

PASSIONARIES™

Definition of *passionary*: \ˈpɑː-shən-er-ē\ *n* (ca. 2005) 1. one inspired passionately through vision and compassion to change the world for the better: visionary in action on a mission. 2. society's agent of change: pioneer of benevolent innovation giving forward and causing positive ripples. 3. a social entrepreneur emboldened to make a difference, volunteering above and beyond responsibilities to family and work: inspirational difference-maker.

# *Passionaries*<sup>TM</sup>

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TURNING COMPASSION INTO ACTION

Barbara R. Metzler

  
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*Templeton Foundation Press helps intellectual leaders and others learn about science research on aspects of realities, invisible and intangible. Spiritual realities include unlimited love, accelerating creativity, worship, and the benefits of purpose in persons and in the cosmos.*

Most of *Passionaries'* profiles have involved personal telephone interviews with information updated through each nonprofit's Web site listed at the end of each profile. Stories included in this book were collected over a period of four years. Reasonable care has been taken to trace original ownership and, when necessary, to obtain permission to reprint. If the author has overlooked giving proper credit to anyone, please contact the publisher at the address above.

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## Preface

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**H**AVE YOU EVER WANTED to make a difference in the world and didn't know the means or avenues to pursue? Perhaps you have looked at a major social problem that tugs at your heart and thought to yourself—"what difference can I make? I am just one person." After reading all 35 chapters in this book, you'll never wonder again. But beware—in reading this book, your heart may be touched and changed forever and new questions and passions may arise.

For a long time, I have been captivated by social entrepreneurs and how the organizations they started significantly impact our world, most just in the past 30 years. These individuals are making waves and they create "ripples" emanating positive forces that also move the world forward. Since there was no word to accurately describe these present-day heroes, I created the term *passionaries* to describe "passionate visionaries who take positive actions and significantly change the lives of others." My intent in writing this book is to give a voice to these "good news makers" of all ages whose stories often go unheard.

After observing the unified, altruistic actions of Americans following the September 11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina, I have learned that we *can* come together to make a difference in our world. It is my hope that *Passionaries* will be a vehicle to inspire you to action. I have collected the stories of Americans who, through their passion for a single cause, have made a significant impact on hundreds, thousands, or millions of people's lives. As you read about these magnificent individuals, their organizations, and their 20 million like-minded volunteers, consider how you might also get involved.

What are you going to do with the information within these profiles? *It is your life and your choice.* Pass on the power of these stories of goodness that surround us to friends and family. You have no idea what fervor you may spark or how many lives your spark may reach. Find your own

passion. Start, build, or join any of the organizations that touch your heart. Like these passionaries and their ripples, you too hold the power to change our world in the palm of your hands.

*“I am only one, but I am one. I can’t do everything, but I can do something. The something I ought to do, I can do. And by the grace of God, I will.”*

—Edward Everett Hale

## Acknowledgments ~

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I'D LIKE TO THANK the many people who were such a big part of my life during the creation of this book. First to the 35 passionaries and their organizations' volunteers profiled herein: Your incredible visions have inspired me and will always remain in my heart. Your commitment is a legacy to the world and a blessing to us all.

My immense gratitude is also given to amazing personal heroes of mine who have written the introductions to each part. Tom Sullivan, Bettie Youngs, Art Ulene, and Robert Schuller—each of you continues to make indelible, irreversible marks on the world with your presence, passion, and positive action.

I am especially grateful for the “Earth Angels” I’m so fortunate to have in my life who have been there for me in oh-so-many ways: First to my family: Denny, Erin, Douglas, Kersten, and David; and then to friends who have supported this passionary movement: Matt, Barbara, Ron, Mary, Katherine, Bettie, Chris, Paula, Shelby, Mickey, Ellen, Arlene, Alexia, Tom, Linda, Phil, Gary, Lorraine, and Jack. A most heartfelt thanks to my editor, Amy, whose love and “eyes” gave wings to my creativity. And of course, there are countless others. You know who you are!

Thank you so much Templeton Foundation Press, my publisher, especially Laura Barrett and Joanna Hill for sharing the vision and helping me grow. And bless you, Jack Templeton, for the wonderful accomplishments you have bestowed on America, including your complete support for this heart-filled project.

Finally, this book is dedicated to my Lord and God, with all my love and thanks for your help and gentle nudging. You’ve bequeathed us with a world of possibilities and have touched the heart of many passionaries, as well as their millions of volunteers. Thank you for giving us a country that is free, where giving forward is both our legacy and our promise. May you continue to bless and watch over America.



PASSIONARIES™



## Introduction

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*“America is great because she is good. When America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”* — attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville

**J**UST HOW GREAT and how good are the American people? Check out these facts and you will find America is filled with people of vast generosity and magnificent giving. The waves and ripples from unprecedented donations circle the globe from sea to shining sea—and way beyond all of our borders.

### GIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

“It’s wonderful . . . it’s marvelous,” as Cole Porter once crooned. The scope of our “giving forward” with both time and money is amazingly more than you’d ever imagine. The numbers and statistics on giving in the United States are in the billions every year, both in time and in resources. Most of us gloss over the magnitude of how much a *billion* really is or confuse the terms *millions* and *billions*. For perspective, think about this: One millionth is the equivalent of 1 second every 11 1/5 weeks; 1 billionth is the equivalent of 1 second every 32 years.

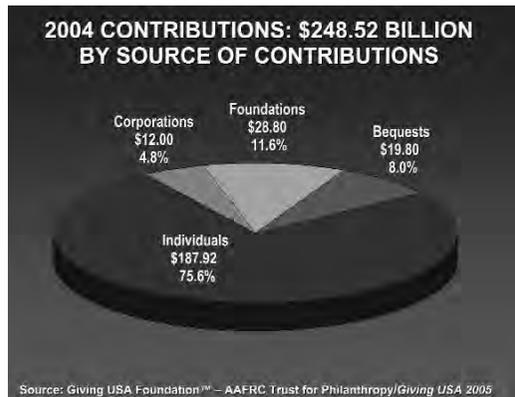
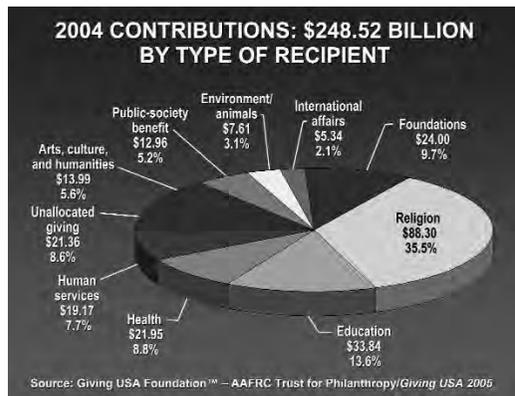
#### *Giving Money*

Charitable donations in the United States alone far surpass the entire economies of many countries, and the amounts are growing off the charts. Americans gave approximately \$248.5 billion in 2004. It was only in 1990 that we first celebrated giving away \$100 billion in a year. But who’s actually doing the giving? Is this just tax write-offs for corporations? Surprisingly, more than 83 percent of this giving comes from individuals and their bequests.<sup>1</sup> After the disaster of September 11, 2001, when Americans seemed to give instinctually from hearts of compas-

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sion, most individual gifts were \$100 or less, and an estimated total of \$2.3 billion<sup>2</sup> was given toward the relief and recovery effort.

America's image as "the greed capital of the world" clearly does not hold water. Consider that in 2003 there were 825,000 charities registered in the United States valued at \$1.76 trillion and 66,000 private foundations controlling \$476 billion<sup>3</sup>—hardly a group of people who are "in it for the money." Above and beyond work and family responsibilities, we take care of those in need, both here and abroad. Putting it in a global perspective, in 2004 Americans privately sent more than \$70 billion to aid people in developing countries, which is more than three times as much as the United States provides in overseas aid. According to a study by the Hudson Institute, that is far more than the aid distributed by any other country and is just \$10 billion less than the nearly \$80 billion donated by all the governments of the world.<sup>4</sup>



*Who* is doing the giving, and *where* are charitable donations being directed? The charts above illustrate an astronomical amount of giving from beautifully average Americans, and that giving is directed toward religious groups that care for others.

### *Giving Time*

Our cynical sides think, “Money’s one thing. But time? Now that’s something people wouldn’t offer quite so easily.” Wrong. It’s estimated that 109 million or 57 percent of American adults volunteered 19.9 billion hours in 1998, each averaging 3.5 hours a week.<sup>5</sup> That means people are volunteering time in astounding amounts. The Points of Light Foundation puts it another way: “The volunteer workforce represents the equivalent of over nine million full-time employees; their combined efforts were worth \$225 billion.”

This giving of time is not done grudgingly, either. Eighty-six percent of volunteers surveyed said they volunteer because they feel compassion for people in need or feel they can fill a need that is not being met.<sup>6</sup> It takes countless volunteers to make our churches, schools, libraries, parks, hospitals, civic groups, museums, and community centers run smoothly. People making a difference through volunteering are all around us. To name just a few:

- As of June 2002, there were 7,662 Rotary Clubs with 399,179 members.
- Since 1961, 165,000 people have served in the Peace Corps in 185 countries.
- Created in 1993, AmeriCorps engages more than two million Americans a year.
- Nearly 1.4 million Lions tackle tough problems in 190 countries.
- Three million U.S. businesspeople belong to Chambers of Commerce.
- The National PTA has 6.5 million members.
- Meals on Wheels volunteers serve one million meals daily to U.S. shut-ins.
- Shriners is an international fraternity of about 500,000 who support their hospitals and give free care to children in need.
- Through Junior League, 193,000 women volunteer within their communities.

And it's not just the grown-ups who understand their responsibility to society. Children and students volunteer as well, making a huge difference. A 1995 survey (the latest statistics available) showed that 59 percent or 13 million American teens volunteered for community service. In 2001, it was reported that 63 percent of all college-age Americans have volunteered at a local school, hospital, or neighborhood center; 38 percent have served as tutors or mentors; and 27 percent have raised funds locally. Our youth are giving their time and energy to improve the lives of others. The power of our youth is awesome.

Millions of Americans are ignoring the negative news heard daily and living the possible. Usually silent, many of these purposeful people seek to serve God by serving others. They speak to the reality of American hearts, and the world depends on these giving individuals who commit to doing the extraordinary.

### *≈ Starfish Make Ripples*

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AS AN OLD MAN WALKED ALONG a deserted beach at sunset, he saw a young girl in the distance. Drawing closer, he noticed the girl kept bending down, picking up something, and throwing it into the water. She did this time and time again.

As the man approached, he was able to see the girl was picking up starfish that had washed up all over the beach. One at a time, she was throwing them back into the water. As she threw each starfish, the splash made ripples in the ocean.

The man asked the girl what she was doing. The girl replied, "I am throwing these starfish back into the ocean so they will live." "But," said the man, "you can't possibly save them all. There are thousands here, and this must be happening on hundreds of beaches along the coast. You can't possibly make a difference." She smiled, bent down, and picked up another starfish. As she threw it back into the sea, she replied: "It made a difference to that one. Would you like to help?" He did. Together they saved twice as many, and the ripples multiplied.<sup>7</sup>

—adapted from Loren Eiseley's *The Star Thrower*