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DONOR OF THE DAY | By Shelly Banjo

Profits for Nonprofits

Suzanne Sunshine has made her business personal.

A year ago, she struck out on her own to launch S. Sunshine & Associates LLC, a real-estate brokerage and consulting firm specializing in nonprofits and foundations.

The business comes with a twist: 10% to 50% of her commissions on every deal go back to the client, or an associated charity. She negotiates the donated fee percentage with each nonprofit client in advance.

Based on that model she's not only finished the year in the black, but by October will have sent \$150,000 to charities across New York, including the Bronx Museum of the Arts and International Planned Parenthood Federation.

As the daughter of luxury real-estate pioneer Louise Sunshine, Suzanne Sunshine has grown up learning about New York City real estate. The 46-year-old got into the business in her early 20s and began working for her mother's company, the Sunshine Group in 1998. From there she began her career in real estate nonprofit brokerage with Time Equities and spearheaded a nonprofit advisory practice group at Cushman & Wakefield and then at CB Richard Ellis.

"I was giving 50% of my commission to the brokerage firms I worked for and thought there was better use for the money," she says.

In June, she completed a



Suzanne Sunshine

26,000-square-foot sublease for Atlantic Philanthropies, one of America's largest foundations, which was started by Duty Free Shoppers founder Charles "Chuck" Feeney. The foundation, which is set to spend its \$2.2 billion and close its doors by 2016, had moved to a building downtown and had excess space in its midtown location.

She helped the New York Blood Center rent space in its building and gave 30% of her commission to causes related to aging and health, one of Atlantic Philanthropies' focus areas. Ms. Sunshine donated to Healthcare Chaplaincy, a palliative care nonprofit, New York Presbyterian Hospital and NYU Medical Center.

She also works with individ-

uals and businesses that see value in paying part of their commission to charity.

Doug Rice, founder of construction management firm RD Rice, tapped Ms. Sunshine to help him find new office space. She took about \$9,000 of her commission and donated it to the Bronx Museum of the Arts, where Mr. Rice is chairman of the board of directors.

"We're not like the Met where people donate millions of dollars. Thousand or hundred-dollar donations go a long way," Mr. Rice says.

She also helps nonprofits negotiate lower rents, better agreements and lease out space they might not need, as many nonprofits have downsized post recession.

"When I approach landlords, they know I'm coming from the perspective of an organization with a real mission," she says.

Ms. Sunshine says she works only with three or four nonprofits at a time. Before taking on a client, she scrutinizes a charity's balance sheet, including its debt and equity, competing nonprofits and the quality of its board of directors.

"Before I agree to represent a nonprofit, I do my due diligence. I need to be able to sell the long-term viability of the nonprofit, including its staff and board of directors, not only to the landlord, but to myself," she says.