaling US \$7 million to 173 organizations across the country."

The UPS Foundation gave \$100,000 to the Human Rights Campaign and \$50,000 to PFLAG in 2010, and the corporation has an employee non-discrimination policy that covers sexual orientation.

Intel and the LDS Church

Intel — the Boy Scouts' largest donor among the corporations surveyed — has an explicit policy of not giving to groups that discriminate.

That policy, which applies to competitive grants, states that the Intel Foundation will not fund "organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, veteran or disability status."

The Intel Foundation also has a volunteer matching program that donates funds to a charity based on an employee's volunteer hours. That program has a [similar policy](#). It says that the foundation disqualifies "organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran, or disability statuses" from the grant program.

Yet, according to tax documents, the Intel Foundation gave about \$700,000 to Boy Scout chapters in 2010. Those donations came exclusively through the employee volunteer matching program.

Of that, more than \$320,000 went to Boy Scout troops and councils connected to the Mormon Church. TAI contacted two of the regional councils overseeing those Boy Scout troops, but those inquiries were not returned.

The LDS Church became formally affiliated with the Boy Scouts in 1913. According to figures on the Boy Scouts of America website, as of 2011, there were nearly 38,000 scouting units sponsored by the Latter Day Saints. That's nearly 34 percent of all units nationwide.

And the LDS Church, which opposes "homosexual behavior," holds sway with the Boy Scouts of America.

In a brief filed in the landmark case of Boy Scouts of America v. Dale, a lawyer for the LDS Church warned that the church would leave the scouts if gays were allowed to be scout leaders.

"If the appointment of scout leaders cannot be limited to those who live and affirm the sexual standards of BSA and its religious sponsors, the Scouting Movement as now constituted will cease to exist," wrote Von G.

Keetch on behalf of the LDS Church and several other religious organizations in 2000 ([PDF](#)). "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — the largest single sponsor of Scouting units in the United States — would withdraw from Scouting if it were compelled to accept openly homosexual Scout leaders."

When asked about the Intel's funding policies, Intel Foundation executive director Wendy Ramage-Hawkins told TAI via email: "All organizations seeking financial support from the Intel Foundation are required to affirm their compliance with Intel's non-discrimination corporate donation policy. Organizations that cannot affirm their compliance will not receive funding from the Intel Foundation."

Intel wouldn't say whether or not it would continue to fund the Boy Scouts.

"We will know if and when they affirm our non-discrimination policy and request our support," Ramage-Hawkins said.

She later clarified that the Intel Foundation will be asking for a statement of agreement with their nondiscrimination policy in the next grant cycle but had not done so in the past.

"We have not previously asked for affirmation, so this will be the first time the question is raised," she said.

Funding discrimination

Intel isn't alone in funding the Boy Scouts despite having a policy that would appear to prohibit it.

The charitable giving arm of Aluminum producer Alcoa contributed \$9,000 to the Rip Van Winkle Council of the Boy Scout in New York State (another payment of \$6,000 was scheduled for 2011) and \$25,000 to the "Boy Scouts of America" in 2010. The United Way of Ulster County, New York, ended a [40-year relationship with the Rip Van Winkle Council](#) in 2004 because it refused to sign a non-discrimination statement that included sexual orientation, according to reporting at the time.

The Alcoa Foundation's [grant guidelines](#) state that "in general" it does not make grants to "organizations whose policies or actions are inconsistent with Alcoa's non-discrimination policy."

A search of Alcoa's website did not turn up a "non-discrimination policy," but Alcoa has an [equal opportunity policy](#) that states:

"Alcoa reaffirms its policy to provide equal employment opportunity in recruiting, hiring, upgrading and promotion, conditions and privileges of employment, company-sponsored training, access to facilities, educational assistance, social and recreational programs, compensation, benefits, transfers, discipline, layoffs, recalls or termination of employment to all employees without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity / expression, veteran status, genetic information, sex or age (within statutory limits)."

The U.S. Bancorp Foundation — the charitable arm of U.S. Bank — gave about \$143,000 in 2010, much of it through direct grants, including \$78,000 in direct grants to the Western Colorado Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The rest came from an employee-matching grant program. The Western Colorado Council did not return a request for comment and has also [declined other media outlets' interview requests](#) related to the ban on gays and lesbians.

The U.S. Bancorp Foundation's [website states](#): "The U.S. Bancorp Foundation charitable contributions program will not provide funding for ... organizations whose practices are not in keeping with the company's equal opportunity policy."

According to U.S. Bank's employee handbook ([PDF](#)):

"U.S. Bank prohibits both discrimination against and harassment of any employee or applicant, and ensures that all personnel practices are administered on individual merit and capability without regard to race, religion, color, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, genetic information, disability, veteran status, or other factors identified and protected by law. These practices include, but are not limited to, recruitment, advertising, selection, performance management, compensation, training, placement, transfer, demotion, promotion, disciplinary action and termination."

The Verizon Foundation bars funding for organizations that discriminate. According to the [Verizon Foundation's grant guidelines](#), in order to be "eligible for funding consideration, organizations must ... serve the community without discrimination on the basis of age, color, citizenship, disability, disabled veteran status, gender, race, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, military service or status or Vietnam-era veteran status."

But Verizon gave roughly \$318,000 in 2010 to various Boy Scout entities.

Several other corporate foundations provided grants and funding to the Boy Scouts despite having a non-discrimination policy. GE Foundation gave about \$68,000 in matching contributions to the Boy Scouts, but also has a policy ([PDF](#)) warning potential grantees that they will be ineligible if they "do not comply with GE's non-discrimination policy," which includes sexual orientation.

The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, the charitable arm of Eli Lilly and Company pharmaceuticals, gave a \$100,000 grant to the Boy Scouts' Crossroads of America Council in Indiana in 2010 as part of a \$500,000 grant agreement. Lilly contributed another \$30,500 to the Crossroads council and other local troops and councils in a volunteer matching program. [According to Indianapolis Star columnist Ruth Holladay](#), the Crossroads of America Council excluded a gay parent from leadership activities in 2005 and acknowledged it adhered to the national policy. The council's spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

Yet, [Eli Lilly's website](#) states that "organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, age or religion" are "not supported by the Lilly Foundation as a matter of general policy."

Many companies did not respond to requests for information specific to their foundations, including whether they had policies that prohibit funding groups that discriminate. However, all the corporations whose foundations gave to the Boy Scouts did have employment policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Among those were the Pfizer Foundation, which gave about \$191,000 to the Boy Scouts, and the foundation of Valero Energy, an oil refinery company in Texas, which gave roughly \$189,000.

Large financial services companies also gave to the Boy Scouts in 2010. The Wells Fargo Foundation gave close to \$227,000, and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation gave about \$240,000 to various Boy Scout entities.

(Wells Fargo, which merged with Wachovia in 2008, also administered the Wachovia-Wells Fargo Foundation, and that foundation gave an additional \$288,000 to Boy Scout entities in 2010. According to that foundation's tax documents, it has distributed 99 percent of its assets and will cease operations at the end of 2012.)

Both Wells Fargo and Bank of America had withdrawn funding for the Boy Scouts in the past.

According to an Associated Press report, Wells Fargo stopped funding the Boy Scouts in 1992 because the Boy Scouts' policy conflicted with Wells Fargo's non-discrimination policy.

That appears to have changed when Wells Fargo merged with Norwest Corp. in 1998, and area managers were charged with making funding decisions.

"Norwest saw a need to decentralize decision-making, and it was agreed to let local bank presidents decide if they want to donate to the Boy Scouts," said spokesman Larry Haeg, according to a Washington Times article published in 2000.

According to Wells Fargo spokesman Jim Nawrocki, that is the current policy of Wells Fargo. "Our position is that local leaders are in the best position to know the specific needs of their community," he told TAI in an email.

Bank of America found itself the target of dueling boycotts in the summer of 1992. An anti-gay group, the American Family Association, led the initial boycott after the bank pledged to withhold funding to the Boy Scouts because of its policy banning gays.

The AFA said that Bank of America, along with Wells Fargo and Levis Strauss, was "aggressively promoting the homosexual lifestyle." In a July 1992 press statement ([PDF](#)), AFA head Don Wildmon said, "The fact that they would penalize the Boy Scouts because they would not endorse homosexuality shows that they no longer want or desire the business of the overwhelming majority of Americans."

Republican members of Congress circulated a letter to the Bank of America urging them to restore funding.

Bank of America relented and promised to continue funding the Boy Scouts, according to press reports at the time. That move sparked a new round of boycotts, this time by the LGBT community, but the bank stayed firm in its decision. Bank of America did not respond to repeated requests for information regarding its current policy.

Other corporate foundations giving at least \$10,000 to the Boy Scouts in 2010 included the Abbott Fund at about \$37,000, the Caterpillar Foundation at \$25,000, Illinois Tool Works Foundation gave roughly \$22,000, the Dow Chemical Company Foundation at \$12,000, the Nationwide Insurance Foundation at about \$46,000, the Monsanto Fund at about \$55,000, the PNC Foundation at about \$49,000, and the Allstate Fund at \$21,000. The Emerson Charitable Trust, the philanthropic arm of Emerson Electric, gave \$533,000 during its fiscal year ending September 30, 2010.

Attempts were made to contact each foundation, but many went unreturned. Some foundations said they would wait until the next grant cycle to determine if the Boy Scouts qualify for funding.

Fred Solomon, vice president of corporate communications for the PNC Financial Services Group, told TAI via email: "The PNC Foundation provides support based on the strength of a group's proposal and its alignment with the foundation's priorities. Without a specific funding proposal before it, the foundation would not speculate on the potential for future support."

Kathleen Manning, public relations manager for the Monsanto Fund, said in an email statement, "No preemptive decisions to fund the group have been made and if we receive a grant request from the Boy Scouts of America again we will evaluate it at that time."

Enforcing the policy

Specific Boy Scout councils that have benefited from donations from these corporate foundations in the past have reportedly kicked out gay scouts and volunteers.

The Cradle of Liberty Council in Philadelphia voted in May 2003 to end its participation in the national policy of discrimination based on sexual orientation. But just weeks later, the council kicked out a scout named Greg Lattera after he told media outlets that he was an openly gay boy scout.



Cradle of Liberty Council building by Bruce Anderson (Wikipedia)

"He decided to hold a press conference to come out as a member of the gay community," William T. Dwyer, the chief executive of the council, told the Philadelphia Inquirer. "Our staff knew he was gay and never made a big deal about it. He decided to make a big deal about it. The don't-ask, don't-tell policy is pretty clear."

The Inquirer noted that the council's policy had "no mention of don't ask, don't tell."

By that summer, the council had adopted a policy that stated: "Applications for leadership and membership do not inquire into sexual orientation. However, an individual who declares himself to be a homosexual would not be permitted to join Scouting."

News outlets cited threats by the national Boy Scouts of America to revoke the council's charter if it did not revert to the national policy on gays and scouting.

The council lost hundreds of thousands in grant funding from the United Way, Pew Charitable Trusts, and William Penn Foundation after it dismissed Lattera and changed the policy. The incident also spurred the Philadelphia City Council to review a 1928 agreement that lent the Boy Scout council city land for \$1 a year. In 2006, the city raised the rent from \$1 to a market rate of \$200,000 on the Boy Scouts after the council failed to state that it would not discriminate based on sexual orientation. The Boy Scouts sued and won the right to remain in the building. In 2010, a jury sided with the Boy Scouts on free speech grounds.

Several corporate foundations donated to the Cradle of Liberty Council in 2010. Bank of America gave \$1500; Verizon gave \$250; and PNC gave \$150. UPS appears to have given \$5000 – the foundation's tax form indicated a donation to "Boy Scouts – Cradle of" but the rest was cut off.

Other Boy Scout councils have also kicked out scouts in recent years while taking in funds from corporate foundations.

In July, a 19-year-old who had previously attained the rank of Eagle Scout in the Pony Express Council in Missouri [reportedly was removed](#) from his job at a Boy Scout camp after coming out as gay. The US Bancorp Foundation gave that council \$650 in 2010.

Another Boy Scout [employee was fired](#) in late-July in California, prompting 10 of his co-workers to resign in protest. The Golden Empire Council fired Eagle Scout Tim Griffin, who was one of the most senior employees at Camp Winton. Griffin and his fellow employees claim he was fired because he is gay. A spokesperson for the council told local media that he was let go over a dress code violation and his "mannerisms and behavior," not because of his sexual orientation.

Intel gave \$10,000 to the Golden Empire Council in 2010. That same year, Bank of America gave \$931, Verizon gave \$3,543, Monsanto gave \$281, and Nationwide Insurance and Pfizer each gave \$200.

In the fall of 2010, the Circle Ten Council of the Boy Scouts of America in Texas [told the gay father of a Cub Scout](#) that he could not be a member of the leadership team of his 9-year old son's pack.

Several corporate foundations have given to the Circle Ten Council. In 2010, Verizon gave \$4,440, Bank of America gave \$3,940, Abbott gave \$225, and Pfizer gave \$140.

A Louisville scout leader, Greg Bourke, was asked to resign in August from his son's troop after the Lincoln Heritage Council learned he was gay, [according to the Courier-Journal](#).

Bank of America gave the Lincoln Heritage Council \$1,100 in 2010.

Bucking the policy

Not all scout troops and councils are abiding by the national Boy Scouts' policy.

After the Boy Scouts of America announced they were keeping the ban on gay scouts, several Boy Scout affiliates announced their opposition.

In July, an Amherst, Mass., troop sent a letter to the local papers announcing its intention to allow gay scouts.

"We want to reassure you, our friends, neighbors and colleagues, that local Boy Scouts Troop 500 in Amherst does not support BSA's policy," the [letter states](#). "Troop 500 invites the participation of all interested 11-to-17-year-old boys and their parents or guardians without regard to sexual orientation."

In August, a separate Massachusetts [Cub Scout pack announced](#) it would allow gays to be members and adopted a "Policy of Acceptance" that states the pack will "openly reject the national policy put forth by Boy Scouts of America barring gay boys from membership and gay or lesbian adults from serving as leaders."

Also in August, a California Cub Scout pack [publicly opposed the national policy](#), and another troop in [New York City told the Wall Street Journal](#) that it would not discriminate against gays.

A handful of regional councils located in liberal parts of the country have also rejected the policy.

The Minuteman Council in Boston added sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination policy several years ago. Originally, the council's 2001 policy allowed gays to serve in the Boy Scouts as long as [they weren't open about it](#). When the Boy Scouts affirmed the current policy, the [council issued a statement](#) disclosing its current nondiscrimination policy that includes openly gay scouts and leaders.

The Connecticut Rivers Council has routinely signed a statement with the United Way declaring that it will not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, [according to a WTXV-TV report](#).

Corporate donations to those councils and troops appear to have been fairly small. In Minnesota, however, an inclusive scout council has received the bulk of funding from three of the top 50 corporate foundations.

The Northern Star Council, which covers the Twin Cities and western Wisconsin, has been inclusive for more than a decade. A spokesman for the council told the Minneapolis Star Tribune that the announcement by the national Boy Scouts would not cause that to change.

"We're a reflection of the community," [spokesman Kent York told the paper](#). "Our commitment has been to reach out to all young people and have a positive influence."

The Northern Star Council has an "inclusive leadership program" he said.

In an interview with [South Florida Gay News](#), York said they haven't seen any reprimand from the national Boy Scouts of America.

"We're trying hard not to be in conflict with national. We're continuing an approach which has worked in our community. This focus on sexual orientation is really outside the scope of our mission," he said. "I'm sure that there is something [national] could do about it, but fortunately we haven't found out what yet."

Minnesota's biggest corporate donors to the Boy Scouts have given much of their funding to the inclusive Northern Star Council.

General Mills, based in Minneapolis, gave \$34,000 to different scout chapters through their corporate foundation in fiscal year 2010. The vast majority, \$30,000, went to the Northern Star Council. In fiscal year 2009, General Mills gave \$42,000 to the Scouts; again the majority of that, \$40,000, went to the Northern Star Council.

"As a longstanding practice, organizations we support must sign an affirmation of nondiscrimination as a standard part of our grant making process," the General Mills Foundation told TAI in a statement.

In 2010, the 3M Foundation gave about \$279,000 to various BSA chapters across the country; nearly \$265,000 of that went to the Northern Star Council.

The Medtronic Foundation gave \$52,000 to the Boy Scouts of America during its fiscal year ending April 30, 2010. About \$27,000 of that went directly to the Northern Star Council, and another \$13,000 went to individual scout troops within the Northern Star Council.

In the past, Medtronic has been sharply critical of the national Boy Scouts' exclusionary policy. In 2000, the foundation announced that its \$1 million United Way contribution for the year would be directed away from the Boy Scouts of America.

"It is important that the gift reflects ... the values of our company and our commitment to nondiscrimination," Penny Hunt, former head of the foundation, told the Associated Press at the time.