

Sharon Alpert



Sharon Alpert is the next president of the Nathan Cummings Foundation. She is its fourth president since its founding and the first woman leader in the history of the organization. The multigenerational family foundation, which is focused on building a socially and economically just society, marks its 25th anniversary this year.

A seasoned philanthropic leader, Sharon is currently the vice president for programs and strategic initiatives at the Surdna Foundation, a 100-year-old family foundation focused on fostering just and sustainable communities throughout the United States. In this role, Sharon works alongside Surdna's president and vice president of finance to oversee all operations of the nearly \$1 billion organization. She was the lead architect of Surdna's first strategic plan, which created a deeper culture of collaboration both internally and externally. Under Sharon's leadership, Surdna refreshed strategies across all of its programs, redesigned its office of grants management and launched a new communications department. She also created and drove new board initiatives to transform program oversight and expand mission-related investing.

Joining Surdna in 2004, Sharon rose from program officer to director of Surdna's Sustainable Environments Program, which she reframed to focus on improving people's lives through investing in innovative solutions to environmental problems. Under her tenure, she helped seed and grow groundbreaking coalitions and networks, including Energy Action, a national coalition of youth leaders focused on solving the climate crisis, and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, the first peer-to-peer network of city sustainability leaders from across North America. She also collaborated with leaders from the nonprofit and private sectors to help the White House launch *Recovery through Retrofit*, a signature piece of President Obama's stimulus to increase the energy efficiency of homes and create green jobs.

Sharon began her career in philanthropy at the Ford Foundation, where she implemented a cross-portfolio initiative to address inequality in housing, employment and environmental opportunities in Camden, New Jersey. She also reshaped Ford's environmental justice portfolio to focus on next generation leadership from communities of color and the intersection of health and the environment.

Previously, Sharon spent eight years in the nonprofit and private sectors. This work included securing millions of dollars of public and private investments for the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation to support affordable housing, energy efficiency and environmental health programs; working with leaders in the environmental justice movement at the Washington Office on Environmental Justice and Natural Resources Defense Council; and serving as a liaison to the Sustainable Communities Taskforce of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. She also worked on Wall Street as the director of marketing for a financial software firm that provided technology solutions to international banks and energy companies.

Sharon holds both a master's in public administration and a bachelor's in agricultural, resource and managerial economics from Cornell University. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her Canadian husband, Kevin, and their two children, Millie and Jesse.