Recognizing individuals who are addressing some of America’s most difficult social problems.
T
he Manhattan Institute’s Social Entrepreneurship Awards honor nonprofit leaders who have founded innovative private organizations to help address some of America’s most pressing social problems. The awards include two prizes. The William E. Simon Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Social Entrepreneurship is presented to the leader of an organization that has been both demonstrably effective and widely influential. An honorarium of $100,000 accompanies the Simon Prize.

The Richard Cornuelle Award for Social Entrepreneurship is given each year to up to five organizations that have demonstrated both effectiveness and the promise of significant impact. A prize of $25,000 is presented to the organization founded or led by the award winner.

The Manhattan Institute’s Social Entrepreneurship Awards are supported by funds from the William E. Simon Foundation, the J. M. Kaplan Fund, and the Ohnell Family Foundation. Howard Husock, vice president for policy research and publications at the Manhattan Institute, is director of the program.

For the Cornuelle Awards and the Simon Prize, nominations may be submitted by anyone familiar with a person’s or group’s activities, except for a current employee of that person or group. Award applications for 2017 will be available online at www.manhattan-institute.org/social-entrepreneurship-initiative after January 1, 2017, and will be accepted until March 1, 2017. Winners are selected by the Manhattan Institute, with the assistance of the following selection committee: Howard Husock, Manhattan Institute; Cheryl Keller, foundation consultant; Leslie Lenkowsky, Indiana University; Alicia Manning, Bradley Foundation; Adam Meyerson, The Philanthropy Roundtable; Lawrence Mone, Manhattan Institute; James Piereson, William E. Simon Foundation/Manhattan Institute; and Dane Stangler, Kauffman Foundation.
whose vision and use of private, nonprofit management and finance has restored and maintained some of New York City’s greatest public spaces.

Nominations are accepted for the Simon Prize, but potential winners are not limited to those nominated.

**Richard Cornuelle Award for Social Entrepreneurship**

Throughout its history, the United States has been distinguished by the capacity of citizens to address social problems through new organizations established through private initiative. From Clara Barton and the American Red Cross to Millard Fuller and Habitat for Humanity, Americans have consistently come forward, without prompting or assistance from government, to organize nonprofit action to improve American society by providing services to those in need. It is those who follow in such footsteps whom the Manhattan Institute seeks to recognize with its Richard Cornuelle Award for Social Entrepreneurship.

The characteristics of winning organizations have included:

- Energetic founding leaders with strong visions
- Provision of specific services to clearly-targeted groups of those in need
- Creative, entrepreneurial ways of meeting the organization’s goal
- Significant earned income and a diverse base of donors
- Clear and measurable results
- Use of volunteers

Recognition is reserved for those organizations whose guiding purpose and function stem from private initiatives and ideas, but acceptance of some government funding does not, in itself, preclude consideration. The Cornuelle Award recognizes the creative energy of the nonprofit sector by highlighting new ideas and approaches even by mature organizations.

Any nonprofit organization that provides a direct service to address a public problem can be nominated for this award. Examples of such organizations include:

- Private social-services groups that assist the poor and disadvantaged with services designed to improve their prospects for success and upward mobility in American society
- Reformative organizations that help people cope with moral or psychological problems, such as drug addiction and criminal behavior
- Education groups that improve children’s educational achievement and possibilities through mentoring, counseling, or other after-school programs
- Community groups that improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods
- Conservancies that use private donations from corporations or individuals to purchase land and preserve it from development

As many as 10 organizations may qualify for site visits, the impressions from which will augment those provided by written nominations. Nonprofit organizations that engage in political advocacy or that bring legal actions, or whose primary activities are in response to government grants, are not eligible for this award. Individual schools are not considered for the award, but novel approaches to education may be considered.

A complete list of award winners, 2001–16, can be found at: [www.manhattan-institute.org/social-entrepreneurship-initiative](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/social-entrepreneurship-initiative)
The Man Who Named the “Independent Sector”: The Legacy of Richard Cornuelle

By William Schambra

With the death of Richard Cornuelle in 2011 at the age of 84, America’s “independent sector” has lost one of its most faithful and vigorous champions.

Indeed, one of his claims to fame was the very invention of the term “independent sector,” deployed in his landmark 1965 volume *Reclaiming the American Dream* as a way to describe, in the words of the book’s subtitle, “the role of private individuals and voluntary associations” in our national life.

Richard Cornuelle was a lifelong libertarian, convinced that “man’s power over man should be strictly limited and that any design for social improvement that depended on government for its execution was ill- advised.”

He developed this political outlook in his studies with one of its pioneers, Ludwig von Mises, then teaching at the Graduate School of Business at New York University. It was the only job, Mr. Cornuelle noted, that even a libertarian economic genius like Mr. von Mises could find in the late 1940s, when big-government devotees utterly dominated the American academy.

Mr. Cornuelle became a program officer at one of the early foundations on the right, the William Volker Fund, where he mined economics journals for telltale indications of libertarian tendencies. Once he discovered these scholars—typically scattered and disconnected loners at lower-tier colleges—the foundation would offer them what modest financial support it could afford.

In a time when lurid headlines tell stories of behemoth conservative foundations buying and selling public policy at will, it is hard indeed to imagine these hard-scrabble origins. As Mr. Cornuelle put it, free-market advocates could fit into a phone booth, possessed by the “haunting, subliminal suspicion that we were fighting not just a losing battle but a war already lost.”

In a sentiment familiar to any foundation program officer, Mr. Cornuelle soon cast covetous glances at the Volker grants going not to his projects but rather to the small, local humanitarian groups that William Volker, who created the foundation, said his philanthropy should also support. Instead of converting those grants to his cause, however, they soon converted Mr. Cornuelle to theirs—the notion that human suffering was best reduced by local voluntary efforts. Mr. Cornuelle’s abstract intellectual inclinations could not efface his origins as the son of a midwestern Presbyterian minister, called to a life of purpose and service.

Libertarianism may have offered a philosophically devastating analysis of the failures of government social programs and the superiority of free markets, in his view. But it failed to speak to our irrepressible humanitarian impulses, for which government programs, however faulty, seemed to be the only politically plausible expression.

In *Reclaiming the American Dream*, Mr. Cornuelle outlined a way to deal with urgent social needs in a manner both humane and free. Drawing on Alexis de Tocqueville (by no means as commonly cited then as today), he noted that “as a frontier people, accustomed to interdependence, we developed a genius for solving common problems. People joined together in bewildering combinations to found schools, churches, opera houses, co-ops, hospitals, to build bridges and canals, to help the poor.”

Mr. Cornuelle maintained that we had all but forgotten this vast array of voluntary civic associations—an “important third force,” which he termed “the independent sector”—in our growing reliance on government-financed, centrally administered, professionally delivered social services.

But he insisted that the human “desire to serve” was just as primal and powerful as the yearning for political power or material gain, and once unleashed, it could re-energize our voluntary associations and address our problems without oppressive bureaucracies.

Even 50 years ago, Mr. Cornuelle understood that America’s nonprofits had all too readily become servile adjuncts of govern-
ment. But he looked to the “revival of a lively competition” between government and nonprofits, even though that very idea “is by a weird public myth, thought to be illegitimate, disruptive, divisive, unproductive, and perhaps immoral.”

To drive home the point, he obtained financing from several foundations to start private programs that worked to provide housing, urban renewal, employment, and especially low-income college loans that proved to be at once more effective and less expensive than their government counterparts.

“The notion that a conservative is indifferent to human problems is part of a myth—the same myth that says that the government is the only instrument that can solve social problems,” Mr. Cornuelle insisted in a Life magazine article on his efforts in June 1968.

It is entirely forgotten today, but well before other conservative presidents in the 1980s extolled the virtues of “private-sector initiatives” or “a thousand points of light,” Richard Nixon eagerly embraced Mr. Cornuelle’s voluntarist notions.

In his 1969 inaugural address, President Nixon insisted that “to match the magnitude of our tasks, we need the energies of our people—enlisted not only in grand enterprises but more importantly in those small, splendid efforts that make headlines in the neighborhood newspaper instead of the national journal.”

President Nixon started both a Cabinet committee and a White House office on voluntary action to cultivate this approach.

The rapid and quiet demise of President Nixon’s volunteerism program, as well as similar experiences with civil-society efforts in subsequent administrations, taught Mr. Cornuelle that the “independent sector”—in his understanding, nonpolitical or even counterpolitical—was not likely to be revived by any political figure.

But in his later years, with the collapse of Soviet totalitarianism abroad and the decline of centralized, command-and-control corporate organization at home, Mr. Cornuelle came to the optimistic view that completely without elite guidance, everyday citizens were beginning to reorganize themselves into small, self-governing communities.

No longer satisfied with the roles of passive voter and taxpayer or pliant corporate employee, they wanted to have a larger and more immediate say in their own lives through their own, freely organized, self-administered associations.

Mr. Cornuelle suggested that libertarian thinkers—who had so accurately described the theoretical superiority of free markets to government management but who had so little to say about solving social problems—now needed to turn their minds to this new phenomenon.

So he organized financial support for efforts by Lenore Ealy at the journal Conversations on Philanthropy, as well as scholars associated with George Mason University and the New York City think tank the Manhattan Institute, to document, celebrate, and provide a secure theoretical footing for these new civic examples of what libertarians call “spontaneous order.”

Leaders of today’s nonprofit organizations will look at Richard Cornuelle’s call for competition, rather than collaboration, with government agencies as hopelessly naïve, given their massive reliance on government money.

Yet with governments at all levels today resolved to balance their budgets on the backs of nonprofits, it is no longer so evident that “public-private partnership” is the path recommended by realism.

At any rate, it is a continuing source of sadness for any champion of civil society to see its once-proud and self-sustaining institutions engaged in such vigorous denial of their own capacity to meet society’s problems were they forced to rely on voluntary contributions rather than mandatory taxation.

But Mr. Cornuelle’s life and message should be even more compelling and perhaps troubling for his conservative colleagues today, who seem to devote their political energies almost exclusively to engineering a decline in government spending.

Mr. Cornuelle maintained that it is not enough to show that government programs are too expensive or ineffective. Champions of a free society must also demonstrate, both in thought and in practice, that it too can provide ways to satisfy the human impulse to serve others and to alleviate their suffering.

Conservative donors today seem to be more focused on securing electoral victory for their ideas than on nurturing their concrete expression in the resuscitation of local civic associations.

Richard Cornuelle’s life and work remind us that for friends of liberty, no momentary political triumph is an adequate substitute for the painstaking, immediate, hands-on work of reconstituting, in thought and deed, the sector to which he affixed the proud adjective “independent.”

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2016 William E. Simon Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Social Entrepreneurship Winner

Chris Anderson
TED Talks

2016 Richard Cornuelle Award for Social Entrepreneurship Winners

Reid Porter
Advocates for Community Transformation

Luma Mufleh
Fugees Family

Alfa Demmelash and Alex Forrester
Rising Tide Capital

Glenys Carl
Coming Home Connection

Past Simon Prize Winners

Past Cornuelle Award Winners
In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, it was a common form of entertainment and edification to attend public lectures. Chautauqua in western New York became not only the most famous site for such lectures but inspired a nationwide movement, which brought talks on politics, religion, and culture to the citizenry. Theodore Roosevelt called Chautauqua the “most American thing in America.”

In this age of Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, it has taken someone with a deep familiarity with technology and its applications to help us rediscover the past—and the value of a compelling speaker addressing a live audience. That’s the unlikely but important story of the 2016 winner of the William E. Simon Prize, Chris Anderson, the man who has built a latter-day Chautauqua movement whose name we’re all familiar with: the TED talk.

Already an extremely successful media, technology, and publishing entrepreneur, Anderson, born in Pakistan, the son of British medical missionaries, began his own mission in 2001. That’s when a nascent foundation that he had started acquired the TED conference, then just an annual California conference focused on technology, entertainment, and design. As “curator” of TED, Anderson saw its potential as a forum for virtually any “idea worth spreading.” He also saw the power of posting simple, straight-to-camera lectures—succinct and entertaining—on the web, which TED began to do in 2006.

Today, more than 2,000 TED talks—none, by rule, more than 18 minutes long—have been posted. To say that they range widely is understatement in the extreme. The titles speak: Do Schools Kill Creativity? The Mathematics of Love. The Single Biggest Reason Startups Succeed. Magical Houses, Made of Bamboo. Why Do We Sleep? One can find a TED talk by Stephen Hawking (Questioning the Universe) but most TED talkers are not famous—at least until they’re chosen to deliver their TED talk, which may also find its way onto the Ted Talk radio hour on NPR and, more recently, TED TV on PBS.

Like other influential social entrepreneurs, Chris Anderson has not just built an organization; he’s inspired a movement. Through TedX, he’s lent the TED name and idea to local organizers
around the world, who bring TED-style talks to schools and auditoriums and theaters everywhere. There have now been nearly 80,000 talks presented in some 170 countries. Soon enough, TED may have to borrow that McDonald’s slogan: millions and millions sold. Except, of course, TED talks can be viewed free of charge, thanks to the remarkable social entrepreneurship of Anderson.

Recognizing Anderson is not the same thing as seconding the sentiments of any, or all, TED talks. And that’s exactly the point. Invigorating discourse and discussion in an age in which anomie and alienation threaten is an end in itself—an end that Chris Anderson has helped America, and the world, realize.

TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking

“[P]ublic speaking is the key to unlocking empathy, stirring excitement, sharing knowledge and insights, and promoting a shared dream. Indeed, the spoken word has actually gained new powers. Our campfire is now the whole world. Thanks to the Internet, a single talk in a single theater can end up being seen by millions of people.

Just as the printing press massively amplified the power of authors, so the web is massively amplifying the impact of speakers. It is allowing anyone anywhere with online access (and within a decade or so, we can expect almost every village on earth to be connected) to summon the world’s greatest teachers to their homes and learn from them directly. Suddenly, an ancient art has global reach.

This revolution has sparked a renaissance in public speaking. Many of us have suffered years of long, boring lectures at university; interminable sermons at church; or roll-your-eyes predictable political stump speeches. It doesn’t have to be that way. Done right, a talk can electrify a room and transform an audience’s worldview.”
Thirty-nine-year-old Reid Porter is a Tom Cruise look-alike who decided he was willing to face real-life danger. Notwithstanding a budding, successful career as a civil-litigation attorney, Porter found himself drawn to parts of Dallas in which few, if any, of the members of his church, Park Cities Presbyterian—5,000-strong and affluent—lived. But Park Cities was active in recruiting volunteers to help in dangerous, drug-infested West Dallas. Porter’s volunteering there led to a profound change in his own life and in the neighborhoods he believed himself called to serve.

Today, Porter and the 20-strong staff of the organization he founded, Advocates for Community Transformation, are at work a long way from a pristine law-office environment. Instead, first Porter and now ACT’s troops are knocking on doors in non-booming Dallas, the West and South Dallas black and Latino ghettos pockmarked with vacant lots and old frame homes which house the drug trade.

Over the past four years, Porter has done as much as anyone in the city to lower crime, through the combination of community organizing and his own background as a high-end litigator. ACT recruits neighborhood homeowners to file suits against absentee landlords whose properties provide havens for the drug and sex trades—asserting that they are creating a public nuisance.

The possibility of legal liability and substantial fines—in a neighborhood where the homes may be worth as little as $20,000—has forced the eviction of tenants or the demolition or sale of more than 70 such houses over the past four years. Only three cases have gone to court, and all three were decided in ACT’s favor. ACT has even been able to identify property owners who specialized in renting to drug operations (likely because they are reliable rent-payers and may even be willing to pay above-market rates, in effect, cutting owners in on their profits).

He may be faith-inspired, but Porter has drawn the support of a long list of individual donors themselves inspired by what ACT does. More than $1 million comes from one of the largest Dallas philanthropies, the Carruth Foundation. Its giving is directed by the Communities Foundation of Texas, which has been instructed to make what the Communities Foundation president Brent Christopher calls “big bets.”

One cannot visit the ACT office in a small strip mall without getting a sense of the religious commitment that fuels the staff. It gathers daily for mid-morning prayer meetings, and its legal strategy draws on top Dallas law-firm volunteers, many from Park Cities Presbyterian, still Porter’s home church, a socially conservative institution established in 1991 to be independent of the politically liberal Presbyterian Church USA. While taking on what some might describe as a mis-
sion of social justice, Porter speaks the language of the evangelical church. “I felt led,” he says, “to put my law degree to use in West Dallas.”

His is an initiative that speaks the language of faith but brings to its work the sophistication of GIS mapping, innovative legal tactics, and an alliance with city government. The Dallas Police Department regularly provides ACT with up-to-date crime data for its targeted neighborhoods; the city’s legal office refers cases to Porter because it lacks the capacity to take up the cases of dozens of individual homeowners.

Because ACT must gain the cooperation of homeowners who have long lived in fear, Porter has steeped himself in community-organizing literature—even including that of the Left. Yes, he says, he’s read Saul Alinsky. ACT’s results have been closely tracked and are impressive. In the four West Dallas neighborhoods where ACT has been active since 2008, crime has fallen by 52 percent. That’s a decline in major crimes, including murder, assault, burglary, and rape: from 1,701 incidents in 2008 to 1,124 in 2015.

The trend has largely continued in 2016 in the neighborhoods where ACT is active. The general improvements in the ACT neighborhoods come at a time when the *Dallas Morning News* reports that the city’s murder count, overall, increased over the first quarter of 2016 by 71 percent.

The crime rate in the ACT neighborhoods is still not insubstantial: in 2015, four murders and 147 home break-ins. But in the neighborhood where ACT first began its efforts—Westmoreland Park/Ledbetter Gardens—there were no murders in 2015, and crime, since 2008, is down by 70 percent. There, the Rev. William White, who leads the tiny whitewashed Saint Mark AME Zion church—and has himself faced down gang threats—points to what he considers the most important data point of a program, one led by white outsiders in a black neighborhood and of which he was initially skeptical. “Kids are riding bikes in the street again,” White observes.

Porter reports, matter-of-factly, that both the Dallas Police Department and the city attorney’s office regularly refer complainants to ACT for assistance— notwithstanding ACT’s avowedly religious roots. (ACT regularly leads prayer walks, for instance, in the neighborhoods in which it’s active.) He’s taken aback when asked if that might spark controversy. Its religious dimension is no hindrance and, indeed, surely helps to drive voluntarism, including the volunteers from Park Cities Presbyterian and other churches who help Reid Porter clean the alleys of West Dallas.

Volunteer attorneys from 13 law firms and the Southern Methodist University School of Law provide an estimated $2.4 million in pro bono assistance. As ACT puts it: “Our work gives attorneys an opportunity to carry out Christ’s call to pursue justice on behalf of the oppressed.”

Porter and ACT will begin this fall to transplant their approach to troubled South Dallas, where there were nearly 1,600 major crimes, including nine murders, in 2015 (of 136 in the entire city). But crime reduction, if it occurs, will be only part of the story for Porter. ACT’s fund raising literature puts it this way: “You will not be disappointed in the social and Kingdom returns on your investment with ACT.”
Clarkston, Georgia, hardly seems to be a likely site for an influx of refugees from war-torn parts of the world, from South Sudan to Iraq to the Congo to Burma to Nepal. But the names of the businesses in the Clarkston Village strip mall quickly make clear that something unusual is happening here.

There’s the Katmandu Kitchen and Grill, the African Restaurant Food Mart, and the Global Pharmacy. Look more closely on weekday mornings, and you can spot students from all those ethnic backgrounds walking through the shopping center parking lot—all dressed smartly and wearing school ties. They are the ties of a new school, one established specifically to serve refugee children. They’re part of a sizable block of refugee families resettled by the federal government in Clarkston, the result of a decision to take advantage of the relatively low rents and available housing in the apartment complexes of suburban Atlanta, whose metro area is among the new hubs for refugee resettlement.

That the Fugees Family school (the name is a pun on “refugees,” as well as the name of a hip-hop group) exists at all—and has proved to be effective at educating refugee children, some of whom arrive illiterate even in their native languages—is the result of a series of lucky coincidences at the center of which can be found Luma Mufleh, founder and director of Fugees.

The story begins when this daughter of an affluent Muslim family from Amman, Jordan—her mother’s family had owned businesses in Damascus—came to Atlanta after graduating from Smith College. Mufleh did not have a traditional Muslim woman’s background. Her father had wanted her to be educated; in Amman, he sent her to a British international school. During her years at Smith, Mufleh starred on the soccer team.

The roots of the Fugees Academy, today a school with 76 refugee students in grades 7–12, are decidedly on the soccer field. It was in 2005 that Mufleh took a wrong turn into one of the Clarkston apartment complexes, where rents are cheap and refugees concentrated. There she saw boys playing soccer and quickly realized that they could benefit from coaching. The team she would recruit and coach would lead her to abandon her business interests and gain the attention of the New York Times, 60 Minutes, and Sports Illustrated. A book by New York Times reporter Warren St. John was optioned to Hollywood.

In the years since, that initial buzz has faded, but Mufleh’s enthusiasm and entrepreneurship have not. Getting to know the refugee students led her to understand their situation in the local public schools. As a rule, newcomers were placed in classrooms based on their age, notwithstanding the fact that many, especially from less-developed countries such as the Congo or South Sudan, could...
neither read nor write, let alone follow grade-level lessons.

That led to what Mufleh makes clear is the core organizing principle of Fugees. “They have to be taught the basics,” as she puts it, “before they can do anything else.” If students have to be taught the alphabet before they can be taught to read, that becomes their lesson plan. If they have to be taught to add and subtract before they can be taught algebra, then that will be their lesson plan. Both situations are common for Fugees students, most of whom have not only had their childhoods disrupted by war but who then lived years without formal schooling in U.N. refugee camps, prior to their families’ good fortune of being admitted to the U.S.

The results are impressive. Fugees has just graduated its first senior class—of three. All are headed to four-year colleges. The bigger picture is even brighter. The Southern Association of Independent Schools found the following:

“By the end of 7th grade, Fugees average a 75% increase in their National Percentile Rank, while their peers at public school in the community average a 2% decrease in their NPR. Between 7th and 8th grade, Fugees average a 41% increase in NPR while their peers average a 3% increase. … 90% of Fugees students will be first generation middle school graduates, and 100% the first in their families to graduate from high school.”

Providing for those who blossom led Mufleh to arrange for students to have access to remote advanced placement courses and to forge a relationship with the nearby community college, where qualified students can take courses for credit. Just as their families must be focused on getting work (there is virtually no safety net for refugees, and work is actually required after a short resettlement orientation period), graduating seniors are focused on careers.

Nor has the initial impulse—using soccer to draw refugee children into education—faded. Mufleh has been as successful a soccer coach as she’s been a school leader. In 2016, the Fugees male varsity team had an undefeated (14–0) record, losing only in the state championship game to a two-time defending champion.

Such results have attracted significant support, all of it in the form of private philanthropy, which supports the school and its $1.2 million annual budget. School extends over most of the summer, and the schoolday includes two full meals in a bona fide cafeteria. (Students must help clean up.)

Luma Mufleh is an only-in-America story. She relies on the sort of private philanthropy that is in short supply outside the U.S.; Fugees exists only because of the formal generosity of this country, in welcoming refugees at all. She is someone who has found, in America, a welcoming adopted country. Not only is she a Muslim but she is gay—and has had to endure estrangement from her family and from her religion.

Mufleh has found, moreover, that persistence, not publicity, is what’s most required as she pursues a dream of a permanent building for Fugees—and replication of its model in resettlement sites around the country. She recalls the phone call she received from a former Fugees family that had moved to Lewiston, Maine, another resettlement hub. They were shocked to learn that “there’s no Fugees here. They told me, ‘come up here, we need you.’” As increasing numbers of refugees come to America, other cities that learn of the Fugees may well feel the same way.
On a Saturday morning in mid-May, a small classroom at St. Peter’s College in Jersey City is crowded, but not with college students. They are mostly low-income Jersey City residents, African-American and Hispanic adults mainly in their 30s and 40s, looking to move up in the world through a time-honored American means: starting or expanding their own businesses.

There is Cynthia, who has started a cleaning service and has figured out that specializing in reducing allergens and mold will give her a market advantage. Hakim has a radio-quality voice, which he’s learned can be in demand for commercials. Hector has a small bodega and is looking for ways to increase sales, which, he feels, are too reliant on lottery tickets.

Jay Savulich, the instructor, is an experienced and successful restaurant owner who’s discussing “brand and market presence”—and how to establish and maintain them. He’s peppered with questions. What should a prospective candy business owner do, a woman asks, after a business with a similar name has opened? Jay advises her to forget her investment in a website; confusion will kill her business. Pick a new name.

The discussion could be about insurance or advertising or accounting. These nuts and bolts of running a business are all included in the 12-week curriculum of the Community Business Academy, the signature program of Rising Tide Capital, the 12-year-old organization premised on the idea that entrepreneurialism can be the route up from poverty. The organization itself is the product of the entrepreneurial dream of Alfa Demmelash and Alex Forrester, two young Harvard graduates who joined forces and planted their flag on Martin Luther King Drive, in the poorest, most dangerous part of Jersey City.

Beginning with flyers posted around the city’s Bergen-Lafayette section (where shootings remain common today), Rising Tide has graduated 1,500 current and prospective entrepreneurs in Jersey City, Elizabeth, Orange, Union City, and Newark (most recently helping to support a similar program on Chicago’s South Side). The results go far beyond completing the course: nearly 300 of those graduates have started new businesses, while some 460 have seen expansions in businesses they already operated when they enrolled with Rising Tide.

On average, those with businesses who have completed the 12-week program have seen a 64 percent increase in sales and a 47 percent increase in income (from $38,375 to $56,412). Use of public-assistance programs by participants has declined, from 27 percent to 12 percent. Enrollees have started and expanded preschools, pest control, home repair, home cleaning, and auto-repair businesses.
It’s difficult to overstate how unlikely Demmelash’s and Forrester’s story is. Demmelash is the daughter of a refugee Ethiopian mother, resettled in Boston as a result of Ethiopia’s civil war of the 1980s; Forrester was raised near Princeton, the son of a health care executive and a former New Jersey assistant state treasurer. Alfa, growing up in Boston’s then-blue-collar Jamaica Plain section, saw first-hand the value of entrepreneurship, when her own mother, who had been supporting the household as a waitress, instead opened a tailoring and custom-clothing business.

Demmelash—sent to a local Catholic grammar school and then to Boston Latin, the city’s legendary selective public high school—became a Harvard government major. She was intent, she thought, on returning to Africa to help guide postwar “truth and reconciliation” processes. Forrester, for his part, was a philosophy major, seemingly on course for the ministry. It was Forrester’s father who reminded them that helping the poor need not mean looking outside the U.S. That led them to begin planning their own version of a micro-finance program: lending for Jersey City’s urban poor.

Rising Tide is a quintessential social entrepreneurship organization, and not just because it provides good advice. It has combined thoughtful business practices with detailed tracking of results. Some of the lessons that Demmelash and Forrester have learned are right out of a business school case study. When they first opened their doors in Jersey City, they advertised their services as free—and got almost no interest. Soon after, they renamed their service as the “academy,” warned that space was limited, and tuition was $3,000, though scholarships would be available. They were overwhelmed with interest and have been so ever since.

The $3,000 tuition was something of a fiction: foundation grants (and modest government funding) cover the core costs. But students are required to pay the cost of class materials (nearly $400), based on the belief that something offered without cost can create the wrong incentives. Rising Tide’s costs are substantial, too. If one counts only new Business Academy graduates, the annual cost could be calculated at more than $8,000 per participant. But if one looks at all program participants served to date—some 1,500, all of whom are still eligible for assistance—the annual cost falls to about $1,500.

Thanks to Rising Tide, businesses are starting and going on to flourish, in communities where business entrepreneurship has historically been in short supply. It’s impossible to know how many others are positively affected by the examples they see in those communities—success stories that would not have existed absent Rising Tide. It seems not an idle boast for Rising Tide to have chosen as its motto “transforming lives and communities.” Nor should one lose sight of the fact that two young people have rediscovered and promoted a time-honored approach to reducing poverty: capitalism.
As much as we praise and encourage voluntarism in America, there are some needs that volunteers would seem unlikely to address. But at a time when the number of chronically ill and elderly confined to their homes keeps rising—and the number of those willing to work as home health aides has failed to keep up—a small program in New Mexico is showing that community volunteers can help close the gap.

That there’s a big need cannot be doubted. As in so many parts of the U.S., the over-65 population in Santa Fe is expected to grow by 64 percent by 2030. Yet the city, says a local hospital official, has a “total lack of infrastructure” to care for these needs. One would never expect to see a feasible model for completely free, volunteer-provided in-home health care help fill the vacuum.

But that’s exactly what Santa Fe’s Glenys Carl has built in the Coming Home Connection. Her organization recruits and trains volunteers to provide completely free in-home care—care that often is 24/7 and extends for months and years as well as for the short term—filling a critical need for the elderly, the chronically ill, the uninsured, and low-income adults.

CHC volunteers provide gradually increasing amounts of care for dying patients, working closely to help families and those without families to stay in their homes through their last days. Surveys show that most people prefer to die at home—an option generally not funded by insurance plans. Long-term care coverage is a help but is not widely available and often is not sufficient.

Founded in 2007, CHC operates in a straightforward fashion. Carl recruits volunteers, many from a local nursing program run by a community college, as well as others with no medical training. Some 400 volunteers have been trained since 2007, and all are required to submit to a background check and attend a three-day training program. A registered nurse in the CHC office is in charge of patient intake (though Carl is involved with everything) to assess patients’ needs and draft care plans.

Many of those assisted just need temporary help after minor knee surgery. Other times, there are teams of CHC volunteers who provide full in-home care for weeks, months, and even years. Approximately 80 active volunteers care for 30–100 patients every week, last year serving 147 families. Using online volunteer-scheduling software, CHC is able to tally annual total volunteer hours: for 2015, 20,000 hours of free care and 40,000 hours of care that was at least partially compensated.

One volunteer, Christina Simic, described how CHC cared for a friend, a middle-aged man dying of tongue and throat cancer. He had no insurance and no close family relations. Carl told the
“We will be there for you,” which was a “precious and priceless” gesture for Simic. As the man declined, a team of 25 volunteers took turns with his care—care that was “compassionate and caring” and often overnight. The man “had never before felt loved” until this time and “felt safe for the first time in his life.”

Most of what CHC does is defined as long-term palliative care, end-of-life care, and disability support. Volunteers help with meal preparation, getting in and out of bed, fall prevention, driving and shopping, changing dressings, and just being a friend. One local volunteer specializes in modifying homes with grab bars at no charge. Donated medical equipment, such as wheelchairs and walkers, are also loaned free of charge.

CHC uses three categories to group patients, by level of need. Certain volunteers have specialized training to care for high-need patients, but generally even those patients require something short of professional nursing care. As a practical matter, that means CHC can help someone with incontinence but not with a feeding tube. The mandatory three-day volunteer training focuses on practical instruction around care skills (lifting, transfers, wound care, first aid, following doctor’s orders, etc.), hospice care, ethical decision making, grief counseling, and volunteer self-care.

Those suffering from chronic, life-threatening illness may not choose hospice care at home unless there is live-in family or a caregiver. Hospice care entails one or two visits a day (to check the patient’s health and pain levels and adjust medication) but does not assist with daily living. The experience of Coming Home Connection makes clear that such relatively basic assistance could help many stay in their homes—and stay out of nursing homes.

Carl, originally from Wales, remembers hospice homes (which originated in Wales and England) and has aspirations to build a small, home-like hospice house in Santa Fe, where patients could go for round-the-clock hospice care or respite care for families of the chronically and terminally ill. She has even caught the interest of a foundation in supporting her idea; but Santa Fe property values are very high, so she has not yet found the right property.

CHC volunteers whom I met referred with disdain to our popular culture that “ignores or fears death.” In today’s modern, disconnected society, Coming Home Connection offers the great gift of sharing in our illness and death by offering this loving, humane, often thankless work of charity.
**Past Simon Prize Winners**

### 2015

**Relay Graduate School of Education**  
Norman Atkins  
40 W. 20th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
(212) 228–1888  
www.relay.edu

Relay Graduate School of Education takes a simple, revolutionary approach: help aspiring and current teachers hone their classroom skills. Today, most teachers do not hold an undergraduate degree in the subject they teach and, once hired, are rewarded for graduate school study that is completely divorced from teacher effectiveness. The mission of Relay, started in New York by Norman Atkins but now working in cities across the country, is to prepare effective teachers—as measured by gains in student achievement and character development.

### 2014

**Khan Academy**  
Sal Khan  
P.O. Box 1630  
Mountain View, CA 94042  
www.khanacademy.org

Khan Academy—the Internet teaching institution that has grown from founder Sal Khan’s individualized YouTube math lessons for his seventh-grade niece into a worldwide phenomenon—offers thousands of free, plainspoken online courses, from algebra to biology. The success of Khan Academy, which boasts 15 million registered students and nearly 500 million YouTube views in 70 countries, shows how a new approach to a deep-seated problem can gain an astoundingly wide reach, with private, rather than governmental, origins and support.

### 2013

**Alliance for Catholic Education**  
Rev. Timothy R. Scully  
107 Carole Sandner Hall  
Notre Dame, IN 46556  
(574) 631–7052  
www.ace.nd.edu

Father Timothy Scully founded the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) in 1993, a University of Notre Dame–based program that, each year, selectively recruits recent college graduates to teach in Catholic schools in poor neighborhoods across the U.S. While nearly 2,000 Catholic schools have closed for lack of resources since 2000, ACE has signed-up some 1,500 teachers—volunteers who earn credit toward an M.Ed.—since its inception, with many continuing on to influential careers in education.

### 2012

**C-SPAN**  
Brian Lamb  
400 N. Capitol St NW  
Suite 650  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 737–3220  
www.c-span.org

C-SPAN is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1979 by the cable television industry as a public service to broadcast many proceedings of the federal government, as well as other public affairs programming. Over three decades, the network has grown to include C-SPAN2, covering the Senate, C-SPAN3, devoted to history, C-SPAN Radio, and C-SPAN.org. It was built by Brian Lamb on an original vision that successfully marshals private support for its public-spirited goals.
2011

HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE
Geoffrey Canada
35 E. 125th Street
New York, NY 10035
(212) 360-3255
www.hcz.org

Geoffrey Canada's Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) began as a modest pilot project on a single block. It now serves over 8,000 children and 6,000 adults on nearly 100 blocks. HCZ surrounds neighborhood children with an enriching environment of college-oriented peers and supportive adults as a counterweight to “the street.” Students at HCZ’s nationally known Promise Academy charter schools have consistently outperformed their public school peers. HCZ’s success is driven by Canada’s deep belief that all children can succeed, regardless of race, wealth, or zip code.

2010

GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY
Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman
49 W. 45th Street
6th Floor
New York, NY 10036
(646) 366-9666
www.gilderlehrman.org

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's purpose is to support the love and study of American history. Originally founded by Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman as a repository for rare and invaluable historical documents—including original copies of the Constitution, the Emancipation Proclamation, and numerous letters written by the Founding Fathers—the Institute has expanded dramatically. The Gilder Lehrman Institute now dispatches traveling expositions to schools, libraries, historical sites, and other venues across the country.

2009

KIPP
Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin
135 Main Street
Suite 1700
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 399-1556
www.kipp.org

KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. Founded by Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin, the KIPP network now boasts 99 schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 26,000 students.

2008

DOE FUND
George T. McDonald
232 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
(212) 628-5207
www.doe.org

In 20 years, George McDonald’s Doe Fund has graduated more than 3,500 of the hardest-to-help from the streets to work, changing the face of New York City in the process. The Doe Fund’s guiding premise is that the homeless are neither victims nor enemies but human beings with “the potential to be contributing members of society.” The Fund’s Ready, Willing & Able program is the manifestation of McDonald’s straightforward philosophy, shared by the Manhattan Institute: that people can rebuild their lives through the structure and sense of accomplishment that employment provides.

2007

BRYANT PARK CORPORATION & 34th STREET PARTNERSHIP
Daniel A. Biederman
1065 Avenue of Americas
Suite 2400
New York, NY 10110
(212) 768-4242
www.bryantpark.org

The work of Daniel Biederman, founder of the Bryant Park Corporation, 34th Street Partnership, and Grand Central Partnership, is known to virtually all New Yorkers. Biederman has used private, nonprofit management and finance to restore and maintain some of New York City’s—and the world’s—greatest public spaces. The rescue of Bryant Park from crime and degradation sparked and symbolized the renaissance of New York.
FOUND IN TRANSLATION
Maria Vertkin
649 Massachusetts Avenue
Central Works, Suite 6
Cambridge, MA 02139
www.found-in-translation.org

Found in Translation offers an intensive 14-week program for immigrant women—with FIT itself founded by an immigrant woman, Maria Vertkin—who aspire to careers as medical interpreters. FIT students learn the basics of, for instance, anatomy, physiology, C-sections, chemotherapy, and blood-sugar levels. The goal: to allow the women to explain to hospital patients in their native languages, without medical jargon, what’s going on; and to allow the women to explain patients’ concerns to physicians. It’s a combination that can be life-saving.

EDWINS
Brandon Chrostowski
13101 Shaker Square
Cleveland, OH 44120
(216) 921–3333
www.edwinsrestaurant.org

Founded by Brandon Chrostowski in 2013, the EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute is both a school and one of Cleveland’s top French restaurants, staffed by 25 ex-convicts, most of whom had never held restaurant jobs—or, in some cases, any legal job. Ex-cons who have served time for any offense are eligible to apply for its six-month training course. Nine classes have graduated 65 students, of whom 61 are working—all in the restaurant and hospitality industries—and earning $12–$16 an hour.

TEAM RUBICON
Jake Wood
300 N. Continental Boulevard
Suite 100
El Segundo, CA 90245
(310) 640–8787
www.teamrubiconusa.org

Cofounded by Jake Wood in 2010, Team Rubicon deploys military veterans as emergency first-responders. In 2014, TR responded to 30 natural disasters worldwide, engaging 917 volunteers (its 10-region database now includes nearly 30,000 volunteers) in 239 days of volunteer work—which included disaster assessment and management, debris removal, and home repair—amounting to 50,701 hours of service. At a time when veterans are often portrayed as suffering from PTSD or drug addiction, TR has not only helped ravaged communities recover in the days before conventional aid organizations arrive; it has also helped vets find a new path through which to serve others.

BARD PRISON INITIATIVE
Max Kenner
P.O. Box 5000
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504
(845) 758–7308
www.bpi.bard.edu

The Bard Prison Initiative has enrolled 600 students—virtually all serious felons with long sentences, many imprisoned as young as 16—convicted of involvement in violent crimes. BPI has gone on to grant 350 Bard College degrees in the full range of the liberal arts, including history, literature, the sciences, quantitative reasoning, and math. By seeking to bring higher education to those behind bars in the prisons of upstate New York, BPI founder Max Kenner is a pioneer in the growing movement to reduce America’s prison population.

SARRELL DENTAL CENTERS
Jeffrey Parker
2700 5th Avenue N
Bessemer, AL 35020
(205) 425–1327
www.sarrelldental.org

Sarrell Dental Centers provide 175,000 annual dental checkups for poor Alabama children and families—many of whom had previously never seen dentists because only a small minority of dentists accept Medicaid patients. Left untreated, oral-health problems can lead to serious medical conditions. Though a nonprofit, SDC brings in $17 million annually in revenue—enough to support 49 salaried dentists and 43 dental hygienists. Says founder Jeffrey Parker, “SDC is eliminating cavities among some of the poorest children in the poorest counties in one of America’s poorest states.”
2014

ELY CHAPMAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Alice Chapman
403 Scammel Street
Marietta, OH 45750
(740) 376-9533
www.elychapmanedu.org

The Ely Chapman Education Foundation offers intensive after-school programming to children in Marietta, Ohio, where families once known for deep work ethics have been wracked by drug use, single parenthood, and dependency on government benefits. Led by Alice Chapman—founder, lead teacher, and chief executive officer—ECEF has, since 1999, served nearly 2,000 kids (in a city with a total population of 15,000) who have improved grades and life prospects that Chapman, a hands-on manager, tracks assiduously.

BLUE ENGINE

Nick Ehrmann
75 Broad Street, Suite 2900
New York, NY 10004
(646) 517-1060
www.blueengine.org

Founded by Nick Ehrmann, a Princeton and Teach for America alumnus, Blue Engine partners with high schools to offer intensive tutoring to ensure that students graduate at college-ready levels. Blue Engine tutors are vetted via a selective screening process and undergo an exhaustive summer training program. Although Ehrmann has built a relatively small organization to date, Blue Engine offers a highly innovative model that can serve as the foundation for the larger organization that he aspires to build incrementally.

WISHBONE

Beth Schmidt
2144 Leavenworth Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
(310) 467-0035
www.wishbone.org

Since 2012, Wishbone has connected low-income, high-potential high-school students in the San Francisco and New York metro areas to summer programs through which they can pursue strong interests. While the goal of helping kids fulfill their potential may be timeless, the means employed by Wishbone are anything but: students compete for placements, both on the basis of their own essays and nominations by teachers or other adults. Most impressively, no Wishbone student has failed to complete a summer program in which he has enrolled.

VENTURE FOR AMERICA

Andrew Yang
40 West 29th Street,
Suite 301
New York, NY 10001
(646) 736-6460
www.ventureforamerica.org

Venture for America places graduates from top U.S. universities in small start-up firms in 12 U.S. cities. Founded in 2012 by Andrew Yang to help correct what he viewed as an “inefficient allocation of talent in this country,” Venture for America offers would-be entrepreneurs hands-on, yet structured, experience in promising companies in some of America’s most distressed cities, including Detroit and Baltimore.
Established in 2005, Gospel for Teens arose out of founder Vy Higginson’s desire—with the support of her Mama Foundation for the Arts—to ensure the survival of gospel music within the black community. Gospel for Teens now routinely tours the U.S. and Europe, too: earning members both pocket money and invaluable experience. In the process, Gospel for Teens has not only created a structure for passing on the gospel music tradition, it has become a haven and engine of uplift for African-American adolescents throughout the New York area.

Colorado Uplift works in Denver’s lowest-performing public schools, offering its mostly low-income Hispanic students “teacher-mentors”, on call 24/7 to provide a deep, regular presence in and outside the classroom. Since 1982, Colorado Uplift has established relationships with over 30,000 underprivileged students. Among students who remain in the program three years or more, 90 percent graduate high school (compared to 58 percent district-wide), while 86 percent go on to post-secondary education, whether four- or two-year colleges, trade schools, or vocational programs.

All Hands Volunteers (AHV) provides hands-on assistance to communities around the world devastated by natural disasters. Founded by David Campbell in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, AVH offers volunteers the opportunity to assist directly in clean-up and repair tasks, areas often neglected by major disaster relief organizations. In 2012, some 4,300 adults volunteered to work for AVH in exchange for nothing more than room and board—all on a total annual budget of $660,000, a pittance in the world of disaster relief.

Give an Hour was built on the idea that mental health professionals would be willing to volunteer their time and services to help U.S. military veterans. Founded in 2005 by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a clinical psychologist, Give an Hour has since built a network of over 6,000 psychiatrists who have, collectively, provided a staggering 400,000+ volunteer hours. Give an Hour targets its modest $1.6 million budget and 14 volunteer staff to assist the 2.3 million American troops deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001, of whom around 20 percent will likely return with post-traumatic stress disorder.
BUILD
Suzanne McKechnie Klahr
2385 Bay Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 688-5840
www.build.org

BUILD uses the teaching of entrepreneurship, the development of business plans, and the operation of actual small businesses to encourage adolescents to stay in school. Serving disadvantaged youth has been at the heart of BUILD’s efforts since the organization was founded by attorney Suzanne McKechnie Klahr in 1999. On average, 80 percent of those enrolled in the BUILD 9th grade class continue on to the 10th grade. Of those who do stay in the program for a full four years—a period that includes academic help and college application assistance in the junior and senior years provided by volunteer mentors from prominent businesses such as Google and Cisco—virtually all go on to postsecondary education or training programs.

The Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale provides emergency shelter for victims of elder abuse and enhances public awareness and knowledge about elder abuse. It is the nation’s first comprehensive regional elder abuse shelter. A unique model based within an existing long-term care facility, the Weinberg Center takes in a population group with special and significant problems into one of the nation’s premier nursing homes. These are people who often require assistance in arranging for payment should they become residents and who, demographically, are likely to differ from the elderly Jewish population that the Hebrew Home was established to serve.

HARRY AND JEANETTE WEINBERG CENTER FOR ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION
Daniel Reingold
5901 Palisade Avenue
Riverdale, NY 10471
(718) 581-1000
www.hebrewhome.org/abuserecovery.asp

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Getting Out and Staying Out has established itself as one of the most effective reentry programs in the New York City area for 16- to 24-year-old men at Rikers Island. Fewer than 20 percent of GOSO participants return to jail, as compared to a national average of 67 percent for their age group. Over the last eight years, GOSO has proved that early intervention within the prison system, as well as supportive counseling, education, and job readiness training once participants have been released into the community, reduces recidivism.

GETTING OUT AND STAYING OUT
Mark Goldsmith
91 E. 116th Street
New York, NY 10029
(212) 831-5020
www.gosony.org

IDIGNITY
Michael Dippy
424 E. Central Blvd., #199
Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 792-1374
www.idignity.org

IDignity was created to assist the disadvantaged in Central Florida to navigate the complexities of obtaining their personal identification, such as birth certificates, Florida ID cards, and Social Security cards. Since its founding in 2008, IDignity has served more than 8,000 people, hosting monthly events that pull together volunteers from Orlando churches, as well as representatives from various government agencies such as the Orange County Department of Health, DMV, Social Security, and legal assistance. IDignity has developed an efficient, cost-effective, and highly successful model for providing a crucial hand to those living on the margins of society.
Based out of Houston, the WorkFaith Connection (WFC) seeks to help those transitioning out of homelessness, prison, or addiction. WFC accepts referrals of clients from 25 other relief organizations, from churches, homeless shelters, and the courts. The goal: to provide the skills, knowledge, relationships, and experience required for building a new life. The program’s successes are clear—54 percent of all graduates have kept their jobs for a year, and earn, on average, $9 per hour. While WFC’s immediate goal for clients is to find and keep an entry-level job for a year, they support the clients further with career-planning, work training, and school opportunities.

ISUS has built a top-performing school emphasizing career and vocational preparation, focusing on some of the hardest-to-reach students; some 70 percent of ISUS students have previously dropped out of high school, and the majority have been involved with juvenile court. The charter school provides a combination of academic and field-oriented vocational training with a focus on helping students obtain a high-school diploma, not just a GED. Through partnerships with local businesses, students are certified in four areas: construction, health care, computer technology, and manufacturing.

MedWish began when Lee Ponsky, then a college student, participated in a faith-based medical-missionary group that led him to the Baptist Missionary Hospital in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Seeing the staff trying to adapt to a lack of equipment, he recalled the waste of medical supplies he saw as a surgical assistant. He decided to approach nurses whom he knew from his days as a volunteer; they agreed to put out collection bins for surplus equipment. By 2006, the organization hired its first full-time employee—executive director Tish Dahlby. Since then, contributions have increased from 20,000 pounds to 800,000; staff has increased from one full-time member to eight; and relationships with 38 hospitals have been formalized.
The Cristo Rey Network provides a quality, Catholic, college preparatory education to young people who live in urban communities with limited educational options. Every student works five full days a month to fund the majority of his education, gain job experience, grow in self-confidence, and realize the relevance of his education.

The Mission Continues was founded in 2007 after CEO Eric Greitens returned home from service in Iraq as a Navy SEAL. Upon his return, Eric visited wounded Marines at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Inspired, Greitens founded The Mission Continues to build an America where every returning veteran can serve again as a citizen leader and where, together, we honor the fallen by living their values through service.

Resources for Educational and Employment Opportunities is committed to empowering community college students with the opportunity to transfer to a four-year university, earn a college degree, and obtain a professional position upon graduation. REEO’s partnership model is aimed at creating mutually beneficial relationships between community colleges, community college students, universities, and corporations.

Civic Builders is a nonprofit facilities developer that provides turnkey real-estate solutions for high-performing charter schools. By assuming responsibility for building financing, acquisition, design, and construction, Civic Builders relieves charter schools of the burden of navigating a complex real-estate market and provides affordable educational facilities.

The SquashBusters/NUSEA mission is to promote squash and education among urban youth. The organization’s ultimate aim is to oversee the creation and longevity of many urban squash programs so that thousands of young people across America benefit every day from athletic, educational, and community enrichment activities. NUSEA acts as a catalyst, organizer, and overseer of urban squash’s improvement and growth.
ROCKING THE BOAT
Adam Green
812 Edgewater Road
Bronx, NY 10474
(718) 466-5799
www.rockingtheboat.org

Rocking the Boat uses boats to help young people challenged by severe economic, educational, and social disadvantage develop into empowered and responsible adults. Participating during the school-day, after-school, and summer in hands-on wooden boatbuilding and on-water education programs, young people in the South Bronx develop the self-confidence to set ambitious goals and the skills needed to achieve them. Adam Green launched Rocking the Boat in 1996 as a volunteer project in an East Harlem junior high school. It has since developed into a fully sustainable independent non-profit organization annually serving over 2,500 young people and community members.

NATIONAL KIDNEY REGISTRY
Garet Hil
P.O. Box 460
Babylon, NY 11702
www.kidneyregistry.org

The mission of the National Kidney Registry is to save and improve the lives of people facing kidney failure by increasing the quality, speed, and number of living donor transplants in the world. The Registry’s vision is that every incompatible or poorly compatible living donor in the world will pass through a common registry—95 percent of these pairs will find a match in less than six months, with the majority being age-compatible, six-antigen matches—extending the functioning life of these transplanted kidneys while simultaneously reducing the deceased donor waiting lists.

CINCINNATI WORKS
Dave and Liane Philips
708 Walnut Street
2nd Floor
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 744-9675
www.cincinnatiworks.org

Cincinnati Works offers a holistic approach to eliminating poverty in the Cincinnati Tri-State area through a network of services and partnerships designed to help its members overcome barriers to stable, long-term employment. Its members include the currently unemployed, and those who are underemployed (i.e. the working poor). The short-term goal for the unemployed is to help them stabilize in a job that pays $7 to $10 per hour with health benefits. The long-term goal for the underemployed is for them to earn 200 percent of the federal poverty rate and move to economic self-sufficiency. Economically self-sufficient people become taxpayers and productive citizens who no longer require public assistance.

UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION PATH TO AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP AND ASSIMILATION
Juan Rangel
954 West Washington Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60607
(312) 332-6301
www.uno-online.org

For two decades, the United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) has been challenging Hispanics to play active roles in the development of a vital American community. UNO has carried this mission into an array of major campaigns and initiatives, ranging from Chicago’s school reform movement in the 1980’s, to UNO’s naturalization drive—which has serviced over 65,000 new American citizens since the 1990’s—to the establishment of the UNO Charter School Network in 2004.
CAREERS THROUGH CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

Richard Grausman
250 West 57th Street
Suite 2015
New York, NY 10107
(212) 974-7111
www.ccapinc.org

Careers through Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP) is a curriculum enrichment program linking public high school culinary teachers and their students to the food service industry and preparing students for careers in hospitality. New York City is the headquarters and flagship program. The C-CAP National Network includes Arizona (statewide); Chicago; Hampton Roads, VA; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; and Prince George's County, MD.

GIRLS EDUCATIONAL & MENTORING SERVICES

Rachel Lloyd
298B West 149th Street
New York, NY 10039
(212) 926-8089
www.gems-girls.org

Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS) is the only organization in New York State specifically designed to serve girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking. GEMS was founded in 1999 by Rachel Lloyd, a young woman who had been sexually exploited as a teenager. GEMS has helped hundreds of young women and girls, aged 12–21, who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking, to exit the commercial sex industry and to develop their full potential.

BEACON HILL VILLAGE

Susan McWhinney-Morse
74 Joy Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 723-9713
www.beaconhillvillage.org

Beacon Hill Village is a membership organization in the heart of Boston. Created in 2001 by a group of long-time Beacon Hill residents as an alternative to moving into retirement or assisted living communities, Beacon Hill Village organizes and delivers programs and services that allow members to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives in their own homes.

ST. BERNARD PROJECT

Zack Rosenburg and Elizabeth McCartney
8324 Parc Place
Chalmette, LA 70043
(504) 277-6831
www.stbernardproject.org

The St. Bernard Project creates housing opportunities so that Hurricane Katrina survivors can return to their homes and communities. Started in March 2006 by Zack Rosenburg and Liz McCartney, the organization provides vital resources and support to families in a seamless and timely manner. The St. Bernard Project’s programs and goals are directly driven by the needs expressed by the community members.

CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERPRISE: VIOLENCE-FREE ZONE PROGRAM

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.
1625 K Street NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 518-6500
www.cneonline.org

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise was founded in 1981 to help residents of low-income neighborhoods address the problems of their communities. CNE has headquarters in Washington, D.C., but operates throughout the nation to help community and faith-based organizations with training, technical assistance, and linkages to sources of support. The Center chronicles and interprets their experiences to make recommendations for public policy and works to remove barriers that hamper their efforts to solve societal problems. CNE has provided training to more than 2,600 leaders of grassroots organizations in 39 states.
MORE THAN WHEELS
Robert Chambers
89 South Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02111
(866) 455-2522
www.bonnieclac.org

More Than Wheels (formerly Bonnie CLAC) helps people get the best deal on a reliable and fuel-efficient car. Since its establishment in 2001, More Than Wheels has helped nearly 1,200 New England residents get the best deal on a new, or nearly new, car by negotiating with dealers to secure the lowest price and providing the lowest interest rate available.

A HOME WITHIN
Toni V. Heineman
2555 Van Ness Avenue
Suite 101
San Francisco, CA 94109
(888) 898-2249
www.ahomewithin.org

A Home Within seeks to heal the chronic loss experienced by foster children by providing lasting and caring relationships to current and former foster youth. A Home Within chapters around the country improve the lives of foster youth through direct services, professional training, public awareness, and advocacy.

RECLAIM A YOUTH
Addie Mix
P.O. Box 740
Glenwood, IL 60425
(708) 757-7293
www.reclaimayouth.org

Reclaim A Youth’s mission is to empower youth, ages 12-18, with basic values, affirm their individual talents, and help to build a healthy sense of self-worth and community. The vision is to improve the quality of life for future young leaders and ensure a better tomorrow.

PRISON ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM
Catherine F. Rohr
P.O. Box 926274
Houston, TX 77292
(832) 767-0928
www.prisonentreprenuership.com

Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) helps ex-offenders reintegrate into their communities. PEP staff, volunteer business executives, and MBA students teach business concepts, etiquette, writing and grammar, interview technique, team dynamics, and even how to offer a firm handshake. Within four weeks of release, 97 percent of PEP graduates have found employment.

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
Rabbi Levi and Bassie Shemtov
6892 West Maple Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48322
(248) 788-7878
www.friendshipcircle.org

The Friendship Circle provides assistance and support to the families of children with special needs. In addition to helping those in need, the Friendship Circle enriches its vast network of volunteers by enabling them to reap the rewards of selfless giving; its affiliate, Friendship House, provides support to individuals and families struggling with addiction, isolation, and other crises.
2006

**VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE**
Amy Hamlin  
162 Saint Paul Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
(802) 651-0112  
www.volunteersinmedicine.org

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) was started by retired physician Jack McConnell in 1994 in South Carolina, where seasonal unemployment left many people without health insurance. Executive director Amy Hamlin, a former nurse practitioner from Vermont, has been the entrepreneurial chief executive for over a decade and now oversees a network of 60 clinics in 25 states.

**THE TAPROOT FOUNDATION**
Aaron Hurst  
466 Geary Street, Suite 200  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 359-1423  
www.taprootfoundation.org

The Taproot Foundation (TF), founded in San Francisco in 2001, delivers support to organizations through a structured volunteer management process. TF provides “service grant” awards of teams of prescreened volunteers with specific roles. Five volunteers work together for about five hours per week for six months on each project. A Taproot volunteer manager directs the team with a detailed blueprint to deliver a specific product.

**PROJECT LEAD THE WAY**
Richard C. Liebich  
3939 Priority Way South Drive Suite 200  
Indianapolis, IN 46420  
(317) 699-0200  
www.pltw.org

Founding benefactor and CEO Richard Liebich established Project Lead the Way in 1997. The mission: to create dynamic partnerships with schools to prepare a diverse group of students for success in science, engineering, and engineering technology. Sadly, Liebich died in 2012, but his Project Lead the Way lives on.

**PROJECT K.I.D**
Dr. Lenore Ealy  
2807 Remington Green Circle  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
(888) 352-4453  
www.project-kid.org

Project K.I.D. promotes the development of intentional and integrated community-based capabilities for effectively addressing the needs of children and families in disasters. Project K.I.D. was founded in September 2005 in the days immediately after Hurricane Katrina and successfully developed and deployed its PlayCare response model in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana for six months.

**INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ART HOUSE**
Sister Anne Wambach  
6101 East Lake Road  
Erie, PA 16511  
(814) 899-0614  
www.eriebenedictines.org

The mission of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie Inner-City Neighborhood Art House is to enable children to experience beauty, grow in positive self-expression and self-discipline, and develop into full and productive human beings. The program provides classes in the visual, performing and literary arts to “at risk” children in Erie, PA, in a safe, nurturing, and caring environment.
Jose-Pablo Fernandez, with the Houston public schools and the Monterrey (Mexico) Institute of Technology, created a program that helped hundreds of recent immigrants, some barely literate even in Spanish, to become computer-literate. Through school computer rooms and distance learning, graduates get jobs and start their own businesses. The community learning center program draws immigrants into American life, brings them to their children's schools, and motivates them for higher education.

Philadelphia Futures prepares students from low-income families to enter and succeed in college, providing mentoring, academic enrichment, college guidance, and financial incentives. The goal is to increase the percentage of Philadelphia graduates prepared for higher education and to reduce the institutional barriers to their academic success. Corporate attorney Joan Mazzotti took charge in 1999.

Temp Keller, a former teacher, founded Resources for Indispensable Schools and Educators (RISE) to connect job-seeking teachers with dynamic principals and to strengthen work environments. The target clientele are experienced teachers with enthusiasm and a valid teaching credential.

Grady “Mack” McCarter, a minister without a congregation, revived Jane Addams’s early settlement-house movement in the black neighborhoods of Shreveport and neighboring Bossier, building eight “Friendship Houses” in some of the poorest neighborhoods in America. Some 40,000 people have joined Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal’s (SBCR) “We Care Team,” paying $2 a year and wearing an SBCR button. Block leaders unite these members and help them become friends as well as neighbors.
Bridges to Life believes that understanding the impact of crime will spark remorse in criminals and lessen the chance that they will commit new crimes after being released from prison. Bridges is a 14-week project conducted in prison and led by trained volunteers. The curriculum includes victim-impact panels and small-group discussions, typically with five inmates, two victims, and a lay facilitator.

The Center for Teaching Entrepreneurship (CTE) was founded 15 years ago in Milwaukee’s East Side neighborhood by ReDonna Rodgers as an effort to revive the tradition of self-reliance and business skills that she was fortunate to learn as a child. Fundamental to the program philosophy is the “CEO of me”: punctuality, self-discipline, business etiquette, perseverance, motivation, leadership, and money management.

READ Alliance (Reading Excellence and Discovery) was created in 2000 to help children learn to read. The READ model pairs poor readers, in kindergarten, first- and second-grade, with academically successful teenagers, for tutoring after school or in an intensive summer program. The program is also designed to provide jobs and encourage teaching careers.

Upwardly Global acculturates immigrants to succeed and helps employers understand the skills of the immigrant workforce. Founded in San Francisco, UpGlo opened a second office in New York in 2008, and in 2009, a Chicago office. It serves immigrants of less than five years who have permanent work authorization, a university degree, good English and computer skills but who are unemployed or underemployed because they don’t know how to apply for work in America. UpGlo also enlists corporate partners seeking workplace diversity and immigrants’ job skills.
Life in foster care is arduous for children whose parents cannot adequately raise them. A continued concern is the fate of these children as they “age out” of foster care at 18. These teenagers are handed their possessions and sent out into the world with poor academic skills, few life skills, and much psychological damage. Amy Lemley, cofounder of the First Place Fund for Youth in Oakland, created an organization that helps with housing, reading skills, and health care, and prepares these teenagers for self-reliance and independent living.

Living Lands and Waters (LL&W) is a floating recycling center visiting a long list of river towns once a year. The organization has grown from three barges a year (with a fourth for crew quarters and office) to using six or seven barges, visiting nine states in the Midwest, and collecting four million pounds of garbage annually from the Mississippi, Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers. LL&W has trained 1,500 teachers in educational workshops on the history and ecology of the rivers.

Mike Tenbusch and Dan Varner founded Think Detroit in 1997. These two University of Michigan law school graduates remembered their own sports teams as children and started a baseball league in a Detroit housing project, appealing to local merchants for funds to renovate the nearby city-owned baseball diamond. By 2003, their nonprofit organization enrolled 4,000 kids in baseball and soccer leagues with 500 volunteers as coaches.

Sara Horowitz founded Working Today in 1995 to address the needs of the growing independent workforce. Working Today seeks to update the nation’s social safety net, developing systems for all working people to access affordable benefits, regardless of their job arrangement. As executive director, Horowitz takes an entrepreneurial approach, pursuing creative, market-based solutions to pressing social problems.

Gerald Chertavian’s Year Up (YU) combines high expectations with marketable job skills, stipends, apprenticeships, college credit, and a behavior management system to place young adults on a path to economic self-sufficiency. YU places participants in information-technology help desks and other behind-the-scenes computer-dependent jobs.
In 1996, Reverend William Barnes, pastor of Saint Luke's United Methodist Church of Orlando, Florida, felt compelled to help the working men and women in Orlando who had no access to health care. Thinking that some medical professionals in his congregation might be interested in helping, he could not have imagined the network of volunteers that would become Shepherd's Hope, a consortium of local churches that treats patients free of charge.

Through summer workshops, College Summit motivates and trains students to boost college enrollment in their high schools. College Summit also works with educators to embed postsecondary planning structures and resources into each school. This includes a for-credit College Summit class, teacher training, and application-management tools.

The New Jersey Orators is a volunteer organization founded in 1985 by a small group of African-American corporate executives who set out to improve the language skills primarily of African-American youth, from ages seven to 18, in preparation for roles of leadership and employment.
John Dixon, a retired army sergeant, and his wife Catherine knew that the legions of fatherless and undisciplined kids in their Buffalo, NY, neighborhood would benefit from a structured military-style program run by former military officers. Sadly, John Dixon has passed away and the Junior Uniformed Mentoring Program (JUMP) is no longer in operation. His legacy, however, continues in the many lives he touched in Buffalo.

Starting with $85,000 in seed money from the Echoing Green Foundation, Mark Levine established Credit Where Credit Is Due, a nonprofit organization that promotes economic empowerment in upper Manhattan by increasing low-income people’s access to, understanding of, and control over financial services. CWCID runs a bilingual financial-education program and in 1997 opened a community development credit union called Neighborhood Trust Federal Credit Union (NTFCU).

Eric Adler and fellow management consultant Rajiv Vinnakota built and manage a boarding school in an impoverished area of Southeast Washington, D.C., providing underserved students with a college-prep education. The SEED School opened in 1998, admits all students by lottery, and is the only urban public boarding school in the nation. SEED has a rigorous academic program in a safe and structured environment.

Founded in 1990, Steppingstone develops and implements programs that prepare urban schoolchildren for educational opportunities leading to college. The program began in Boston and Philadelphia and recently expanded to Hartford. Currently, 850 students are enrolled in Boston, 200 in Philadelphia, and 30 in Hartford. Steppingstone “Scholars” participate in a 14-month program, from fourth to seventh grade.
The Manhattan Institute’s Social Entrepreneurship Initiative welcomes nominations for the

*William E. Simon Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Social Entrepreneurship*

and the

*Richard C. Cornuelle Awards for Social Entrepreneurship.*

**Nominations are accepted online at**

WWW.MANHATTAN-INSTITUTE.ORG/SE2017

from

JANUARY 1 – MARCH 1

*The Social Entrepreneurship Initiative* honors nonprofit leaders who have found innovative, predominantly privately funded solutions for America’s most pressing social problems.

Up to five *$25,000 Cornuelle Awards* for new program founders and a single *$100,000 Simon Prize* will be presented.