Many older adults with hearing loss just won’t use the phone – it’s too frustrating. The resulting separation from family, friends and caregivers often leads to feelings of isolation and even depression.

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The Caring Institute: 
Taking Stock of its 30th Year

The Caring Institute was born in June of 1985 inspired by our first meeting with Mother Teresa. She said there was a poverty of the spirit in the U.S. and developed world that was far worse than the poverty of the body seen in the less developed world. She directed us to do something about this. She suggested that we use the power of caring, which she defined as “love in action”— the one-word summary of the Golden Rule.

This is our 30th year of honoring people who share a commitment to improving the lives of others. The formal mission of the Caring Institute is to promote caring, integrity and public service. One of the quotations that we have incorporated comes from Albert Einstein who said, “Only a life lived for others is worthwhile.

The national Caring Awards was the first program. We wrote asking every major U.S. newspaper and television station to cover them. Thousands of nomination were received. We then gathered volunteers to help us review and research, candidates for the award. To date some 300 adults and almost 200 young adult winners have been selected.

Second, we established a website and secured the rights to www.caring.org.

Third, with the help of the National Association for Homecare, we acquired and renovated the first Washington, DC home of the great civil rights leader, Frederick Douglass. This became a museum, the Caring Hall of Fame, which opened three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol.

Fourth, we sponsored a poster and photography contest for school children of all ages. The winners are still on display at the museum.

Fifth, we established what we called our “Dreams for Kids and Families” program, which brought together the home care and hospice community and Orlando’s Give Kids the World, which answers the last wishes of dying children. Next year, this program is turning into one that focuses more on young parents who are dying and leaving behind one or more children.

Sixth, we have established a web-based television network which will share videos of past and present Caring Award winners.

Seventh, the Caring Hall of Fame increasingly has become the place on Capitol Hill where organizations and individuals like to host events. For example, the National Governors Association and the Gates Foundation hosted meetings there.

Eighth, the plan is to host more exhibits such as we did on the 13th Amendment, which we put on display, and a montage of photographs of Mother Teresa by celebrated photographer, Michael Collopy.

Ninth, we plan to create chapters of the Caring Institute in other states and nations.

Tenth, we are using social media so that others can learn about our honorees and their programs instead of waiting till they have time to visit our website.

We have come far in 30 years but we know that we have far to go. We hope to make Mother Teresa proud. We are determined that our efforts will help the U.S. continue to be what it has always been, the most caring nation in the history of the planet.

Val J. Halamandaris, 
Founder, Executive Director
The Caring Institute
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This issue of CARING magazine celebrates the human spirit by profiling those who best personify caring which Mother Teresa called “love in action.” We underscore the importance of service to others in the belief that the solution to most problems lies in the love, understanding and caring of one human being for another. We seek to break down barriers between people and build bridges to join them.

We strive to redefine wealth and success in America. We believe that both should find their meaning in service to humankind. We believe that we must change from a materialistic society to a caring society and that the words “caring people” are two of the most important ones in the English language.

We emphasize the importance of hard work and seek to promote a positive work ethic in America. We believe there is no such thing as a menial job; each occupation in its own way is essential to society.

Through our interviews with men and women of achievement, we underscore the fact that one person can make a difference. In doing so, we provide positive role models for our nation’s youth. We search for genuine heroes, particularly among those who have overcome disability, pain, and suffering to serve others.

We strive to remember and celebrate those whose selfless contributions to society have been forgotten or gone unrecognized. We focus on the positive rather than the negative side of the news in the belief that there is a hunger among the citizens of this nation for such uplifting stories.

We seek to promote the solidarity of the American family, which we perceive to be the bedrock of our society.

We do our part to shatter myths about aging and combat prejudices that keep the disabled from attaining their full share of the American dream.

We believe that “caring” is the very essence of the Golden Rule, the thread that connects all great religions of the world. It implies empathy, sensitivity, and placing the welfare of others before self. It involves community service and community cooperation.

We believe that the 21st century will be known as the “Era of Caring,” and that society’s adoption of this positive value will produce economic as well as sociological gains.

We believe that Luciano de Crescenzo put it well when he said, “We are each of us angels with only one wing — we can only fly by embracing each other.” We invite our readers to join us on our flight into the future, and in our endeavor to build a better and more caring tomorrow.

Val J. Halamandaris is the founder and executive director of the Caring Institute and President of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice, and editor and publisher of CARING Magazine.
The 30th Annual
Caring
Awards

Saying Thanks

No person acting alone can be successful. No organization can thrive without the help of dozens of people. The Caring Institute is no exception. It has succeeded because a large number of people have been attracted by its compelling mission. Mother Teresa helped to provide that vision but without affiliating it with any one religion. She went to great lengths to point out that “caring” is not the dictum of any one religion; rather, it is the one word summary of the Golden Rule — the thread that unites them all.

The Caring Institute wishes to thank the Caring Award winners who are this month being inducted to the Caring Hall of Fame. They provide an example to all of us; they are role models to be emulated. In addition, the Board of Trustees and Directors wish to thank those who have donated their time and money to make the organization successful. The National Association for Home Care & Hospice in particular needs to be thanked for providing essential services such as telephones and a small amount of office space for volunteers. Such support is, of course, reimbursed by the Caring Institute. Finally, the Institute wants to thank all of those people who nominated candidates for consideration. Anyone can nominate a potential caring award winner by calling up the Institute’s website www.caring.org and entering a few lines about a person, including their name, address, phone number, and email address and a short paragraph or two about what they have done and why they should be recognized with a national Caring Award.

If you would like to consider making a tax deductible donation, please go to our website at www.caring.org.
Editor’s Notes

BY LISA YARKONY, PhD

It is my pleasure to provide you with a road map to this special Caring Awards issue. You will read about the six special people who have been selected by the Board and Trustees to be honored in 2015. You will read about:

Jim Langevin who represents a victory of the human spirit. He transcended a gun shot wound that left him a paraplegic to become one of the most effective and most caring members of Congress;

Noah Levinson who worked in Mother Teresa’s home for the dying when he was 18 and was so moved that he spent the next 14 years creating a mobile health clinic and then Calcutta Kids, an organization providing maternal and child care services to the poorest of the poor;

Gloria Lewis who works as a waitress in Fort Lauderdale who created CARE IN ACTION USA. She used her own money to buy food and spent hours cooking and distributing it to the homeless over the past several years.

Jorge Muñoz, a bus driver who got the idea to buy, cook, and distribute food to the homeless in Queens, New York. With the help of his family Jorge has donated more than 280,000 meals over the past 11 years.

Dikembe Mutombo, a NBA superstar who was just inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame; he is also one of the superstars of philanthropy. Back home in the Congo, he dreamed of becoming a physician to help his countrymen. He found out he could make his dreams come true in a bigger and better way by playing in the NBA. He created a foundation which among other things, donated $15 million to create a state of the art hospital in the Congo.

Pope Francis has chosen to live modestly; he has lectured on the evils of climate change, which he says is polluting the environment and weighs heaviest on the poor. He has also railed against materialism, which he says is turning our world into a dung heap. The man called the People’s Pope has apologized for the sins of church officials, particularly child abuse by priests, and apologized to native Americans on behalf of the whole of society for the ways their lands were taken and the less-than-humane way that they were treated. He has been an advocate for human rights and believes something must be done to reduce the size of the prison population in the United States. In his short tenure, he has fired up interest in Catholicism and other religions and inspired many to consider the benefits at all levels of leading a life of morality. With all due respect to his predecessors, he is being more and more recognized as “the Caring Pope.”

You will read about the young adult winners such as Michael Bervell who founded Hugs for Ghana and Helping U Grow; Lulu Cerone, Founder of LemonAID Warriors, who fused the idea of hosting a social party with philanthropy; Emilee Hamilton, created Utah YOuth Connect and lined up some 15,000 middle school volunteers to visit and help seniors in retirement homes; Lillian Pravda who created Vision For and From Children helping some 25,000 kids in the developing world to have the eye surgery that they need; Haile Thomas learned how to cook when she was five. But when her father was diagnosed with diabetes she took action helping to make him food that brought his sugar intake under control. Through her HAPPY Organization she now teaches others, including underprivileged kids, how they can do the same thing.

This issue also includes three very special features. First is a salute to Glenn Kielty, the UK- and Africa-based builder who was one of those closest to Mother Teresa. What he achieved is an amazing list of projects—among them schools and convents that he built and donated to Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity.

Second is commendation for Wayne Dyer who died in the summer of 2015. Dyer is the author of some 40 books which have made a major difference in the lives of people throughout the world. Dyer believed that what you see in your mind is what you will be.

Third, there is a tribute to President Jimmy Carter who was the 39th President of the United States. He and his wife Rosalynn were named Caring Award recipients in 1996. Our story argues that a good case can be made that President Carter saved American democracy by restoring ethics, integrity and human rights as central tenets of government. I hope all our readers enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed its preparation.
Congressman Langevin urges people to overcome obstacles to make society better. He did after a policeman’s bullet put him in a wheelchair at age 16. In Congress, he has advanced laws to make our nation safer, expand health care, and allow others to have the opportunities he’s enjoyed. As a spokesman for the disabled, he has worked to defend the ADA and give people the right to receive the care they need at home. Page 8

The sights Noah saw as a volunteer for Mother Teresa in Calcutta after high school led him to found Calcutta Kids. He was distressed to watch people die of curable diseases, so he started a mobile clinic that provides medical care to Calcutta’s street children. Realizing their illnesses were the product of poor immune systems and malnutrition, he also launched an initiative to provide pregnant women with counseling, checkups, and nutrition. Page 12

Each Sunday, Gloria feeds Fort Lauderdale’s homeless as part of her mission, CARE IN ACTION USA. In the past three years, she and her husband have served 18,000 meals out of the back of their 1991 Honda. Lewis, who works as a waitress, buys the food, cooks it in her kitchen, and scrimps so the homeless can eat. She does it because she looks on the homeless like family. Page 16

Jorge drives a school bus by day but seems to sprout wings at night when he feeds homeless and unemployed people who wait for him beneath the train tracks on a dark corner in New York. The Angel in Queens uses his own money to buy food and his free time to cook it. Every night, he gets in his pick-up truck and drives to Queens, where he has provided over 280,000 meals. Page 20

The former NBA star, and native of the Congo, has given his homeland the ultimate assist through the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation. He has fulfilled his childhood dream of helping others by providing the Congo with medical supplies, boosting polio vaccinations, and joining the Starkey Hearing Foundation in fitting thousands with hearing aids. Best of all, he donated $15 million to open the Biamba Maria Mutombo Hospital, named for his mom. Page 24

When Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina became pope, he chose to be called after Francis of Assisi. The thirteenth-century saint was a man of poverty who loved all of creation. The first pope from the developing world has followed in his path by speaking out for peace and justice worldwide. Pope Francis has expressed a new view of Catholic gay rights, apologized for the Church’s mistreatment of Native Americans, and pleaded for action on climate change, which he says affects the poor most. His moral vision of a “poor church, for the poor” inspires his impassioned critique of unfettered profits and demand that governments redistribute social benefits to the needy. This focus on poverty stems from his belief that sacrificing for the poor is the heart of the gospel, as St. Francis once preached. Page 28

Glenn has embraced the mission of his great friend and mentor Mother Teresa. He has built over 50 homes, hospices, orphanages, and schools for more than a dozen religious orders that help Africa’s poor. Page 60
**Michael Bervell**  
*Age 17, Washington*

Michael and his volunteers at Hugs for Ghana have collected $75,000 in toys, school supplies, and donations for underprivileged children in Ghana. His local effort, Helping U Grow, also provides young people with chances to tutor at elementary schools, write notes to hospitalized children, and give concerts at retirement homes.  
*Page 35*

**Lulu Cerone**  
*Age 16, California*

Lulu throws philanthro-parties that have raised $80,000 for schools and clean water projects in Africa. By sharing her ideas online, she inspires kids to be LemonAID Warriors who hold social gatherings like pizza parties that raise dough for hospitals and Halloween parties where guests treat homeless kids to clothes they no longer wear.  
*Page 37*

**Emilee Hamilton**  
*Age 18, Utah*

Emilee’s love for the aged inspired her to found Utah YOUth Connect, which brings seniors and middle school students together. She has raised nearly $9,000 to get 15,000 kids involved in visiting retirement homes and showing seniors that someone really cares. Her volunteers engage seniors in watching videos, singing, and sharing stories.  
*Page 39*

**Lillian Pravda**  
*Age 14, New York*

Lillian shows her sense of vision by giving needy children the gift of sight. As founder of Vision For and From Children, she has enlisted volunteer doctors and provided eye surgery for 25,210 children in the developing world. She also flies medical equipment to poorer countries or pays for children to come here for operations.  
*Page 41*

**Haile Thomas**  
*Age 14, Arizona*

Haile Thomas helps young people learn to cook and eat better. She has given them a taste for healthy eating by hosting an online cooking show and doing cooking demonstrations. She also raised $7,000 to found HAPPY Organization, where she offers cooking classes, nutrition education, and physical activities to underprivileged kids.  
*Page 43*

**A Tribute to President Jimmy Carter**

Jimmy Carter’s faith requires him to do all he can to make a difference. This has been his mission since he stepped on the national stage. As President, he restored confidence to a nation shaken by Watergate, cracked down on human rights abuses by America’s allies, and brokered the first-ever peace treaty in the Mideast. But these achievements paled beside what he achieved after leaving office. Setting a new standard for the post-presidency, he established a center to fulfill people’s basic needs, fight human rights abuses, and promote peace. In the past three decades, he has logged thousands of miles monitoring elections, soothing political crises, and building houses for the poor. He is determined to continue making life better for his fellow human beings.  
*Page 52*

**A Eulogy for Wayne Dyer**

The “father of motivation” empowered millions to lead a life of intention and to reach their potential. In over 40 books, he combined spiritual lessons with common sense about surmounting challenges in life. The best way to succeed, as he urged his fans, was by using the “power of intention” to build a world based on service and love.  
*Page 44*
Jim Langevin is a revered member of the U.S. Congress who personifies Aristotle’s formula for leadership: ethos, which means having the intellect and vision to make good judgments; pathos, or being able to empathize with people and feel their pain; and logos, or being able to frame solutions in words that uplift the public and unite it in action. Aristotle’s three words taken together make up a directive: lead through caring. The secret to Mr. Langevin’s rapid rise is that he has become one of the most caring people in the history of the Congress.

Langevin had a passion to serve. When he was 16 he dreamed of being a police officer. This dream was cut short by a freak accident in which a policeman’s gun discharged leaving him a quadriplegic. The bullet broke his body but didn’t break his spirit, he remained positive through a long and difficult rehabilitation. Rather than bemoaning his losses, he looked forward to new opportunities to serve. He came to believe Nietzsche’s dictum of “that which does not kill us, makes us stronger,” and found meaning in Hemmingway’s words: “The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places.”

This was true of FDR, the congressman’s hero. “He was a man with a disability who rose to serve in the nation’s highest office,” Langevin says. “He led us through World War II and the Great Depression, two of the most difficult times in the nation’s history. He faced great challenges and obstacles, yet he led us with great ability and grace.”

The idea of running for public office came to him as he slowly recovered thanks to help from able physicians, nurses, therapists, and home care workers. After he graduated from Rhode Island College and earned his M.P.A. from Harvard, he decided to follow in the footsteps of Senator Claiborne Pell, the senior senator from Rhode Island who Langevin came to know when he served as an intern in the great man’s office. “He was a true gentleman and a statesman, Langevin recalls, “and in many ways I have tried to model my career after him.”

He has repaid voters faith in him by making major contributions in the House. These include helping to found the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus. His expertise in this field led to appearances on media outlets, including 60 Minutes, and his grasp of health care issues led him to author legislation that would have created a national health insurance plan for all Americans. He ended up shaping the Affordable Care Act so it better covered prevention and then voting for its passage. He has also supported the expansion of federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, he worked to ensure the U.S. maintains a strong defense. As a member of the Budget Committee, he introduced bills to reduce taxes on the middle class, especially those with yearly incomes below $75,000, and voted to increase funding for medical research at the National Institutes of Health.

Langevin has also been a staunch advocate for home care and hospice because he knows we all need some help along the way. “Home care is incredibly important to me. It means independence and living a full life in my own home,” he says. “Without home care, I might very well have been placed into institutional care. My experience with home care has been so positive that I have developed a passion for making sure independent living programs are supported and continued. I want to ensure that all Americans, including those with disabilities, can to the greatest
possible extent live in their own homes and enjoy full, productive lives.”

Langevin revealed this goal in a recent interview with his friend, Val J. Halamandaris where he discussed his life lessons and values. Those who emulate him should know the importance he places on persevering. “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed,” he quotes from the Bible, “you will say to that mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible to you.” And Langevin has found it to be true. “That is kind of the story of my life. In a lot of ways, I have had to move a lot of mountains along the way.”

Great leaders can move mountains and inspire people to help them push, Langevin knows. “I have many who have inspired me, and I have learned from them that leadership is the ability to encourage others to be their very best.” These wise leaders include Justin Dart and Senator Bob Dole, along with Congressmen Steny Hoyer and Tony Coelho, all of whom played a major role in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act. President George H.W. Bush also earned Langevin’s regard by signing the ADA into law, a giant step in tearing down walls for the disabled. “I remember what the world was like before the ADA. I experienced the difference it made, so I’m grateful for the vision and perseverance of those who pushed the legislation through Congress,” Langevin says. And he had the chance to reinforce their work. “I was proud to be part of the effort a few years ago to improve the ADA and to be in the Oval Office when President George W. Bush signed the ADA Enhancement Act into law.”

This ongoing march toward wider avenues for the disabled is among the things that lead Langevin to declare himself “forever the optimist.” There are brighter days ahead — he’s convinced — despite the issues we confront. “Every generation is tested and challenged by a set of problems,” he explains. “We are no different, and we’re going through ours right now. But I think America’s best days are still ahead. We’re not there yet, but we have the momentum and determination to get there.”

We’ll reach those days faster if each person sees they can make a difference and does it, Langevin says. “Sometimes the difference is small, sometimes great. But every person can make a difference in some capacity or another. I believe each of us is born with certain gifts and talents, things we can do better than anyone else. God’s goal is for all of us to find out what those gifts and talents are, then develop them and share them with the world. Our goal should be to try to make the world a better place than we found it. It may be a cliché, but it’s something I’ve believed all my life. By living our lives with passion and purpose, we really do make a positive difference in the world.”

And whatever your age you can contribute to the common good, Langevin knows. So he tells young people to follow their dreams. “Do the things you’re going to enjoy and remember your responsibility to give back.” It helps for the young to get advice from those who’ve been there so Langevin urges seniors
to share their wisdom. “I would also tell older people,” he adds, “to get involved, stay involved, and be politically active. There are so many things worth fighting for, like preserving Social Security and Medicare,” programs that matter for both the seniors of today and tomorrow. Langevin has done his share to preserve these programs but knows he can’t do it alone. “This is a team effort, so the more people who rally to the cause the better. And I think advocacy is an area where seniors can clearly play an important role.”

The most effective advocates know “caring means empathy and putting yourself in someone else’s shoes,” Langevin says. And his own caring spirit still leads him to break down barriers so others can have the same chances he’s had. Looking ahead, he wants to continue working to keep our nation safe and its economy strong. “We face great challenges,” he says. “We have a lot of work ahead to get our fiscal house in order to ensure we leave our country in sound financial shape. Our work is not done, so I hope I can continue standing for justice and making a positive difference in others’ lives.”

Langevin has decades to achieve this goal since he’s still a fairly young man. But when his time comes he’d like people to recall him as someone who shared his gifts and had a passion for public service. “Hopefully, I’ll be remembered as someone who lived with dignity and made a positive difference in the world.” He’s already done that through his acts and through the example he’s set in dealing with life’s valleys and peaks. “Nobody gets through life without facing tough times,” he says, “and we all have the ability to overcome them. I believe tests and challenges are God’s way of shaping us, molding us, and making us better, stronger people.” We can triumph if we persevere, Langevin knows, so “one of the most important lessons is to remain determined and positive no matter what challenges you face.” Langevin has faced his challenges and now he’s helping our nation face its own.
Noah found his purpose from three boys. The first was his friend, Sohrab, who told him about his time volunteering at Mother Teresa’s Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. The summer before college, he went with Sohrab to volunteer at the home and also spent some time at a dispensary giving first aid and medicine to street kids.

At the dispensary, he met the second boy, Sudip, who had cut his head on a rusty nail and needed medical attention. Noah had just run out of medical supplies and couldn’t treat him. So when he returned to volunteer the next year, Sudip was at the home, near death from an infection caused by the wound. “Sudip was my age” says Noah, who was then 19. “We connected though we didn’t speak the same language.” When Sudip died in Noah’s arms, Noah felt both responsible and inspired. “I wanted to take that inspiration,” he says, “and figure out a way to make sure people like Sudip didn’t wind up at Mother Teresa’s home. I took his death as a sign from God that I needed to do more than care for the dying.”

He realized the most frustrating thing about Sudip’s death, along with that of many others, was that it was preventable, so he and Sohrab decided to start a mobile health clinic for street children. When he returned home to Vermont, he asked support from everyone he knew: the local car mechanic, the drycleaner, and everybody in his family. He admitted his idea to help street kids was “crazy,” but he touched people with his passion and the interfaith dimension of his mission. “This was after 9/11,” Noah recalls, “and my friend, Sohrab, is a Muslim. I’m Jewish. We were working with Mother Teresa’s organization, which is Catholic, and we were primarily going to be working with Hindu children. There was something about this interfaith idea that was inspiring to a lot of people.” Soon he had $30,000 dollars and a return ticket to India, where he felt “closest to God.”

That a young Jewish man would receive a sign from God while working in a Catholic charity may seem unusual. But Noah comes from a family that believes in service and he has embraced the family mission to heal the world. In the past 15 years, he has helped over 8,000 people by bringing medical services to Calcutta slums. His program, Calcutta kids, cuts morbidity and mortality for children and their moms, increases infant survival rates, and ensures that children up to three years of age grow at a normal rate. The idea for it dawned on him that second summer as he came to know street children on his walks to and from Mother Teresa’s home. “I’d befriended a number of these children and would stop to play cards with them, share a meal, or have them teach me Bengali slang.” These kids reminded him of Sudip and they became the “more” he needed to do.

After getting back to Calcutta, he transformed a used van into a clinic and hired a doctor, nurse, driver, and coordinator. For two years, Noah and his team drove around to different slum areas where street children spent time and gave them medical care. After getting Calcutta Kids off the ground, they did an analysis of the services they had provided. “Through the data,” Noah says, “we found out that while children were happy they could be treated for their illnesses free of cost, they were coming back to the clinic again and again with the same illnesses. Basically, the mobile clinic was a Band-Aid solution to a larger problem, which was that most of these kids were malnourished when younger and had weak immune systems and incomplete brain development.”

This finding made him think about how to get these kids to have to stop coming to the mobile clinic. “Remember, my real interest is in prevention,” he says. “It was clear that if we really wanted to prevent people...
from ending up in the Home of Dying Destitutes, we needed to work with children under the age of three. In addition, we needed to ensure that mothers give birth to healthy children with good birth weights and that malnutrition does not plague them. So we decided to start the Maternal and Young Child Health Initiative.”

To see his program at work, you go to the Fakir Bagan slum in Howrath, just on the other side of the Ganges from Calcutta. The streets are full of adults and children in rags. There are no toilets or electricity. Puddles of standing water draw mosquitos to the muddy walkways, and the stench of a fish market fills the dark, narrow street where Noah’s clinic gives people a glimmer of hope. “We work with about 700 families,” he explains, “and we have a team of 20 people who work with us. Our front-line workers are, for the most part, from the slums and we have trained them to really care. They identify pregnant women and become didis, or older sisters. What they do is create a relationship with these women and hold their hands through the pregnancy and through the life of the child up to the age of three.”

This “adoption” of a pregnant woman/child pair comes with a wide range of services. Calcutta Kids provides pregnant women with monthly counseling in the home by a community health worker, a minimum of three antenatal checkups with a female doctor, at least two tetanus toxoid inoculations, and access to folic acid, iron, calcium, and vitamin A through lactation. In addition, mothers receive free medicine, daily access to a free clinic for pregnant women, access to a delivery savings scheme in which Calcutta Kids matches a woman’s savings up to half the cost of a normal delivery in a facility, the required immunizations and micronutrients for the child, and monthly checkups to monitor their growth. A child who is not growing normally will be invited to join the program’s sponsored daily feeding program. And until their children are three, mothers continue getting monthly counseling at home as well as access to 24-hour emergency care at the local clinic.

Working with these women has taught Noah not to be judgmental and realize that “caring is about empathy.” That means “really listening to someone” and learning to communicate on their level, Noah explains. So Calcutta Kids holds community meetings where mothers can ask questions, share personal experiences, and start discussions. These meetings have shown Noah’s community workers how cultural and religious factors, heavy responsibilities at home, and the temptation to not bother eating one more meal or washing their hands one more time often leads moms to suffer from poor health. To get needed health messages across, Calcutta Kids uses puppet shows, discussion groups, role play, and an interactive theater that lets mothers step in and portray their own solutions to a given health issue. The results of these activities speak for themselves.

Before Calcutta Kids, the Fakir Bagan slum had
high rates of maternal and infant mortality and about 20 percent of children died before age five. Since Noah began his program, there have been no maternal or infant deaths stemming from medical reasons and the average weight of a newborn is over six pounds compared to about four in previous years. There has also been a 75 percent decrease in child malnutrition, an achievement that makes Noah proud. At the same time 3.5 percent of the children Noah works with remain severely malnourished, no matter what he does. “We spent some time talking with the families of this 3.5 percent, and we found that the challenges facing these families don’t have to do with food,” Noah says. “They have to do with mental illness, alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence.”

This finding has led Noah to the Smith College School for Social Work in Massachusetts, where he’s learning what he can do to assist that 3.5 percent. He’s undertaken this challenge because he has never forgotten the message he received after watching Sudip die. Nor has he forgotten another boy he met on one of his first trips to Calcutta. The thought of this third boy makes Noah sure Henry James got it right when he wrote, “Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.”

Irshad, a child laborer, lived with his parents and 11 siblings in the Pilkhana slum. One day, he spent his few precious rupees to rent a bike. His inexperience in riding led him to fall into a deep, open frying pan of hot oil. Burned over 60 percent of his body, he spent three days largely neglected in a government hospital before being sent home to die. When word of Irshad’s plight reached Noah, he ran to the boy’s home and fetched his father. Together they carried Irshad in a makeshift stretcher to a doctor Noah knew would help. Irshad spent three months in the hospital and came home scarred but strong. When Noah returned to India the next year, Irshad gave him the only gift he could afford. He borrowed a tape player, put on his favorite song, and danced to it as blood and sweat seeped from his wounds. It was, Noah says, “the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.”
I know we’re saved by grace, but we still have to do the work. And the ones of us who actually do the work are so blessed. We have the heart of Jesus because the only thing he did was serve.

Caring means sharing, as Gloria learned from her parents in Barbados. Her father worked in the sugar cane fields, and they were too poor to even have running water. “But whatever we had, we shared it,” Gloria says. “Sometimes, we didn’t even know how we were going to eat tomorrow, but if my dad brought home six bananas, then this neighbor got two and the next neighbor got two. If a neighbor had water before we did, they ran a hose over the fence and we shared. Everybody worked together to help one another, and the community was a family.”

Gloria left this close community to come live in the U.S. with her first husband and found herself in an abusive marriage for nine years. Since she had no support system, she felt trapped whenever he beat her. Then one day, after he beat her yet again, she left with her two kids and never turned back. She was 24 and had no money, so she sent the kids to live with her mom while she searched for work. The experience taught her that homelessness can happen to anyone. “I know what it’s like to work a low-income job. At any point you can wind up on the street, so we can’t judge the homeless or make assumptions about what put someone on the street.”

Gloria escaped this fate by dint of her sense of faith and ability to cope. In time, she found work, retrieved her kids, and remarried. Off to work one day, she saw people living in tents on the beach. When the police told them to move, she knew she had to feed these destitute folk. Her husband reminded her, “We can’t feed ourselves,” but Gloria felt filled by a force greater than herself. In time, her husband came to agree with her that we are supposed to serve people who have less. “If you care, you have to act,” Gloria explains. “If you go back to the Bible, you’ll read that the best way to care for someone is to feed them. When visitors come, people in the Bible are always saying, ‘Go get the food. Go get the food.’”

Gloria fulfills this command by feeding Fort Lauderdale’s homeless on Sundays, the one day her family always had a good meal. Every week she spends 30 hours shopping for fresh food and preparing up to 190 meals, besides working full time as a waitress at Ruven’s Deli. When she gets home from her job on Saturday night, she cooks until the wee hours of the morning while her son writes Bible scriptures on foam boxes that will hold the meals. As soon as she gets up, Gloria, her son, and her husband, a car mechanic, pack the boxes and load up their old Honda. Then they go out to feed those living on the streets in their humble
neighborhood near the airport. She does it because she thinks “you can’t say you care unless you show your care.” This conviction is summed up in the name of her mission, CARE IN ACTION USA.

Gloria cared, but it was hard for her to act since she had no resources or funding. She began by using her own money to buy chicken, spaghetti and meat balls, fish, fresh vegetables, and bottles of water. “The first week we served 20 meals. The second week was 40 meals. The following week was 60 meals. Now we’re up to 180 or 190 meals.” Along the way, she’s managed to get some donations from her customers and the community, but at the start her family scrimped so others could eat. “For two and a half years, we struggled and made a lot of sacrifices,” she says. “There were plenty of weeks when I didn’t know how I was going to pay the rent. But we still went out and fed the homeless because we know we give them hope.”

When the homeless thank her, she refuses to accept any credit. “Don’t thank me; thank God because God is telling me I need to do this,” she urges them. “Besides, we’re no different from you. We’re also struggling to pay the bills.” And everybody is struggling in their own way, as Gloria knows. The only way to survive, she says, is to do something for the next guy. “I tell people, don’t just lift that Bible; do something with it. I don’t want you to tell me about God, show me. You can quote every Bible scripture, but what good is it, if you’re doing nothing with it? I know we’re saved by grace, but we still have to do the work. And the ones of us who actually do the work are so blessed. We have the heart of Jesus because the only thing he did was serve.”

Gloria also copies Jesus by doing the humblest task: washing the feet of society’s outcasts. One old man’s feet were so dirty, crusty, and swollen that she didn’t want to touch them at first. “I didn’t have any gloves and my head was saying no,” she admits. “Then my vision went straight to Jesus, and the minute I looked to Jesus, it was like I was cleaning a baby’s feet. Then all the filth went away and it just got easy.” Since then she goes to bathe him whenever she can because he can’t stand well and the shelter he goes to doesn’t give him enough time to take a shower. “What I do,” she explains, “is I get behind an abandoned building, and my husband,
son, and I take two five-gallon buckets of water and we bathe him like he’s a baby.” Watching this, an average person might think Gloria’s a saint. “But it’s nothing,” she says. “If it was me, I would want somebody to do that for me.”

She brings this same sense of empathy to seniors because she’s seen how they struggle to pay their bills and get by. “I work in a mostly senior neighborhood,” she says, “and it’s so sad to seniors suffer like this. You know they can barely walk and nobody is there for them. I just want to wrap them all up and take them home and sit around and talk to them and feed them.” Seniors need nourishment for both their bodies and souls, Gloria has realized since many of her customers at the deli are up in years. “The older people have showed me that people don’t just come for the food. Most of them come to see me,” she says, “because I make them feel like this is their home away from home. I never had any grandparents, so I see all of them as my grandparents.” And like a good granddaughter, she goes to their homes, visits them in the hospital, and attends their funerals when one of them passes away.

She does it because too many young people aren’t giving seniors the care and respect they deserve. So she urges them to remember that “life is a cycle that comes full circle.” We start as babies who need care. We care for our own kids, and then we end as seniors who need care. When she sees seniors alone, she wonders where their kids are. Though they tend to show up when their older relatives get sick, Gloria urges them to “come back and reciprocate before it’s too late.”

There’s no excuse for turning a blind eye to those who need us, she points out. “Too many people say, ‘I’ve got my own problems, so I can’t help anybody else.’” Her answer is “happiness comes from within” when you fulfill God’s goals, not when you buy things you want. “I don’t go anywhere,” she says. “When my husband and I come home, we sit down and talk to one another. We pray together, and we watch Christian TV. We don’t have anything, but we’re happy. When we come back from feeding the homeless, it’s priceless. That’s what brings us joy.”

Granted this happiness doesn’t come without a price. Sometimes Gloria feels sick and has trouble getting the food cooked for Sunday. One weekend, her house shorted out and 80 pounds of meat were spoiled. Another time, the burners on her stove didn’t work, and sometimes she comes home wiped out on Saturday night. “I work all day and I’m exhausted,” she admits. “When that happens, I say, ‘Okay Lord, it’s me and you right now because I need your strength.’ Then as soon as I do that, it’s three or four in the morning, and I’m still cooking. I have an abundance of energy because of doing stuff for other people. As long as my son and husband are helping, I can handle any challenge.”

Gloria needs this can-do approach as she strives to feed more homeless people. Though the donations have grown, she still sacrifices to put caring in action on the streets. Sure she’d like a new car because the old one is falling apart. She’d love to take a vacation and see her grandkids in Barbados. But all that will have to wait because she knows there are people who need her time and money more. “These homeless are like our family,” she says. “They believe in us and we can’t turn our backs because we would disappoint a lot of people.”

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God gives everyone a mission. It’s our decision to accept the mission or not. This is God’s mission for me, to feed these people, and we will continue to do this until God makes us stop.

Roosevelt Avenue, in the Jackson Heights neighborhood of Queens, lies in the shadow of raised train tracks. Every few minutes a 7 train clatters by and drowns out conversation below. Outside the subway station, there’s a collection of Asian eateries, along with carts selling tacos, quesadillas, and sopes. Flags of Latin American nations fly, their colors displayed across store awnings. Those of Colombia, Mexico, and Ecuador are most common since 40 percent of the locals are Hispanic. Besides Spanish, you’ll hear people speaking 30 languages from around the world. This ethnic diversity offers a smorgasbord for food lovers and shoppers, so pedestrians pack the street at all hours of the day. Few people would notice the forlorn group of men huddled under the train tracks at 74th street, near one of the busiest transit hubs in Queens.

Jorge Muñoz noticed, and to understand what he does, you have to stand on a dark street corner with the men who wait for him every night. If it’s winter, the cold makes everyone shiver in their heavy black coats and hoods. Shortly before 9:30, they spy a car approaching and instantly form a neat line along the edge of the sidewalk, boots scraping the frozen glaze of pigeon droppings. The air fills with the tension of people who are used to being disappointed. Then Jorge drives up in his white Toyota pick-up truck, like he has for the past 11 years. The men relax and smile at the sight of the truck filled with enough home-cooked meals to feed 160 people.

On a typical night, it takes barely a minute for Jorge, his sister, Luz, and a few friends to transform the bed of the truck into a mobile kitchen. A plastic canteen is filled with hot coffee or hot chocolate. Metal trays hold steaming pieces of barbecued chicken that are placed one by one into polystyrene boxes already filled with rice. The men shuffle forward, collect their helpings, and dig in to what’s often their only meal of the day. Many of them are immigrant day laborers who can’t always find work and send their families much of what they earn. “One man,” Jorge says, “told his wife that the only reason he could send her money was because some guy was feeding him. My help let him help his family, and that made me feel good.”

His generosity has led people to call him a hero, but Jorge says he’s just doing his Christian duty. “This is a mission from God, and when you have a mission ahead, you can change the world.” Yet it isn’t easy, as Jorge admits. Every morning he kneels down and prays, “God give me the strength to do this.” Then each night, he somehow sprouts wings to help needy men who call him an “angel.”

But the “Angel in Queens” didn’t drop from heaven.
He’s a diminutive, five-foot-two-inch man whose family came here from Colombia when he was in his early twenties. “I was a school bus driver,” he explains. “One day, I see these guys standing in the street and I stopped and asked, ‘Why are you guys here?’ They say they are day laborers standing on that corner hoping to get a job. They say ‘If we get a job, we got money to eat. If not, then we got nothing for today.’ So I say, ‘OK. Wait for me tomorrow here. I’m gonna bring something to eat.’"

He began turning up most days with a dozen paper bags containing an apple, a biscuit, and something to drink. Then in 2004, his mission grew more ambitious. He had been on Long Island driving the buses for school summer camp when he noticed men pouring huge amounts of prepared food into rubbish dumps outside a plant that made airline meals. “I thought, ‘Why are they throwing that away?’” he recalls. “I can give those to the hungry people I see on the streets every day. Those leftovers, plus some donations — and over half of his $700 weekly pay — has allowed him to distribute 280,000 meals over the years. “In the beginning, it was eight guys,” he recalls. “Two weeks later it was 110 or 120 people, some days 140. But thank God, I always had enough food for everybody.”

God may not be the only one to thank because Jorge’s life has pretty much revolved around preparing and serving meals. When he was driving the bus, he got up at 5:15, was on his bus around 6:30, and came home at 6 to get meals ready for the guys. That routine changed in 2011 when he lost his job and began college to build a future. His budget was tighter, but he didn’t think of letting the men down. “Money is not what we need to help others,” he thought. “It’s heart and soul.” That, plus donations from local restaurants and some of the household income, has allowed Jorge to keep making sure others can eat.

He spends every day from 1 to 5 in the tiny kitchen in the modest home he shares with his mother and
sister. His living room looks like a pantry, filled with fresh food, parcelled out and ready to be cooked. “This is not a house anymore; it’s storage,” Jorge admits. He has six refrigerators and needs them all for what he calls his “family operation.” His team consists of his mother, sister, 11-year-old nephew, and several friends, who help him in cooking and packing meals before he hits the road.

The only time he’s skipped a night was when a blizzard closed down the city and he couldn’t dig his truck out of the snow. Letting down the men simply broke his heart, so he promised them never to miss another day. “They are alone. They have nothing.” Meanwhile, “I have my family, my sister. I have a home,” he points out. And he has always been willing to help those with less. “My mom taught me to share when I was young,” he says. “She is my hero.”

Her influence became clear when Jorge was seven. A man came to their home while they were eating and asked for food. Though they only had enough to feed themselves, Jorge gave the man his plate and said, “I’ll just have bread.” But even bread became hard to come by in 1974 after Jorge’s father died in an accident outside the factory where he worked. When his mother found it difficult to support Jorge and Luz, she went to Brooklyn, where she found work as a nanny. The two kids followed her in 1980 and all three went on to become citizens of the United States.

Jorge started work as a school bus driver, and for years his life was like that of an average Joe: waking up early to head off to work and coming home in the evening to relax. But everything changed that night he rolled down his truck window and asked a group of men, “Are you hungry?” Since then, he hasn’t seen a movie or watched TV since he doesn’t finish handing out meals till late at night. What keeps him going is his commitment to do God’s work until God makes him stop.

And perhaps God was at work one night just after he’d lost his job. “We only had enough money to cook 124 meals,” he recalls, “but 160 people showed up. When I handed out the last meal I prayed, and suddenly a group of people from a Colombian club showed up with leftover food from a party.” That night, when Jorge served 200 meals, he felt like the miracle of loaves and fishes was taking place in Queens.

The multitudes he now feeds come from all over. Many of them are Hispanics, and he identifies with them though he never stood on a street corner to find work. “When I see these guys on the street,” he says, “it’s like seeing me 20-something years ago when I came to this country.” But he doesn’t just help Hispanics. As word of his mobile soup kitchen spread, people from all backgrounds joined the crowd around his truck: Egyptians, Chinese, Ethiopians, and Asians, along with black and white Americans. “I’ll feed anyone who needs to eat. Just line up,” Jorge says.

One of the people who lined up was a young guy from Peru. He always looked grungy, so Jorge didn’t recognize him the day he showed up in neat, clean clothes. This time, he wasn’t looking for a meal. Instead, he walked up to Jorge, handed him 20 dollars, and said, “Don’t you remember me? My name is Gabriel. I came here for two months while I was sleeping on the street. Thank you. You were here when I needed you.”

The thought of these words makes Jorge want to do even more for those in need. He dreams of having a bigger kitchen and a place where the men can come so they don’t have to eat standing up in the snow. He also urges us all to do our share so nobody goes hungry. “Just help someone once a week.” And if you do, you, too, can change the world. “Everyone has a hero hiding inside,” Jorge says. “Just open your heart and let that hero out.”

As part of New York’s annual Hope Week celebration, members of the New York Yankees joined Jorge, his mother and sister in preparing the evening’s meals.
Dikembe Mutombo is a big man even by the standards of the National Basketball Association where he was the starting center with several clubs. This frequent NBA All Star on September 11, 2015 was a consensus choice for induction into the NBA Hall of Fame. Mutombo is also large of spirit; when it comes to philanthropy no one stands taller than he does.

The reach of his generosity is also amazing. In 1997, he established a foundation to help his homeland of the Congo. Since then, the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation has shipped hospital beds and medical supplies to the war-torn nation. It has brought solar power to the capital city of Kinshasa and joined the Starkey Hearing Foundation in fitting over 1,600 people with free hearing aids, many of them kids who heard their mother’s voice for the first time. Most important of all, the foundation built the Congo’s first new hospital in 40 years and Mutombo gave $15 million of the $29 million it cost to complete the hospital named for his mom.

Since opening in 2007, the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital has treated over 120,000 people and it’s a boon to a country plagued by poverty, disease, and civil war. Each year, 13 out of a thousand women die in childbirth. Nearly half a million children under age five die from diseases like malaria, measles, and polio which are preventable around the world. Tuberculosis claims almost 46,000 lives a year, more than four million children are orphans, and over a million people live with HIV/AIDS. “Africa is dying,” Mutombo says as he reflects on his people’s plight. “Whole cultures are being diminished. Some people’s histories are gone.”

Troubled as Africa might be, it’s Mutombo’s homeland. “I was born there. I was raised there,” he explains. “I think of Africa. When you are born in such poverty, wherever you go in your life, whether you become the president or the CEO of a company, you never forget where you come from.” And Mutombo’s heart aches for the Congo, where he first learned about caring. His father, Samuel, was a school superintendent who earned just $37 a month, but managed to care for his wife, children, cousins, nieces, and nephews. “I think I was pushed by my father,” Mutombo muses, “by him always helping our family members when I was growing up with so little. When I made as much as I did, I said, ‘I’m going to share with my people.’ If not for the community I come from, I would not have that will to push me to where I am today.”

As a young boy, he dreamed of becoming a doctor so he could help his country’s many ailing children. Since his family was poor, he knew he would have to excel to make his dream come true. “If I had a couple of classmates here with me, they could tell you stories of how we used to compete for the highest grade. Who would score the highest on the next test was very important to us.”

Mutombo was an excellent student; he speaks several languages and is a strong advocate of...
“No matter what you are trying to accomplish,” he says, “if you don’t have an education you are not going to succeed. That’s what I always tell the kids. Education should be your primary goal.” In fact, it was his academic gifts, not athletics, which brought him to the U.S. After earning a scholarship to Georgetown University, Mutombo threw himself into studies to prepare for medical school. But his plans changed when Georgetown’s Coach, John Thompson, asked him to play for the basketball team, where he showed amazing talent. After receiving a degree in linguistics and diplomacy, he decided to go pro. In 1991, he was drafted by the Denver Nuggets, and in 1996, he signed with the Atlanta Hawks. Later, he moved to Philadelphia, where he helped the 76ers reach the NBA finals and earned a three-year $65 million contract.

Along the way, he realized a career in basketball would let him do more for his people than he could have done as a doctor. His plans to help firmed up in 1992, when he toured Africa as a spokesman for CARE, the international relief agency. After seeing the death toll, he pondered what he should do. “It’s not like I woke up one morning and said, ‘I would do this,’” he relates. “God gradually gave me this vision. He wanted me to accomplish something for my people.”

He has gone on to realize this vision by bringing a new day to the Congo. He has been a youth emissary for the United Nations and served on an advisory board for the National Institutes of Health. He once hauled 65 suitcases of basketball uniforms, shoes, and equipment for the 18 Kinshasa club teams participating in his free basketball clinics. Another time, he financed the trip of the Congo’s basketball team to the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. In 1999, his efforts to raise awareness of polio led to vaccinations of more than eight million children, some of whom he treated himself.

“My mother told me a long time ago that I must help people,” Mutombo explains. “She told me you must help your family and the people of your country, and that the more you give, that much more will come back to you.” These words took on new meaning for Mutombo when his mother, Biamba Marie, died in 1998. A week before her death, armed soldiers refused to let his father pass through the barricades to take her to the hospital. “She died of a stroke,” Mutombo broods. “For that period, there was constant gunfire, no water, no electricity, and she could not take it.”

After his mother’s death, Mutombo resolved to build the hospital in Kinshasa. “I always wanted to do something very positive that would leave a big legacy in this world, that would be part of my world,” he says. “And the big legacy that I wanted to leave behind is the hospital and to name it after my late mom because she died from some circumstances that could have been
prevented.” Years after her death, Mutombo struggles to hold back tears while talking about her. “She would be alive today if not for the war,” he says, and, “I will never forget it.”

He knows he can’t bring her back, so he’s channeled his grief into improving his people’s health, education, and quality of life. It’s a big project Mutombo admits, but he is committed to using his success in a positive way. “I am a strong believer that we are all put on this planet to fulfill something.” And his own mission is “to give hope to those without hope,” he says. “I’m trying to inspire the next generation. I think that’s why we’re here. We were put on this planet to prepare this place for the next generation that comes after that. How can we make sure our grandkids live in a better place?”

We can do it, he believes, if we simply trust in God. “I feel that anything you need in life, you just put your faith in the Man upstairs,” he says, “and it will be given to you. I feel the Man upstairs has put my dream in my head to realize this project here. Once I realize it, I will be one of the happiest men on this planet.”

He’s already a famous one, since his work has made him known throughout the world. When he comes to Africa, hundreds of people sleep at night in front of his hotel, hoping to see and talk with him. International organizations constantly seek his help with medical issues. His face features on billboards in Kinshasa, and African musicians celebrate him in their songs. The responsibility that comes with this acclaim sometimes worries Mutombo. “It’s not easy to carry that much weight. You feel it night after night.”

Despite his unease, Mutombo has some practice being a guardian angel to the needy. While at Georgetown, he spent a month performing in a play called “La Ville” with his French drama club. To be on stage each night, he had to scurry out of basketball practice at seven, shower, get into costume, and have his makeup on before the curtain rose at seven thirty. On stage, he played “someone who came to save the people of the town.” Thinking back to those days, Mutombo remembers, “I was like an angel,” and “I had wings.”

Those giant wings of his helped him score points and made him a star on the court. But this success did not make the big guy forget about the underprivileged folks at home. Now he’s reaching out to give them the ultimate assist. “In Central Africa,” he says, “there is an old proverb: ‘When you take the elevator to reach the top, please don’t forget to send the elevator back down, so that someone else can take it to the top.’ This is my way of saying thanks and giving back to others.”

Above left: Dikembe and Rose Mutombo with President Jimmy Carter at the America’s Sunday Supper event. Mutombo was a table host for the evening. Above right: Dikembe Mutombo greets the participants at the UNFP meeting held at the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa.
Pope Francis

International Award Winner
He was sitting next to Cardinal Claudio Hummes, archbishop emeritus of São Paulo, Brazil, as the cardinals counted the votes for next leader of the Catholic Church. When Bergoglio was declared the winner, Hummes embraced him and said, “Don’t forget the poor.” At that moment, “I thought of Francis of Assisi,” Pope Francis has recalled, “the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation. He is “the poor man who wanted a poor church,” and “how I would love a church that is poor and for the poor.”

These remarks and his choice of name gave a preview of his values. Like his namesake, Francis is taking a different path by breaking barriers to build solidarity and hope. “Instead of being just a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open,” he has said, “let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself, and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit, or are indifferent.” This credo of caring and inclusion has led him to maintain that “God is in everyone’s life,” whatever their sins may be. “Even if the life of the person has been a disaster, even if it is destroyed by vices, drugs, or anything else — God is in this person’s life. You can, you must try to seek God in every human life. Although the life of a person is a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow.”

Francis is nurturing the seeds of good by taking on today’s major dilemmas: climate change, immigration reform, and the excesses of capitalism worldwide. In place of a church obsessed with dogma, Francis envisions the church as a “field hospital” that heals the world’s “open wounds” of hatred, greed, poverty, and pollution. “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting, and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its security,” he wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*. His first apostolic exhortation made it clear that he wants action, not talk. “We want to enter fully into the fabric of society,” he explained, “sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world.”

He’s especially committed to changing life for the poor. Since arriving at the Vatican, he has put them at the heart of his global agenda and makes headlines for offering concrete support to those in need. He has installed showers in the Vatican for homeless people and is said to regularly “sneak out” to visit them at night. On his birthday, he celebrated by distributing sleeping bags to 400 people who needed them, and he has urged his flock to follow suit. “All of us, each day,” he said, “are presented with the option of being good Samaritans or indifferent passersby.” But for Francis poverty is about more than handouts. Instead, “it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor. This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor
that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives.”

The roots of this concern for social justice go back to his formative years in Argentina. He was born in 1936 to Italian immigrants who fled Mussolini’s regime in 1929. His father was an accountant, his mother was a housewife, and his grandmother was a former member of the lay organization Catholic Action who had given speeches against fascism. She taught him to pray and imparted lessons in justice he didn’t forget as he enjoyed a normal youth in which he developed crushes on girls and enjoyed dancing the tango. He went on to work as a bouncer at a bar, study chemistry, and become a chemist. He had begun studying medicine as his mother wished. Then one day, she discovered books on theology and Latin and realized he was preparing for the priesthood. When she accused him of lying, he said, “No Mother, I’m studying medicine for souls.”

With such a clever response, it should be no surprise that he won his mother’s consent and became a novice in the Jesuit order. Ordained in 1958, he returned to his alma mater, the Colegio de San José, where he served as rector and professor of theology. In 1992, he was named titular bishop of Auca and auxiliary of Buenos Aires a week later. In 1998, when he became archbishop of Buenos Aires, he doubled the number of priests assigned to work directly with the poor and often visited them himself. Three years later, Pope John Paul II raised him to the rank of cardinal, a position that came with many perks. Yet he lived in a small apartment, took public transportation, and cooked his own meals. He also liked to prepare meals for friends and when asked if he was a good cook, he quipped, “Well, no one ever died.”

But many people were dying from disease, want, and drug wars in the poorest parts of Buenos Aires, so Francis continued focusing much of his attention on the dispossessed. He kissed the feet of AIDS patients in a hospice, heard confessions from prostitutes on park benches, and wandered the worst neighborhoods in the city. Every year he made a pilgrimage to Pasaje C, a dirt road filled with packs of dogs and lined with burned-out houses. On that day he would walk to the subway station near his office at the Metropolitan Cathedral. Traveling alone, he would transfer onto a graffiti-blasted tram to the end of the line at a garbage-strewn road, Mariano Acosta. He finished the journey on foot, trudging in bulky, black orthopedic shoes along Pasaje C. On other days, there were journeys to other slums throughout the city. They were all sad places of squalor, but none were too filthy or poor for a visit from Francis.

These desolate roads ultimately led to Rome, where 78-year-old Francis continues to live a simple and humble life. As pope, he rejected the princely trappings of the holy office by choosing to live in a two-room apartment instead of the Apostolic Palace and replacing the papal Mercedes with a Ford Focus. Instead of the traditional red slip-ons, he wears ordinary black shoes. He declined to order new tableware from Leone Limentani, the high-end porcelain company that has
supplied every pope with crest-embossed table settings since 1870. He washes the feet of prisoners and carries his own bag on planes though past popes never carried anything themselves. “We have to be normal!” Francis pleaded when a colleague asked what was in the black leather satchel he recently brought aboard a plane to Rio de Janeiro. “It’s not the key to the atomic bomb!” Francis joked. Instead it contained his breviary prayer book, his agenda, a book on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, and a simple razor.

That bag has come with him to 15 countries in his more than two years as pope. His travel priorities have reflected his motto: “Go to the peripheries” to encounter those who have been marginalized. His first official trip outside Rome was to Lampedusa, a Sicilian Island where he greeted migrants who had survived their exodus from Africa. Since then he has traveled to Brazil and to Israel, Jordan, and the occupied Palestinian territories, where he made an appeal for peace. He has been to the United States and Cuba, two nations that have begun rebuilding ties in part because of his intervention. He has prayed for peace in war-torn Sri Lanka and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He has been to South Korea, where he urged reconciliation of the Korean peninsula. He has traveled to Ecuador, Paraguay, and Bolivia, where he spoke at the World Meeting of Popular Movements, an international body that brings together people on society’s margins.

As he faced nearly 2,000 social activists, trash workers, and landless peasants, he apologized for the church’s treatment of Native Americans and railed against unbridled capitalism. In a passionate speech, he urged the downtrodden to change the world economic order, denouncing a new colonialism by agencies that impose austerity programs and calling for the poor to have the “sacred rights” of labor, lodging, and land. “Let us not be afraid to say it: we want change, real structural change,” he declared as he denounced a system that “has imposed the mentality of profit at any price with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature.” It was a theme he had already addressed in Our Common Earth, a landmark encyclical that urged corporations to stop turning “God’s creation, our earth into a sewer” and contended that climate change weighs heaviest on the poor.

Now he returned to this theme in urgent terms. “Time, my brothers and sisters,” he warned, “seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home. Today, the scientific community realizes what the poor have long told us: harm, perhaps irreversible harm, is being done to the ecosystem. The earth, entire peoples and individual persons are being brutally punished.
And behind all this pain, death, and destruction there is the stench of what Basil of Caesarea called 'the dung of the devil.' An unfettered pursuit of money rules. The service of the common good is left behind. Once capital becomes an idol and guides people’s decisions, once greed for money presides over the entire socioeconomic system, it ruins society, it condemns and enslaves men and women, it destroys human fraternity, it sets people against one another and, as we clearly see, it even puts at risk our common home.”

The current system, Francis contends, also runs counter to the teachings of Jesus, who was born homeless and spent his life with the poor. So he has criticized leaders who take too much for themselves and urged governments to redistribute social benefits to the needy. “Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy,” he has contended. “It is a moral obligation” and a “commandment” for Christians. “Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of the people and those needs are not restricted to consumption. It is not enough to let a few drops fall whenever the poor shake a cup that never runs over by itself. Welfare programs geared to certain emergencies can only be considered temporary responses. They can never replace true inclusion, an inclusion which provides free, creative, participatory, and solid work.”

The key words are inclusion and caring, which sum up the pope’s approach to groups the church has too long kept on the margins. He has eased the path to absolution for abortion in order to give hope to the “many women who bear in their heart the scar of this agonizing and painful decision.” He has offered comforting words for divorced Catholics and their children, urging priests to welcome these families with “doors wide open.” And he has shown a more accepting attitude of homosexuality than previous popes. “If someone is gay,” he said, “and searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge? We shouldn’t marginalize people for this. They must be integrated into society.”

This is also the case for immigrants, a group with which the pope feels a personal bond. “I am the son of immigrants,” he explained, recalling his family’s flight to Argentina in 1929. “It is true that in those days there was work, but the ones from my family — who had jobs when they arrived — by 1932, with the economic crisis of the ’30s were out on the street, with nothing. My grandfather bought a warehouse with 2,000 pesos
which he borrowed, and my father, who was an accountant, was selling goods out of a basket. I know about immigration.” And it was one of the topics he addressed this fall in a visit to the United States, where his first stop was Washington, DC.

The pope arrived in a modest Fiat at the White House, where he spoke to a crowd of more than 11,000 assembled on the South Lawn. In his remarks, he called for further action on poverty and climate change while there was still time to heal the planet for its children. “To use a telling phrase of the Reverend Martin Luther King, we can say that we have defaulted on a promissory note and now is the time to honor it,” he said.

The country’s vast resources demanded a deep sense of moral duty, he later explained at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle to nearly 300 bishops who had come there from around the country.

He also spoke about the responsibility to serve when he became the first pope to address the U.S. Congress. Standing in front of a packed House chamber, he issued a critique of capitalist excess, an endorsement of environmental legislation, a condemnation of the arms trade, and a plea to abolish the death penalty. He also urged compassion for refugees and immigrants as he addressed a crowd that included lawmakers who say the U.S. should keep out Syrians and others who have fled their countries, as well as deport more undocumented immigrants who are already here. “Our world is facing a refugee crisis not seen since the Second World War,” he said. “This presents us with great challenges and many hard decisions.” But there is a solution: “Let us remember the Golden Rule: ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’”

The Golden Rule is inclusive. As Mother Teresa pointed out, it can be summarized in one word: caring. It embraces people of all races and religions, just like Pope Francis. And this explains why his popularity bridges great divides, according to polls by Pew Research Center, Gallup, and the New York Times. Many people have come to see him as more of a humanitarian spokesman than simply the head of the Catholic Church. When he speaks millions listen whether they are Hindu or atheist, Muslim or Baptist. He appeals to both spiritual and secular worlds because he radiates both the simplicity of St. Francis and the charisma of a global leader who takes on the big issues. Regardless of their faith, people are moved by his commitment to the powerless and poor. That is the heart of the Golden Rule and it goes way beyond religion.
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When Michael was younger, he played soccer at the YMCA. One time, he was the first in a game to score three consecutive goals, and “it was one of the proudest moments of my life,” the 17-year-old recalls. Even better was a soccer game he played two years ago in Tikobo, Ghana. This time, he passed off the ball, but he was still part of the winning team. His teammates made him feel great, Michael says, because they have a strong “culture of community” in Ghana. And the Snohomish, Washington, youth had something else to feel good about that day. He had just shown his own sense of community by hand-delivering $20,000 worth of sports supplies to four schools and setting up eight soccer teams on behalf of Hugs for Ghana.

Michael had the idea for his organization six years ago when his family went to visit Ghana. His parents had grown up there and he was excited about the trip. But when he arrived in Ghana, it was nothing like he had imagined. “My mother’s village had no running water and only had electricity in five houses,” he recalls. “The local school could not afford books, equipment for sports teams, or a quality library to store the few books they did have.”

So he and his family mobilized the community to help when they returned home. They started Hugs for Ghana, a student-run organization with Michael as executive director. He showed his gifts for organization in 2013 by holding a book drive in his school and enlisting three friends from nearby schools to do the same. “Ultimately,” he says, “the three of us collected more than 4,000 children’s books, coloring books, chapter books and even a full multi-book encyclopedia set from the students at our schools.” And that’s only a small part of what Hugs for Ghana has done.

In the past six years, the organization has collected $75,000 in toys, school supplies, and donations for underprivileged children in Ghana. Under Michael’s leadership, Hugs for Ghana has established three branches around Washington State, expanded to 10 schools, and recruited over 100 students who each volunteer 50 hours a year. Recently they helped him hold Ghanaian Culture Night, a fundraiser that brought in nearly $6,000. This impressive sum showed Michael that “people are willing to help and don’t want anything in return.”

He’s helped others enjoy the pleasure of giving by developing projects of their own. With Michael’s guidance, one boy started Hugs for Tanzania and delivered 100 backpacks filled with school supplies to Tanzanian students. But most kids can’t go to African, so Michael provides young people with service opportunities at home. As part of his local effort, Helping U Grow, students tutor elementary school students, write notes to hospitalized children, and give music concerts at local retirement homes. Seeing them give back makes Michael glad because his goal is to “help people reach their greatest potential.”

He’s also convinced “everyone can help” since a little effort goes a long way — especially in a poor nation like Ghana. When he was there in eighth grade, he gave a teddy bear to a little boy who gleefully held it above his head and kept saying “thank you.” When Michael returned two years later, he saw the boy again. “He remembered me, he still had that teddy bear, and he thanked me again,” Michael says. And the boy’s happiness made Michael feel even prouder than he had when he scored big at the YMCA. “Even though I can’t do everything,” he realized, “I can do something, and that something will make a huge difference.”
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The trick for having a “philanthro-party” is to “put some social good into any social gathering,” 16-year-old Lulu tells other kids. “We encourage them to take a cause they’re passionate about and look at their schedule and see what they’re already planning on doing, whether it’s a birthday or a sleepover or a sports event and add that little twist to make giving a part of the social activities they already would be doing.” It’s advice that inspires kids to make social activism a regular part of their lives.

Fundraising could be fun, Lulu realized when she was nine and a massive earthquake hit Haiti. Though she lived far away in Los Angeles, she knew she wanted to help. She’d grown up doing lemonade stands to raise funds for local causes, and this time she looked for a way to get her whole class involved. “I decided to make this a boys vs. girls “Lemonade War” because everybody loves competition.” And the event was hardly a lemon. Besides raising $4,000 in two weeks, it led Lulu to ramp up the fun of raising funds.

While googling “free lemonade stand,” she stumbled across Blood: Water Mission, an organization that provides life-saving water to African nations. After donating her sales to help this cause, she founded LemonAID Warriors to create more events that could help kids fight for causes they cared about and launched a series of philanthro-parties that caught the attention of Mattel. The company asked her to share her ideas online, where they have reached over 4.2 million kids and inspired philanthro-parties worldwide.

Lulu’s own parties have raised $80,000, much of it for clean water projects in developing countries like Uganda. Two years ago, she went there with Blood: Water and met women from a community that’s thrived since she gave it the funds to build a well. She also met a little girl named Rebecca when she visited a Ugandan school. “She had no shoes, didn’t have enough to eat, and probably had no clean water,” Lulu recalls. “But she wasn’t looking for money when she approached us. She asked if we could sponsor her to go to school. And I realized poor children don’t want a handout. They want control over their lives.”

This insight has led Lulu to put a new focus on education. She started the 200Girls campaign to help bring back Nigerian schoolgirls who were kidnapped by extremists last year. She’s also partnering with World at School, an organization devoted to getting all children an education, and recently she had a big fundraiser that collected $3,000 for schools in Nepal. It’s a switch from raising funds for water, but Lulu thinks everything is connected. “Water led me to education,” she explains. “As you grow, it’s natural to discover more good things to commit to.”

She helps others discover what’s out there by mentoring kids in her community, and telling them to start small, like she did with her lemonade stand. “Trust in the power of your small ideas,” she says. “They can turn into big things.”
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Emilee Hamilton
Age 18, Utah
Founder, Utah YOuth Connect

Today’s youth are helping yesterday’s youth, thanks to Emilee’s love for the aged. The 18-year-old Utah girl has been acting on it for as long as she can remember. “My mom was my pre-school teacher,” Emilee recalls, “and she would take our class to nursing homes so we could sing for the seniors.” The kids didn’t sing very well, Emilee admits, but the seniors still gave them a big hand. “They’d light up when we came because it reminded them of their younger days.” And something about the seniors also came to remind Emilee of a rough patch in her life as she kept visiting them over time. In eighth grade, she had few friends and told her mother how alone she felt. When her mom reminded her that people in retirement centers are lonely, too, Emilee got an idea for bringing students and seniors together. “I realized the seniors could benefit from this, and I could make some new friends.”

So three years ago, she founded Utah YOuth Connect to show seniors someone really cares. Since then, her organization has connected middle-school students with retired people. “I know youth have a lot of power,” Emilee says, “and they can make a difference, and they’ve got the time.” With Emilee’s guidance, they use it to visit retirement homes and engage seniors in singing, playing musical instruments, watching videos, and sharing stories. Emilee also throws parties where her volunteers give seniors affection and attention. The young people gain, too, as they realize “you don’t learn to live until you learn to give” — words Emilee heard from a man in a wheelchair who helped her hand out candy to trick-or-treaters on Halloween.

But giving seniors the company and comfort they wanted wasn’t as simple as Emilee expected. At first she tried to do it with a local community group but had trouble getting a consistent group of volunteers. “Then I tried to get the retirement centers to get more volunteers, but that wasn’t working either,” Emilee says. So she assessed the needs of the elderly in 10 retirement homes, created a website where she listed service opportunities for teens, and started an advertising campaign which netted her nearly $9,000 in grants and donations. She’s used it to get 15,000 kids involved in her group.

Emilee brings some of these kids to local retirement centers, and along the way, she’s picked up memories she won’t forget, like those of a recent Valentine’s Day dance. “We handed out stuffed puppies from Wal-Mart,” Emilee says, “and gave one to a lady who was passing away. One man joked that we had to come back to change the papers for those puppies, and a man with Alzheimer’s started singing, though he didn’t talk.”

Interacting with seniors like these has taught Emilee to look beyond the wrinkles and ravages of old age. “The seniors have such fun personalities,” she says. “You don’t expect this, but the elderly are young at heart. They’re just trapped in aging bodies.” And Emilee has learned that “they’re a treasure trove of wisdom,” especially that man who taught her the value of giving on Halloween.

She’s picked up added lessons from Richard L. Evans, long-running announcer of a radio and TV program. Evans knew the loneliness of the aged and said, “We cannot bring them back the morning hours of youth, but we can help them live in the warm glow of a sunset made more beautiful by our thoughtfulness and unfeigned love.” Their words Emilee lives by as she connects the hearts of Utah’s young and old.
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Lillian lights up the world by helping kids see. Her sense of vision comes from having eye problems since she was born. By the time she was five, she’d had two surgeries, the first to remove a cataract, the second for lazy eye. When she was six, she realized a lot of children were nervous about undergoing eye surgery, so she began giving toys to kids at hospitals who were about to undergo surgery on their eyes. Then she began volunteering by reading to children in the waiting room, where she assured parents that their child would be just fine. “The more time I spent at hospitals,” the 14-year-old New Yorker says, “the more I learned that not every child in need of care is as fortunate to have access to it.” As she began meeting kids from around the world who came to the U.S. for care, she decided to do something to give needy children the gift of sight.

At age eight, she founded Vision For and From Children, which raises funds to provide eye surgery in the U.S. and developing world. Her organization has sent teams of ophthalmologists to places like Haiti, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Ukraine. Since locations in poorer countries often don’t have proper medical equipment, Vision For and From Children flies equipment there, besides paying for children to come to the U.S. for their operations.

In the past six years, Lillian has helped 25,210 children with assistance from Fortune 500 companies, businesses here and abroad, and the many doctors who volunteer for her group. “My surgeon connected me with doctors at first,” Lillian explains, “but getting doctors to donate is easy. They really want to help.”

One of the conditions they care for is lazy eye, and treatment includes wearing a patch on the dominant eye to strengthen the other. Lillian knows what this is like because she wore a patch for almost 10 years. “I had a great deal of time to reflect on lazy eye and what that means,” she says. “I ultimately began thinking about lazy eye a little differently. Lazy eye. Lazy I.”

Fortunately, there’s a painless cure for lazy I, Lillian points out. Use the “power of one” to make the world a better place. “Helping even one person is an achievement,” she tells students in talks she gives at schools. Many of them have been inspired to start their own projects. Some have become “diplomats” who raise funds for her cause. And one class who supported Lillian’s mission got to see the people they were helping when Lillian skyped them on her yearly trip to meet patients overseas. “Making that personal connection,” she says, “gets them more engaged in public service.”

Interacting with patients also inspires Lillian and she was moved by a girl she met in the Dominican Republic this year. “She looked like me,” Lillian recalls, “and told me she had three wishes: to get her eyes fixed, to get braces, and to be a doctor so she could help other children. I was with her every step of the way through surgery. I was with her when she could see, and now she can be the doctor she wants to be.”

Perhaps that girl will someday work in one of the ophthalmology clinics Lillian wants to build in developing nations. Lillian’s now raising the funds by asking for “one million $1 bills.” But no matter how much her project grows, she’ll never get over the thrill of helping someone see the sun, moon, and stars. She loves knowing “I helped give someone sight.”
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Haile Thomas
Age 14, Arizona
Founder, *Kids Can Cook and the HAPPY Organization*

What does quinoa have to do with caring? The wholesome grain is part of a dish Haile makes to help kids learn to cook and eat better. “I hope to make a difference,” she says, “by inspiring other kids to embrace a healthy lifestyle and become educated about how good and bad food affects their bodies, overall health, and quality of life.” Over 10,000 kids have gotten her message that cooking can be healthy, creative, and fun. They tell Haile “I’m never going to McDonald’s again” after attending one of her cooking classes in Tucson, Arizona, or hearing her speak at schools across the U.S.

Haile knows what she’s talking about because she’s been cooking since age five. Her parents came from Jamaica, and Haile’s cooking career began when she watched her mom make dishes she’d grown up eating. At some point she asked to help and cooking became a passion. Many of the foods she made reflected her parents’ roots, but she put a healthy spin on them after her dad was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Haile was only eight at the time, but she started asking where her food came from and what she was eating. With the knowledge she picked up, she helped her father beat the disease. “So I was inspired to share our journey and success with others to empower healthier generations,” she explains.

Most kids aren’t informed about nutrition, so Haile took steps to give them a taste for healthy eating. She joined the youth advisory board of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, which combats childhood obesity, and started doing cooking demonstrations with local chefs. She went on to host an online show, *Kids Can Cook*, which teaches young people how to make simple, nourishing meals. Her passion for wholesome eating impressed Hyatt Hotels & Resorts so much that the chain asked her to come up with healthy, kid-friendly items like the salad kebabs with honey mustard dipping sauce she once whipped up on TV.

She also managed to whip up $7,000 in donations to start her own health center for kids. Three years ago, she and her mom founded the HAPPY Organization, which offers kids’ cooking classes, nutrition education, and physical activities. “Most of the kids come from underserved communities,” she says, “and can’t afford to pay any fees.” So Haile holds fundraisers, provides scholarships, and gets Whole Foods to donate ingredients for cooking.

Her classes have convinced many kids there are better options than a Happy Meal. Granted, a few are reluctant when classes start to explore a healthier way of eating. But at the end of the session, “they say they wished it could have gone on,” Haile explains. “They didn’t realize how much they would learn.” And teaching them has showed Haile “that when kids are educated they’ll make the right choices.”

Besides giving kids tips for healthier eating, she urges them to give back. “Everyone should strive to find something they can do to make the world a better place,” she maintains. And her own appetite for doing good only grew after she attended the Kids’ State Dinner in 2013. The menu included a black bean and corn quinoa salad, which Haile prepared. It got rave reviews, but what struck Haile most was how the first lady “asked us to pay it forward.” This made Haile think about what her community lacks, so she’s working to get more kids in the kitchen and raise funds to give low-income Tucson families access to organic food. She knows helping others is the recipe for a happy life.
A Eulogy for Wayne Dyer

“When you squeeze an orange,” Wayne Dyer once said, “orange juice comes out — because that’s what’s inside. When you are squeezed, what comes out is what is inside. It’s one of the great lessons of life.

What comes out when life squeezes you? When someone hurts or offends you? If anger, pain, and fear come out of you, it’s because that’s what’s inside. It doesn’t matter who does the squeezing — your mother, your brother, your children, your boss, the government. If someone says something that you don’t like, what comes out of you is what’s inside. And what’s inside is up to you, it’s your choice.” If you choose to think good thoughts, good things will happen, Dyer predicted. It was a message that empowered millions to live with love and reach their potential.

The “father of caring and positive thinking” believed you can get anything you want if you really go for it. That’s what Dyer did when he came out with his first self-help book in 1976. It was a flop, but he didn’t give up. He bought thousands of copies himself and crisscrossed the country hawking his book, talking to small-town newspapers and radio stations about his reader-friendly approach to being happy. His book, as he explained, had two main themes: “You are the sum total of your choices” and “There is only one moment in which you can experience anything and that is now.” This gospel of positive thinking made Your Erroneous Zones a runaway success that sold more than 35 million copies and topped bestseller lists for 27 months. Dyer followed it up with 40 more books that combined spiritual lessons with common sense about surmounting obstacles in life. The bald, telegenic author, with reassuring blue eyes, also did seminars, gave lectures, and made decades of appearances on The Tonight Show, Oprah, Ellen, and PBS.

The secret of his appeal was the way he wove stories from his own life with wisdom from the ages. He often quoted Saint Francis of Assisi, Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, and psychologist Abraham Maslow, known for his hierarchy of needs. He also shared personal foibles, like his habit of losing car keys, so people could relate to him better. “I am everyone’s next-door neighbor,” he said, “albeit one with a powerful message” about how to climb a metaphoric ladder to self-actualization. The best way to self-fulfillment, he explained, was to be an “instrument of love” by serving others. “Everyone has a secret desire to live a fully functioning, self-actualized life. I provide a blueprint for achieving such an exalted state. The top of the ladder is living from a place of divine love, which is where we emanated from and where we shall all return when we shed these egos and the bodies that house them.”

Dyer reached the top though he started at the bottom in a broken home. “My mother had three small children under the age of four, “ he recalled, “and an alcoholic husband who walked away without providing any support. She placed one of my brothers and me in a series of foster homes while my other brother lived with my grandmother until I was ten years old. This is not
a story of pity or blame; it’s precisely what had to take place in order for me to learn about reliance firsthand.” And he was only in grade school when he began passing on vital lessons. “I taught my brother, who lived through this and went through this with me, to rely on himself,” Dryer said. “I taught him not to live in fear because he was scared and bullied a bit, and he was anemic. I always talked to him about relying on yourself and trusting in yourself. When you grow up without parents around, you learn to rely on yourself and once you get that and understand that, no one can ever persuade you from it as you go through life.”

His sense of independence led to one of the pillars of his philosophy: being a “scurvy elephant.” These words were what he misheard when a teacher called him a disturbing element at an orphanage in the third grade. “‘Scurvy elephant,’ that’s the term I’ve used as long as I could remember,” he said. “There are some people who have a sense of who they are and what they are very early in their life, independent of the good opinion of other people. I was one of those people.” Unfortunately, it got him in hot water when he was young. “I couldn’t get past the past I created for myself,” he said when he recalled his attempts to overcome his poor grades and get into college. “But I always believed a brick wall is just there for people who don’t really care enough or don’t really want something badly enough. And I wanted this very, very badly.”

He kept this goal in mind after finishing high school and spending four years in the U.S. Navy. When he was discharged at age 22, his superiors warned him that starting college at his “advanced” age was risky and urged him to become a cryptographer in the Navy. What they didn’t realize was that he dreamt of becoming a famous author and had used his free time in the service to read 770 books, underlining words he didn’t know and looking them up each night. This sense of discipline helped him earn a doctorate in educational counseling from Wayne State University and become a high school counselor for several years before teaching at St. John’s University in New York. He also gave popular motivational lectures that a literary agent advised him to distill into a book. But before Dyer could act on this recommendation he had to make an inner journey and leave the past behind.

This voyage took him to the grave of the father who had abandoned him decades ago. “I was 34 years old,” Dyer recalled, “and I was filled with rage, hatred, and anger toward this man. I used to dream about him all the time and I was just out of sorts. I was drinking, overweight and so many things were just not working in my life. My writing wasn’t going the way I wanted it to, my relationships were terrible, and I was eating awful foods and drinking. Then I ended up at my father’s grave through a series of mystical events, which are impossible to describe or to have any logic behind them, but all of
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it was true. I ended up being sent to my father’s grave to forgive him. It was that act of forgiveness that changed my life.”

The turning point came right after he left the graveyard. Freed from the anger he’d always carried around, Dyer rented a hotel room and banged out Your Erroneous Zones in 14 days. “I just handwrote the whole thing,” he remembered, “and it went on to become a worldwide bestseller and still is to this day. Everything in my life changed after that because I got the rage out of my heart and filled it with love. I sent love to this man who I previously had always sent hatred toward, and when you fill yourself with love, you become aligned with your source. You become aligned with God, and that alignment is what I think made all the shifts in my life. I stopped feeling sorry for myself and stopped the destructive habits that I had. I stopped drinking, eating greasy foods, and began to turn my life around dramatically. Almost everything I wrote after that became a bestseller.”

Many of his books have inspiring titles that appeal to people who want to change their karma. They include The Sky’s the Limit, Real Magic: Creating Miracles in Everyday Life, 101 Ways to Transform Your Life, Manifest Your Destiny: The Nine Spiritual Principles of Getting Everything You Want, The Power of Intention, and many more. His prolific writing output reflected the discipline he brought to every aspect of his life from the eight miles he ran each day to his hectic speaking schedule. At one point, he wrote 60 essays on 60 of history’s “great actualizers,” including Pythagoras, Leonardo da Vinci, and Mother Teresa. “I decided I could write the 60 essays in 60 days,” he said. “I saw myself doing it. At the end of the day, I would do a gratefulness meditation. The next day I would do it again.” The result was his book, Wisdom of the Ages: 60 Days to Enlightenment.

Many of history’s religious leaders have shown us a path, and Dyer honored them though he didn’t belong to any formal religion. Instead, he proposed that God was about goodness. We are all connected to a divine source and we can tap into it to live richer lives, he said. “My beliefs are that the truth is a truth until you organize it, and then it becomes a lie. I don’t think that Jesus was teaching Christianity. Jesus was teaching kindness, love, concern, and peace. What I tell people is don’t be a Christian, be Christ-like. Don’t be Buddhist, be Buddha-like. Religion is orthodoxy, rules and historical scriptures maintained by people over long periods of time. Generally, people are raised to obey the customs and practices of that religion without question. These are customs and expectations from outside the person and do not fit my description of spiritual.”

His own spiritual credo came from this conviction: “You attract what you are.” The “law of attraction,” as he called it, linked the Golden Rule to success. “It’s about giving. It’s about serving. It’s about allowing,” Dyer explained. It’s also about realizing that life’s happiest moment are when you give something away, not when you ask for more. “If you say to the universe, ‘Gimme, gimme, gimme,’” he explained, “then the universe gives you back what you offered out. You get more ‘gimme, gimme, gimme.’ And ‘gimme’ means you don’t have enough. You have a shortage. The universe just keeps giving you more shortage because of what you’re thinking and saying. If, on the other hand, you say to the universe again and again, ‘How may I serve? How may I serve? How may I serve?’ and you live a life of constancy reflecting that principle, the universe will respond back, ‘How may I serve you?’”

Dyer knew service is real success and he lived by this conviction. Throughout his life he donated generously to his alma mater, Wayne State University, and brought in about $250 million for PBS, making him one of public TV’s most successful fundraisers. “I don’t have a vision board with a new Mercedes or a new watch,” he explained. “I wake up every day and ask, ‘What can I give?’ The first thing I do every single morning is I say, ‘Thank you,’ and I pick a letter up, or sometimes I call somebody. And I try to give back. I ask, ‘How may I serve somebody?’”

The most important way he served people was by
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giving them life-changing lessons on how to deal with both others and themselves. Among them was his belief that cooperation is better than competition because people control you if their performance is what motivates you. Another was not to try changing the people you love. “Love is the ability and willingness to allow those that you care for to be what they choose for themselves without any insistence that they satisfy you.” And if people don’t satisfy you, resist the urge to be a victim. “How people treat you is their karma, how you react is yours.”

The key was using “the power of intention” to create the world you want. Rather than trying to control the world around us, Dyer believed we can get what we want by practicing virtues like honesty, kindness, gratitude, and unconditional love. “Sow love to melt away anger” when you have a fight or someone makes you feel bad. If you do that rejection makes you stronger and better, instead of bitter, he explained. You also realize that “self worth cannot be verified by others. You are worthy because you say so.” And when you understand that you know you can soar above your limits to build heaven on Earth. “Loving people live in a loving world,” Dyer said. “Hostile people live in a hostile world. Same world.” The point was we’re all potential saints. “We have built into us this capacity for kindness and creativity and beauty. It’s a matter of perspective,” he explained. And from his viewpoint, there was reason to hope despite all the problems in the world. “For every act of violence and messiness, there are a million acts of kindness and goodness.”

These acts of positive, loving people matter because they energize the “unified field” that joins us all. “Everything is connected,” Dyer said, “and those who live at the very highest and fastest energies are able to compensate for people who live at very low and slow energies. They say that on a scale of one to 1,000, with 1,000 representing divine unity consciousness and a one representing the lowest energy, that one person at 1,000, let’s say it was Jesus Christ walking among us, would counterbalance the negativity of everyone else on the planet. And one person at 900 can counterbalance the negative energy of 90 million people.”

Dyer did that for millions as he used his energy and gifts to enhance people’s lives. “The favorite part of my work, and it happens every day, is encountering people whose lives have been turned around because of what I’ve done,” he said. “Just knowing that you’re making a difference in the lives of other people is the most gracious, fun-filled, lovely experience you can have. I certainly don’t need any more money and I don’t need any more attention or accolades. I don’t need any of that at all. I do it because of that deep, burning desire that inspires me.”

His flame went out this year when he died of a heart attack at age 75. Dyer didn’t fear the end because he felt death was the start of a new adventure that returns us to the source of divine love. And his words remain to spur us onto our own adventures in service and self-fulfillment. You can still read his books, watch his interviews, or listen to him narrate Day and Night, a prize-winning Pixar short based on one of his lectures. In another acclaimed film, American Hustle, Jennifer Lawrence, as a neglected wife, talks about using the “power of intention” to bring her plans about. But Dyer didn’t hustle his fans as he discussed honesty, oranges, and overcoming problems in life. He showed them how to squeeze the best out of themselves by turning lemons into lemonade. There is no doubt that this disciple of caring and positive thinking will be missed by all those whose lives he touched. These millions of people worldwide also unite in wishing him well as he begins his journey to the next dimension.
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A good case can be made that Jimmy Carter, our 39th president, saved American democracy. He restored public confidence in the wake of the biggest constitutional scandal America has ever faced.

I - Prologue: About Watergate

Most people who lived through Watergate will tell you it was the most disturbing time in American history. Outrageous crimes committed by the highest-level leaders, who then committed worse crimes to cover up their tracks, left the republic exposed, hanging by a thread. And it was all triggered by a burglary that took place on June 17, 1972, in Democratic National Committee’s offices in the Watergate Hotel. Five perpetrators were caught red-handed trying to steal any secrets they could and then plant a series of listening devices. Even worse, four of the arrested men had been employed by the CIA and the fifth was a security officer for the Republican National Committee. Within hours, it was disclosed that the black-bag men had ties to CRP, the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

President Richard Nixon denied any knowledge of the crime. But bit by bit, like water dripping on a rock, one story was cast aside and another emerged. The White House undertook a full-court press to protect Nixon from what it called an unfair attack perpetrated by “the left-leaning media.” On November 6, 1972, on the eve of the election, Nixon announced that he had at long last negotiated “peace with honor” in Vietnam. A grateful and much-relieved nation re-elected him over Democratic Senator George McGovern by one of history’s highest margins.

But even in the face of such positive news, the Watergate scandal did not go away. It intensified. As more evidence came to light, a special prosecutor was appointed. The House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Congressman Peter Rodino, took early steps toward impeachment. On March 25, 1973, the Senate formed its own bipartisan committee, chaired by Sam Ervin, to investigate the matter. The first public hearings of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities were broadcast live to the nation on May 17, 1973. Millions watched as Senator Howard Baker, a Republican from Tennessee, repeatedly asked the key question: What did President Nixon know and when did he know it?

It turned out that he knew quite a lot. His counsel, John Dean, testified that he had told the President in person the extent of the White House’s involvement in the initial burglary and successive cover-up. “There is a
cancer growing on the presidency,” he said to America’s horror. The nation was also shocked when a surprise witness, Alexander Butterfield, testified that recordings were routinely made of the most confidential conversations that took place in the White House. The President and his staff did everything they could to maintain custody of the tapes, claiming they were covered by a heretofore rarely used doctrine of “executive privilege.” Nonetheless, the special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, argued that the tapes were essential to deciding whether Nixon was guilty of perpetrating the cover-up, and he demanded that the White House turn them over.

In turn, the President’s attorney general, Elliot Richardson, made history by refusing to carry out Nixon’s order to fire Cox. He subsequently resigned his post, starting a chain of events that became known as “The Saturday Night Massacre.” It continued as the U.S. Supreme Court ordered that the tapes, including one with a suspicious 18 ½ minute gap, be turned over to Cox and the Justice Department. Subsequently, the President’s chief of staff, H.R. “Bob” Haldeman, resigned on April 30, 1974. And John Ehrlichman, the domestic policy chief, also quit as lower-level officials pleaded guilty to lesser charges in exchange for testifying against those higher up.

In June, the Senate issued a report censuring Nixon, and in July the House Judiciary Committee passed the first of three articles of impeachment, charging obstruction of justice. With impeachment imminent, Nixon chose to resign on August 8, 1974. Congress raised Vice President Gerald Ford to the nation’s highest office on August 9, 1974. Ford, a respected Republican leader in the House was himself appointed vice president in 1973, when charges of bribery, conspiracy and tax fraud led to the resignation of Spiro Agnew.

It was, in short, a turbulent time as a real-life soap opera played out daily on national TV. Throughout the nation, there was a loss of innocence and a feeling of betrayal. Americans were disappointed in their key leaders, especially Nixon who had declared “I am not a crook” to keep the public’s trust. To widespread shock, he was undone by audiotapes of him talking with his cronies. In his own voice, Nixon revealed that he had been lying to the public for the better part of two years.

II - Enter Jimmy Carter

Just when he was needed most, a little-known peanut farmer, engineer, Naval Academy graduate, and one-term Georgia governor burst onto the American stage. “I am Jimmy Carter,” he said. “I am running for President of the United States, and I’ll promise you one thing: I will never lie to you. I want a government as good and kind and loving as the American people.” These words struck a chord coming from a man who believed “we should live our lives as though Christ were coming this afternoon.” So did his promise of change in a country scarred by the Watergate scandal. In due course, the man mocked as “Jimmy Who” on the campaign trail had become a household name. When he ran against Ford in the 1976 election, Carter won in part because of the public’s desire to sweep out the old regime and start anew.

Carter’s election restored confidence in government.
People had faith in this wholesome man whose life was a study in virtue: He had been married to his wife, Rosalynn, for 30 years and taught Sunday school every week for decades, speaking in front of a wooden cross he built himself. Under his leadership, America got back on a positive track as justice ethics, and concern for human rights came to prevail. While in office, he saved American democracy and did other notable feats, such as broker peace between Israel and Egypt. Even more impressive is what Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, have done since his presidency ended. Together, they have taken concrete steps to make the world a better place and set a standard of selfless service for all presidents after leaving office.

Carter’s commitment to helping others went back to his early days in the Deep South of the Depression. As a young man, his hero was Harry Truman, a progressive leader who advanced the cause of civil rights after World War II. “I was heavily affected by his ordaining an end to racial segregation in the military years before Rosa Parks sat in the front of the bus or Martin Luther King was known.” Truman’s reforms meant a lot to Carter because had grown up in a village outside Plains, Georgia, where everyone but his family was black. Watching his friends and neighbors scrape by shaped his outlook, especially after he realized they had to go to separate churches and schools. “I learned at first hand,” he recalled, “the deprivation of both white and black people living in a segregated community,” which was not then challenged at all — except by his own mother, a home care nurse and caregiver who ignored racial distinctions. Thanks to her liberalism, all his earliest playmates were black.

Above: Jimmy and Rosalynn donate a great deal of their time to build houses for the poor through Habitat for Humanity.

Below: Carter has monitored more than 100 foreign elections, including this one in Liberia where people showed up to vote in historic numbers.
He embraced her beliefs and hailed the advances in human rights that came with the end of segregation. “I was very convinced,” Carter has said, “before I became President that basic human rights, equality of opportunity, the end of abuse by governments of their people were the basic principles on which the United States should be the acknowledged champion. So even before I was inaugurated, I announced that human rights would be the foundation of our entire foreign policy.”

But it took work to reach that day when he faced the nation as its leader. It was improbable that a one-term governor from the South would seek the country’s highest office, especially since he had few followers, no big-time party organization, and hardly enough funding to even launch a nationwide campaign. To save money, he stayed in people’s houses, which gave him a chance to meet ordinary folk and learn about their dreams. “I campaigned for a long time, throughout 1975 and up until November 1976, in all 50 states,” he has recalled. “I had intimate contacts with different constituencies, beginning with just tiny groups and building as I gained popularity and fame.” After surveying the political landscape, he was even more convinced he had a duty to bring his vision to the American people. This conviction made him a relentless campaigner who left other Democratic primary contenders in his wake. In the post-Watergate era, his promise to always tell the truth helped him defeat Ford and swept the 52-year-old into the Oval Office.

III - Jimmy Carter as President

Once there, “Jimmy Who” made it clear that he knew just who he was: a champion of human rights. He made this clear in an inaugural speech that urged America to assume its moral duties as the greatest power on Earth. “Let us learn together and laugh together and work together, confident that in the end we will triumph together in the right,” he said. “We have already found a high degree of personal liberty, and we are now struggling to enhance equality of opportunity. Our commitment to human rights must be absolute, our laws fair, our natural beauty preserved; the powerful must not persecute the weak, and human dignity must be enhanced.” This meant following the Golden Rule in foreign affairs. “To be true to ourselves, we must be true to others,” he said, “and we will fight our wars against poverty, ignorance, and injustice — for those are the enemies against which our forces can be honorably harnessed.”

Carter acted on these words by refusing to continue the past practice of overlooking human rights abuses by our own allies. He was especially tough on South Korea, Iran, Argentina, South Africa, and Rhodesia. He reduced economic and military aid to Chile, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and he ended more than 30 years of support to one of Latin America’s most abusive leaders, President Somoza of Nicaragua. These steps reflected a policy “designed to serve mankind,” Carter explained.

This determination to do the right thing also led him to address the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union, though it led to conflict with Leonid Brezhnev, president of the USSR, and with Carter’s own secretary of state. “The Soviet leaders did assume that my human rights policy was targeted against them, to embarrass them,” Carter has admitted. But he had no regrets. “It resulted almost immediately in a dramatic increase, for instance, in Jewish migration from the Soviet Union,” Carter has said. “Every one of those human rights heroes who have come out of the Soviet Union has said it was a turning point in their lives.” And historians have come to see that Carter’s human rights policy helped lead to the crack-up
of the Communist system at the end of the Cold War.

But his greatest achievement was brokering the first-ever peace treaty between Israel and one of its Arab neighbors. In the fall of 1978, he brought together Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar El-Sadat for a summit at Camp David. Carter has said his faith drove him to push for peace in the Middle East, and after 13 days of tense negotiations, he produced the Camp David Accords: Israel would give back the Sinai territories occupied since the 1967 Six-Day War, and Egypt would acknowledge Israel’s right to live in peace. When Carter announced the treaty to a joint session of Congress, with Begin and Sadat seated before him, he said, “To these two friends of mine, the words of Jesus: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be the children of God.” And peace lasted between the two nations because Carter had convinced them that “we will not learn how to live in peace by killing each other’s children.”

While scoring foreign policy triumphs like this, Carter contended with challenges at home. He came into office facing an energy crisis, inflation, and high unemployment. Yet with his typical calm resolve, he went to work. In his four years in office, he reduced America’s dependence on imported oil by half, created nearly eight million jobs, decreased the budget deficit, founded the Department of Education, and strengthened Social Security. He appointed record numbers of women, blacks, and Hispanics to office and helped strengthen the economy by signing the 1980 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act into law. The act improved the financial status of Medicare by making a wide range of changes, among them removing the 100-visit-per-year limit for home health and the requirement for a three-day hospital stay before getting care at home. These were all achievements that would likely have won him re-election if the Iran Hostage crisis hadn’t drawn attention away from all the good he’d done.

Jimmy and Rosalynn were selected to receive a Caring Award in 1995. This is an oil painting by revered artist Simmie Knox which pays tribute to them in the Caring Hall of Fame.

In 2002, the year Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize, Mattie Stepanek was chosen as a young adult Caring Award winner. Mattie’s one great wish before he died was to meet his hero, Jimmy Carter. The Caring Institute helped bring this about.
III - Metamorphosis: Founding the Carter Center

Carter admits he would have liked a second term as President. Yet he rallied in his post-presidency by devoting himself to humanitarian causes. He made his intentions clear in a farewell address that focused on human rights. “America did not invent human rights,” he said. “In a very real sense, it is the other way round. Human rights invented America.” It remains our “destiny” to always stand for these rights “because the battle for human rights — at home and abroad — is far from over.” And waging this battle meant following the Golden Rule on a global scale. “The bond of our common humanity,” he said, “is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes” — and Carter did.

In 1982, he and Rosalynn founded the Carter Center in Atlanta to promote human rights, peace, and justice around the world. Since then, they have built an endowment of over $400 million, and the center has become Carter’s personal United Nations for easing the pain of the developing world. Its achievements haven’t always made headlines, but they have made a difference: monitoring elections, teaching the Eastern Bloc about democracy, making Africa self-sufficient in food by teaching farmers how to grow crops, vaccinating children, fighting disease, providing clean water, and negotiating an end to civil war.

IV - Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving

Rosalynn has long been a full partner in all her husband’s efforts to care for people worldwide. She also chairs the center’s Mental Health Task Force, an advisory body of experts, consumers, and advocates who promote positive change in the mental health field and fight the stigma placed on mental illness. Each year, she hosts the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy that brings together leaders of mental health organizations to address critical issues. And outside the center, she chairs the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving at Georgia Southwestern State University. Through research, education, and training, the institute promotes the mental health and well-being of individuals, families, and professional caregivers; develops effective caregiving practices; advances policies that promote caring communities; and builds awareness of caregiving needs. “People don’t want to admit that they are caregivers; they feel it is just their responsibility to care for a mother or grandmother,” she has explained. And beyond defining themselves as caregivers, they “also have to recognize the need for help and be willing to receive help.”
V - The Carter Legacy

“What Rosalynn and I wanted to do,” Carter has explained, “was fill vacuums, resolve problems others weren’t able or willing to do.” From the rustic office he converted out of the garage at his house in Plains, he has spent his post-presidency scanning the world for big, unresolved dilemmas. Then he has addressed them based on concepts of justice he’s come up with over time. “Justice,” he has explained, “is implied in the prevention of abuse of people because they are poor, deprived, illiterate, lacking in influence, inarticulate, or physically or mentally incapacitated.” It also requires meeting the basic needs of human beings. “When some portions of a population are assured food, medical care, security, shelter, employment, and educational opportunities while other people in that society are obstructed in obtaining them, it is a violation of human rights and therefore a deprivation of justice.”

Those who suffer most are women, Carter maintains. So he has campaigned to end violence and discrimination against them, calling it “the human and civil rights struggle of our time.” Ensnared in religious beliefs and traditions that often trump civil law, women’s rights are under assault across the globe, Carter has adamantly pointed out. His concern for women’s rights led him to sever ties with the Southern Baptist Convention, after six decades, over its refusal to let women serve as leaders in the church. And he has organized conferences to “educate and mobilize religious leaders from around the world” on the incompatibility of their teachings with gender equality. “Knowing the world as I do,” he has explained, “I can tell you without any equivocation that the number-one abuse of human rights on Earth is the abuse of women and girls.”

Carter spoke from vast experience since he has logged many thousands of miles to fulfill his mission of justice, democracy, and peace. He has monitored 100 elections throughout the world, mediated conflict in the Congo, and built houses with Habitat for Humanity. By 2002, he had helped soothe so many political crises — in Korea, Nicaragua, Haiti, Bosnia, and the horn of Africa — that he was awarded the Nobel Peace prize. Before accepting the award, he was asked to discuss the greatest challenge that the world faces. “Among all the possible choices,” he told the audience in Oslo, “I decided that the most serious and universal problem is the growing chasm between the richest and poorest people on earth.”

The results of this disparity include starvation, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and unnecessary illnesses ranging from Ebola to HIV/AIDS.

Carter has helped close the gap, but he’s not sure how long he can keep up the battle. Last June, he admitted, “I know there’s going to come a time in the near future when I can’t be so vigorous and travel around the world and spend all night in airplanes and stomp into the deserts and jungles of Africa.” Sadly that time has come closer because Carter learned in August that cancer in his liver had spread to his brain. But hours after getting the bad news, he sat before the press and smiled. “I’ve had a wonderful life,” he said. “I’ve had an exciting, adventurous existence. Now I feel it’s in the hands of God whom I worship, and I’ll be prepared for anything that comes” In the meantime, he’s still planning a trip to Nepal, where he hopes to complete his 32nd Habitat for Humanity mission and he’s giving Bible lessons to the hundreds of people who now come to hear him in Plains.

Carter has also inspired thousands with the lesson he’s given on selfless service. “I believe that anyone can be successful in life,” he has maintained, “regardless of natural talent or the environment in which we live. This is not based on measuring success by human competitiveness for wealth, possessions, influence, and fame, but adhering to God’s standards of truth, justice, humility, service, compassion, forgiveness, and love,” a conviction that drives Carter to keep serving others. “My faith demands,” he says, “that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference.”

Throughout his adult life, he has stayed true to the tenets of his faith. The scandal that brought him to the national stage led him to the world stage, where he again made a promise: to give others a better life. He didn’t lie because his foundation provides millions with the confidence and means to face the future. His ongoing mission is in the spirit of caring and inclusion summed up in the Golden Rule. And his commitment to the Rule has led him to follow his own advice: live as though Christ were actually coming this afternoon. As he enters the twilight of his life, there can be doubt that his legacy will last. In the future no one will wonder about “Jimmy Who.” Instead he will go down in history as one of the most caring — if not the most caring — presidents our nation has ever seen.
In 1981, Mother Teresa and four of her nuns, dressed in their usual blue and white saris, arrived at Huruma, on the outskirts of Nairobi. The Kenyan government had granted them four and half acres of land, where they were set on “doing something beautiful for God,” as Mother explained. Their ambitious goal was to build dormitories for over one hundred destitute and malnourished children, a small nursery for infants and dormitories for over one hundred aged and dying adults. They also wanted washrooms, accommodations for the sisters who would work at the home, a chapel, and facilities for giving women vocational training. Building the complex, as Mother said, was “God’s work that he had entrusted to our care.” Still she needed human help. Fortunately, Glenn Kielty, head of East African Engineering Consultants, was happy to put up the home since he shared Mother’s commitment to serving the poor.

Glenn is an entrepreneur, builder, and developer, who shows the meaning of faith, morality, and being Irish. In 1977, he and his wife, Linda, vowed to help the needy in their adopted homeland of Kenya. Nearly four decades later, the Kieltys succeeded in building 48 homes, hospices, orphanages, and schools for 18 religious orders in Kenya, England, Tanzania, Cambodia, and Russia. In addition to Mother’s order, the Missionaries of Charity, Glenn has done charity projects for the Assumption Sisters, Dominican Nuns, Jesuits, and Vincentian Fathers, among others.

Glenn’s sense of commitment comes from his upbringing in an Irish Catholic home that believed charity is an essential part of Christian living. He honed his values by spending a year at a seminary after earning an engineering degree. This background led him to bring Christian ethics to his business endeavors, despite the old saying that tells us, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” Instead, Glenn brings his faith to all he does and thinks charity should play a role in all our lives. “If every family ‘with’ put something into helping those ‘without,’” he says, “poverty as we know it today would be eliminated.”

At the same time, he wants to empower the poor to provide for themselves. It’s good to teach a man to fish, as another old adage goes. So Glenn employs local men and women with little training to work in his business projects and hires them to build his hospitals and homes. For example, some of the workers who built Mother’s home in Huruma were recruited by the Undugu Society, a religious order that helps African street children have productive lives. In the course of working on the home, they acquired trades, like masonry and carpentry, which allowed them to be independent. They also joined Glenn in giving aid to the poorest of the poor — the mission of his great friend and mentor, Mother. Her order is special for Glenn because of the tender way her sisters take society’s outcasts off the streets to give them the care, nourishment, and love they so desperately need.
“Mother picked up some incredible strays in her life, and I’m one of them,” Glenn jokes. “All my life, people have come forward and helped me.” But no one ever made as much of an impact on him as Mother. “My wife and I feel blessed to have built a number of Mother’s houses,” he says. “We have found that whatever we have given always comes back in other ways.” And yes, he has succeeded in business, but he’s not driven by greed.

Instead, he puts social good into all the business solutions he offers his clients. In one African country after another, he has done whatever he could to provide employment for locals and avoid bringing foreigners in to work for him. “I’ve seen how big corporations lose touch with people,” he points out, though they “should use their intelligence to enhance the life of someone who’s not so fortunate. When it comes to charity you’re never on a deadline” — and this is a giving approach you should carry over to all your interactions. “Stay humble and listen to others,” he advises. “Stay honest and don’t take shortcuts. Share your success with others.” He’s done that, especially in his many years working with Mother.

That first home in Huruma was nearly complete after 12 months, Linda Kielty noted in 1983. “Already nearly 50 old and young are in permanent residence, and are being cared for by the sisters, quite apart from the nearly one thousand children from the surrounding districts who are daily being fed, as well as the classes being given to the women of the area in handicrafts, dressmaking, and other domestic chores.” In time, the home would come to house up to six hundred permanent residents, some of them disabled or mentally challenged children. Doing all the surveys, design work, and engineering for such a large place took a lot of Glenn’s time. Yet he kept fulfilling Mother’s requests to build more homes for the poor. “Think and pray about this,” she suggested after asking him to lend his services yet again. “See what Jesus wants you to do.”

Glenn knew what Jesus wanted him to do. Besides it was hard to say no to Mother, who was both saintly and skilled at handling people. So he kept on building her homes no matter how busy he was. But what did he get in return? The joy of knowing he had served and letters from Mother that he treasures to this day. In one of them, she prayed that his heart would always be full of the love of God. “Jesus who is never outdone in generosity,” she wrote, “will reward you richly for all you have done for our homeless poor in Nairobi. To be able to give a home to the homeless, we must first have Christ in our hearts,” and “shelter him not only in homes made of bricks, but in hearts that understand, love, and care.” Glenn has a heart like this and it makes him do beautiful things for God.
Fredrick Douglass, the great civil rights leader, lived in this duplex located three blocks east of the U.S. Capitol from 1871 through 1877. In the years after he moved, the building was used primarily as a rooming house.

In 1963, the property was sold and converted into a makeshift Museum of African Art. The Smithsonian Institution acquired the property in the early 1970s and took over the responsibility for the African Art Museum. A few years later Congress passed legislation creating a new Museum of African Art on The Mall and mandated that the Capitol Hill property be sold to help offset some of the costs of building the new museum.

The sale took place in 1989. For two years, the National Association for Home Care & Hospice and the Caring Institute led efforts to renovate the property using volunteers and “sweat equity.” The building re-opened in December 1992 to coincide with that year’s Caring Awards Ceremony. The portraits of all those chosen to receive a Caring Award were placed on the walls.

The museum has been home to book signings, and hosted the display of historic documents such as the 13th Amendment; it has been used as a set for movie and television productions and has become the preferred place on Capitol Hill in which to host a reception. It has been used to display art exhibitions including Michael Collopy’s photographs of Mother Teresa. A long list of groups, from the National Governors Association to the Gates Foundation, has used the museum for political, educational, and social events.

In short the museum has become an oasis of goodness on Capitol Hill; featuring portraits of role models who inspire us by their selfless service. The Caring Hall of Fame honors Mother Teresa, Frederick Douglass and men and women of their spirit. In the future the museum will continue to educate, inspire and in Douglass’s words “teach the people the sacredness of human rights and the brotherhood of man.”

Photo 1: An artist’s rendering of the museum in the beautiful Washington, DC springtime
Photo 2: Lovingly restored, it has become a preferred gathering place on Capitol Hill for political dinners and receptions.
Photo 3: President Bill Clinton tours the Caring Hall of Fame
Photo 4: Sister Antonia, a 2005 Caring Award Winner, shown with Caring Institute Co-Chairman Senator Bob Dole
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Lessons from Mother Teresa

Some time ago I interviewed Jim Clifton, the respected CEO of the Gallup Organization. I asked him, based on Gallup’s research, who was the best leader he had studied. Without batting an eyelash he said, “Mother Teresa” and he went on to explain why. When I asked John Wooden the legendary basketball coach who won 10 NCAA titles at UCLA, he answered with the same name. Presidents Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan have also made known their respect for Mother Teresa; Reagan honored her with the Medal of Freedom in 1985.

This led me to create a Caring Institute-sponsored CEO School where we brought together many of those who knew Mother best, including Glenn Kielty, the Africa-based builder who volunteered to create many of the homes for Mother’s Missionaries of Charity, Michael Collopy, the celebrated photographer who followed Mother for some 15 years and Larry Kline from Scripps Medical Center who was Mother Teresa’s physician. All of us who knew Mother enjoyed comparing stories about the living saint who helped inspire the Caring Institute. As we reminisced, we remembered some of the life lessons she taught:

- **She was positive.** For Mother Teresa, the glass of life was always 90 percent full. She saw good in everything and everyone. I once asked her to explain why she was able to get so much done. She said, “If you eliminate all of the negativity in your life, you would be amazed how much energy you have with which to do good.”

- **She was always smiling.** Mother told her sisters to smile and let the light of God shine through them. She said that if they could not smile from the beginning of each day until the end, they should choose another vocation.

- **She was always lifting people up.** Poverty, she said, was a terrible thing, but it was far worse to be unloved. One of Mother’s most common gestures involved stretching out her arms, palms up, and moving them as if she was lifting something upward to the sky.

- **She worked very hard.** She began every day at 4:00 a.m. with several hours of prayer and continued her demanding work well into the night. Asked how she kept from being exhausted, she said, “Mind is everything. What matters is why you do it. If you care for others out of duty or obligation, it will deplete you. But if you do it out of love, it won’t. It will energize you.”

- **She hated waste.** Asked if she hated anything or anyone, she quickly responded, “Yes. I hate waste, above all the waste of human potential.” She added that she hated to have her picture taken, though she often did. She dealt with this conflict, she told Glenn Kielty, by “making a deal with God.” She explained that “every time my picture is taken, a soul is released from purgatory, which is why I like movie cameras; souls are just flying up to heaven.”

- **She was a visionary.** Mother was one of those who could see a little further over the horizon than most people. She could also look at some of the world’s problems and come up with clear plans to help solve them.

- **She was empathic.** She had an acute awareness and understanding of others’ pain. She personally suffered a great deal of pain, but she was able to set it aside by getting deeply involved in the pain and suffering of others. She looked at each person as though they were her beloved Jesus.

- **She was a very spiritual person.** She had a strong sense of faith, but did not seek to impose her religious views on others. The one exception was in the area of “right to life,” where she passionately echoed the teachings of the Catholic Church.

- **She was very tough.** Mother Teresa was very kind and gentle, but she could also be tough as titanium.

- **She was consistent in thought, word, and deed.** Mother had great integrity and a wonderful way of persuading people to do the right thing. Her word was her bond, and she had a clear set of values that she taught to the Missionaries of Charity. The sisters honored Mother by embracing these principles.

- **She was a very caring person.** She told me that caring is the one word summary of the Golden Rule which runs through all the great religions of the world. She said that “caring is love in action.” That the most important attribute of successful organizations was leaders who lived by the principle “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

- **She was a loving person.** She believed in leading by example and looked on her life as her message. “We are not called upon to do great deeds,” she said, “but to put as much love as we can into every single thing that we do.”
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