

\$1.5 Billion Powerball Could Be Good For Charity

By Megan O'Neil



LOU DEMATTEIS, REUTERS, NEWSCOM

Carmen Castellano (left) smiles as she holds roses given to her by her husband California Lottery winner Alcario "Al" Castellano, 66, as Alcario speaks at a press conference in San Jose, California, June 29, 2001. Castellano, a retired grocery clerk, won the \$141 million SuperLotto Plus jackpot making him the winner of the largest single jackpot in California Lotto history.

One of the best parts of playing the lottery is fantasizing about how to spend the winnings.

This week, there was no shortage of green-tinged daydreams percolating through deep lines at neighborhood conveniences stores and hastily formed — or, in some cases, longstanding — office pools.

That's because the Powerball lottery swelled to a record \$1.5 billion after the previous record-setting \$800 million Saturday drawing came and went without a big winner.

The odds of winning the grand prize are 1 in 292,201,338, according to the Multi-State Lottery Association, which operates Powerball. A single winner opting for a lump-sum

payout would have taken in about \$930 million before federal and state taxes.

By Thursday morning, lottery officials in three states said they had sold winning tickets.

Even after splitting the prize, and making things right with the IRS, the winners will have millions of dollars lining their bank accounts.

Besides the possible windfall the winnings could bring for certain Porsche dealers and real-estate agents, disbursement of the money might also spell good things for charities.

When Jacki and Gilbert Cisneros of Los Angeles won a Mega-Millions lottery prize of \$266 million in 2010, they said that in addition to buying a house, they were committed to "trying to do what's right."

"We are going to make sure we give back to those who need it," Mr. Cisneros told the Today Show. "I know we have talked about contributing to our alma maters and also to give back to our church."

They made good on those promises, establishing the Gilbert and Jacki Cisneros Foundation, which focuses on Hispanic student education. They have made gifts including \$1 million for scholarships at the University of Southern California and [\\$7 million](#) to establish a leadership program for high-school students.

In 2013, Tom Crist, a retired businessman, said he would give to charities all of a \$40 million prize from the Western Canada Lottery Corp. The decision was made in honor of his wife, who died of cancer; one of his first gifts was to the medical center that treated her.

Arts and other community organizations in the San Jose, Calif., area got a boost after Al and Carmen Castellano won a \$141 million lottery prize in 2001.

Within minutes of realizing their good fortune, the couple told the *San Jose Mercury News*, they had written down a list of groups they would support.

They created the Castellano Family Foundation, which makes \$350,000 in grants annually to local nonprofits like the San Jose Jazz Summer Fest.

In 2014, Roy Cockrum of Knoxville, Tenn., won a \$259.8-million Powerball prize only to announce shortly thereafter that he would give the bulk of it away to support the arts. The Roy Cockrum Foundation has supported projects including the 2015 production of "Mary Page Marlowe" by the Steppenwolf Theater Company in Chicago.

The lesson for charity leaders and fundraisers? If you didn't win the Powerball yourself, having a supporter holding the winning ticket might not be a bad consolation prize.

