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Philanthropy:  
The Next  
Generation

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# THE NEXT GENERATION OF GIVING

BY ZIBBY RIGHT

IN NEW YORK SOCIETY, non-profits are everywhere. Every Sunday morning in *The New York Times* Styles section, we see photos of dressed-up doyennes supporting causes from local hospitals and museums, to poverty prevention and global warming. Websites like [charitybenefits.com](http://charitybenefits.com) show how a New Yorker could spend every night of the week sipping champagne to support a different non-profit. In the past decade or two, many Junior Committees have sprouted from the "older" boards. The younger generation seems poised to take over when their elders eventually step down.

While it's easy to point to the seamless weaving of philanthropy into society as the main reason that young New Yorkers are aware of and involved with social change, insiders report being inspired by many different influences from family and other role models to education and personal experience. Some are taking the initiative to start non-profits while others revamp traditional ones, leveraging today's technology to connect donors with those in need. Learning what motivates some young people to passionately pursue philanthropy—when others seem comfortable

writing the occasional check—is critical. With so many issues to choose from these days, there's no excuse for apathy.

Kipton Cronkite may be the Director of Global Client Services at Bank of America, but he's also one of the most philanthropically active young New Yorkers. In 2002, Cronkite founded KiptonArt ([kipton.com](http://kipton.com)), a non-profit that helps emerging artists connect with potential collectors both online and through events and exhibitions at venues like the Core Club and Soho House.

On September 11, 2001, Cronkite had just moved to New York and was living a block away from the towers, about to start working on Wall Street. After the tragedy, in which his apartment got destroyed, he decided to take a year off and travel through Europe. Before he left, he was inspired by an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and spent his year abroad visiting as many galleries as possible. When he returned to the city, he started connecting friends with new artists he'd discovered. "I always connect people," Cronkite says. "It's one of the things I do constantly. That's how my brain works."





*This page: Lauren Bush, niece of President George W., was inspired to create the Feed Bag (benefitting the U.N. World Food Program) by her travels in Africa. Opposite page: Lauren's great grandparents Prescott and Dottie celebrate their silver anniversary in 1947.*



# PHILANTHROPY



*Above: Currently a decrepit former elevated railway, Manhattan's High Line will be reopened as a vibrant park (seen in a rendering), thanks to Stephanie Borynack and Friends of the High Line. Below: Borynack with Bronson Van Wyck at the High Line's groundbreaking in 2006.*

Cronkite always had a passion to give back to the local community and decided to formalize his desire to help struggling artists through KiptonArt. Not only that, but Cronkite took on philanthropic leadership roles with the American Friends of the Louvre, the Whitney, the Guggenheim, and the Mount Sinai Medical Center, and joined the American Museum of Natural History, the Frick, the Met, MOMA, and the Neue Galerie.

Cronkite cites Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, Oprah, and Bono as his role models. "They put their money where their mouth is, get behind the scenes to put their initiatives in place, open doors, and create opportunities," he says.

Cronkite fears that some people think writing a check is enough. "It's getting people to put in the extra effort and really reach out to organizations that really makes a difference," he says. "I think it's a duty and a responsibility of everyone to give back to their community," Cronkite says. "When I wake up every day, I don't think about finance. I think about how I can give back to the arts."

Lindsay Nohr Beck never thought she'd end up starting a non-profit. Although she had worked at a homeless shelter in college, Beck followed the path of her entrepreneurial parents and set out to climb the corporate ladder with a position in business develop-

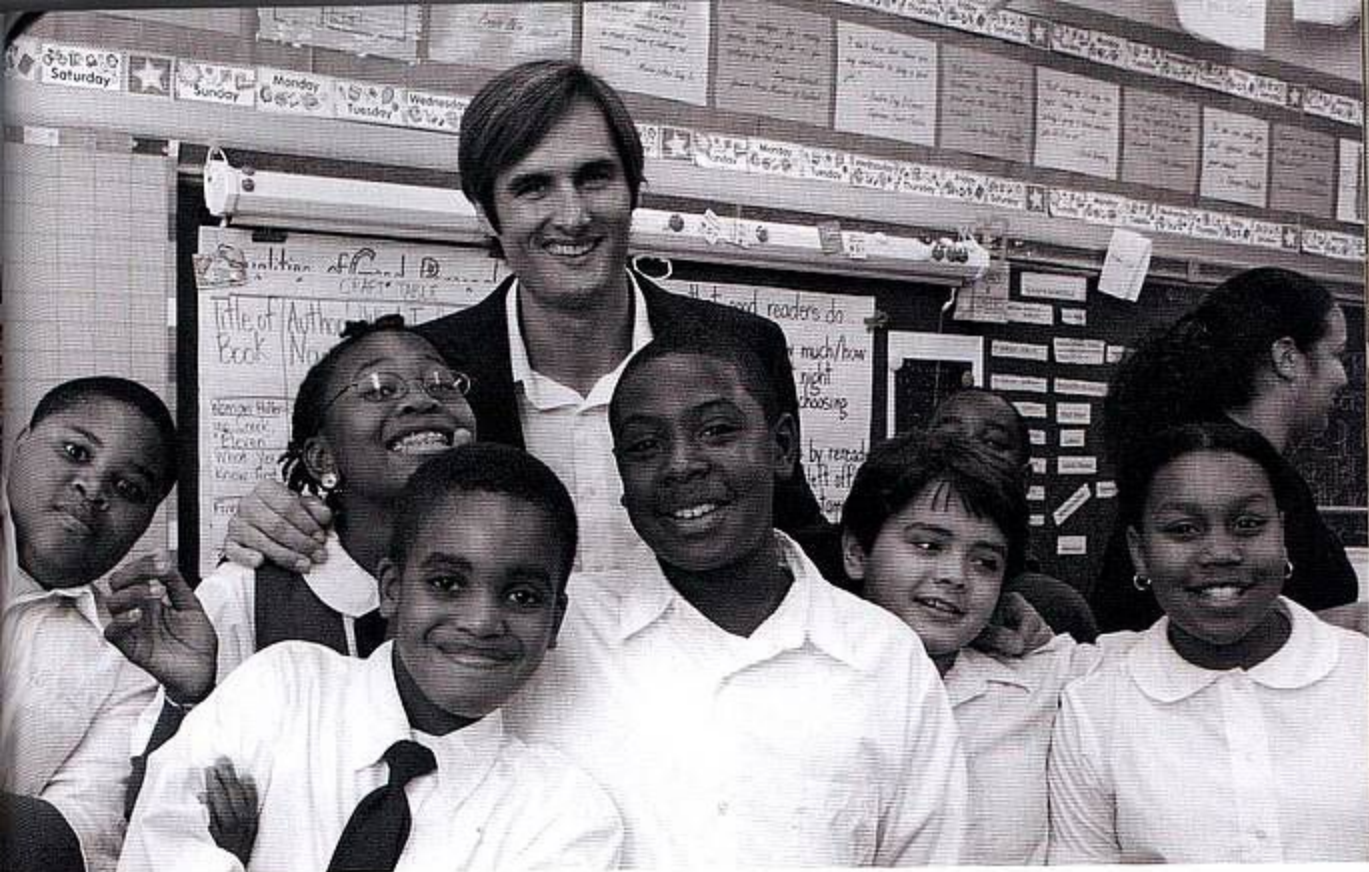
ment at a Silicon Valley startup. However, at age 22, Beck was diagnosed with tongue cancer. She was successfully treated with radiation therapy, but at age 24 the cancer returned and spread to her lymph nodes. She soon found out that the required chemotherapy could lead to infertility, something she was not prepared to live with. Her oncologists gave her no information on how to prevent it, and she was left alone to frantically search for answers. Luckily, she found a clinic that offered egg freezing (oocyte cryopreservation) and went through the rigorous treatment and subsequent injections while undergoing radiation and chemotherapy. She endured enormous physical, emotional, and financial strain. After surviving the ordeal, Beck founded

Fertile Hope ([fertilhope.org](http://fertilhope.org)) in New York to provide education, awareness, financial assistance, and support to patients undergoing treatments associated with infertility.

Beck admits that she was able to transform her personal experience into a successful non-profit due to her business training. She was already in the internet mindset of exploiting "voids in the market" and realized nothing like Fertile Hope existed. But she really started Fertile Hope because, "It felt like I couldn't *not* do it. There was this drive inside me, and I felt like I had this secret that I couldn't keep. I knew that for every day I







**Above:** Former Bronx teacher Charles Best turned his personal experience into a non-profit with Donors Choose, an organization allowing teachers to seek individual funding by posting specific classroom proposals online. **Below:** The great philanthropist John Pierpont Morgan.

didn't start the non-profit, women were becoming infertile and not even knowing it. I couldn't sleep at night."

Beck also knew that a non-profit should be treated like a business. She crafted a business plan, researched the marketplace and decided to move forward, hiring people whose strengths complemented her own. "A lot of people don't take the step of seeing what else is out there," she says. "There are hundreds of cancer organizations out there. Make sure that yours is doing something different so you don't have to go after the same donors and reinvent the wheel." Running non-profits, with their slow pace and need for donors, can be taxing. But the rewards are immeasurable. "When someone calls and thanks us for giving them hope, it makes everything worth it." Beck had her first baby eight months ago, a miracle which only deepened her commitment to the cause.

Lauren Bush, a Princeton grad, model, and niece of President George W. Bush, came up with the Feed Bag idea after her years of experience with the U.N. World Food Program. Her travels through Latin America, Africa, and Asia exposed her to poverty and hunger "that the average American is lucky enough never to encounter," she recalls. "Food is such a basic thing, but it's something that is a constant struggle for most people in the third world. To meet

those people, especially the kids who were born into that life—you just have to do something about it."

Bush designed a tote bag called the Feed Bag ([worldfeedbag.org](http://worldfeedbag.org)), which will be sold on [amazon.com/feedbag](http://amazon.com/feedbag) starting this month. The proceeds from each bag will feed a child in school for one year through the U.N. World Food Program.

"Use your talents and interests," Bush urges. "As young people, we can't necessarily write big checks to charities we love, but we have great ideas, creativity, and a lot of energy. I love design and fashion so the Feed Bag is a product of that. Think about the issues and use what talents and resources you have at your disposal to help."



Charles Best, a native New Yorker, turned his personal experience into a non-profit as well. After graduating from St. Paul's and Yale University, Best taught social studies in the Bronx. He and his fellow teachers would often complain that their students didn't have the resources they needed, like funds for a field trip or art supplies, yet they knew so many people claimed to be interested in helping out the public schools. Best, then living with his parents in the Village, paid a programmer to encode a website that would allow teachers to post specific project proposals which individuals could fund with





*Above, left to right: Henry Ford paved the way for the next generation of giving when he established the Ford Foundation in 1936; Publishing baron William Randolph Hearst. Opposite page: Great-granddaughter of William Randolph and Riverkeeper boardmember Amanda Hearst.*

confidence and transparency. The site spread through word-of-mouth, and teachers flocked to it with their proposals. Best recruited the help of his students, who handwrote notes to 2,000 prospective donors, resulting in the first \$30,000 of funding. The non-profit, DonorsChoose ([donorschoose.org](http://donorschoose.org)), took off and today has raised over \$11 million from donors benefiting more than 500,000 students in 50 states. "We wouldn't exist today without the internet," Best admits. "There are a whole range of things we can do thanks to technology, like creating real-time connections between teachers and donors. If you fund a classroom library, it has to show up as funded immediately on the website."

All the students write thank-you notes to donors with pictures of how they've put their donations into action. Best admits the thrill is contagious. Motivated to give back by a high school wrestling coach, Best looks to eBay founder, Pierre Omidyar, and his "mission-based investment group," Omidyar Network, as inspiration for achieving social change.

Minnie Mortimer also finds giving back personally rewarding. Mortimer, who has been involved with Operation Smile and the American Museum of Natural History, now vice-chairs the International Fine Arts and Antiques Show for Memorial Sloan-Kettering. "I have always felt that if you are able to give back you should," Mortimer says. "These organizations have

done wonders, not only raising capital for their own causes but also raising public awareness and concern. I feel very lucky in my own life and would like to use some of my resources to help those who need it. Contributing is a great feeling."

Two other native New Yorkers, Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone, started WET (Women's Expressive Theatre, [wetweb.org](http://wetweb.org)), a non-profit addressing another social challenge: the stereotypical depiction of women in the media and the dearth of projects written, directed, and produced by women. They resolved to produce plays and projects that challenged the status quo. They teach teenage girls how to look at the media with a critical eye and to take smart risks. Eden, a Chapin graduate, and Pettibone, a Brearley alum, credit their all-girls education with "inspiring us to find what we wanted to do and how to drill down how to do it," Pettibone says. Both their parents taught them: "If you don't like something the way it is, go out and make it happen," says Eden. "It's your responsibility to make a change in the world."

The biggest challenge for Eden and Pettibone is having patience and not letting the apathy of others get them down. "Change can be slow and when you're in it, it's hard to see it happening," says Pettibone. "We're so passionate and committed to making things happen, but the rewards aren't always tangible or measurable," Eden echoes. "This is not about instant





PHILANTHROPY





Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone started WET (Women's Expressive Theatre) to challenge the status quo of cultural depictions of women. Above: The cast of their production of *Big Times*, with guests Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward. Below: Non-profit expert Claire Gaudiani.

gratification. You have to stay committed to really making an impact in your community and know that big ideas are great, but you have to boil them down to a step-by-step program to implement change."

Eden and Pettibone are surprised by how often their peers thank them after seeing one of their productions for just getting them out of the house. Eden says, "People in our generation don't want to buy tickets to plays. They think the theater is too expensive or high-brow, so we have to work hard to get rid of every excuse for them not to come. By just buying one ticket to one play, they're effecting more social change than they probably ever imagined."

According to non-profit expert Claire Gaudiani, Ph.D., a professor at the George H. Heyman, Jr. Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising at NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies and the former President of Connecticut College and Senior Research Scholar at Yale Law School, a main trend in philanthropy is that younger men and

women are no longer merely shadowing their parents' efforts, but are making independent philanthropic choices. "They're earning more money earlier in life," Gaudiani reports, "either by inheriting it or earning it, and they're developing not just career ambition but moral ambition. It's one thing to have ambition to make money on Wall Street, but now when they get there, they say they're also ambitious to solve a problem in society and put their finances to work." Some of the perks of the younger generation doing their own research and choosing their own causes are increased passion, energy, resources (from high school, college, grad school and the office), and time.

Organizations benefit by cultivating their pipeline and infusing their teams with life.

Stephanie Borynack, a Chapin and Groton grad and one of the founding members of Friends of the High Line ([thehighline.org](http://thehighline.org)), an organization dedicated to the preservation and re-use of the High Line in lower Manhattan, says, "When you're younger, so many people want to help you. There are so many doors open that it's easy to get excited







After taking a year off, banker Kipton Cronkite (below) started KiptonArt, a non-profit helping emerging artists connect with potential collectors. He also took on philanthropic roles with cultural institutions including MoMA, the Neue Galerie, the Whitney Museum, and the Louvre (above).

about things." Volunteering can also make you feel more connected to your city and community.

Borynack, who was inspired to give back by her great-aunt, Lucia Chase, founder of the American Ballet Theater and recipient of the Medal of Honor for her work in philanthropy, says, "For me, getting people excited about a project and committed to its mission is what's most rewarding about the work I do for Friends of the High Line, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Groton. Volunteering is more than being asked to join a committee. Today, volunteers want to roll-up their sleeves and get involved in all aspects of contributing to the organization's growth. Lucky for us, it has become a main objective of the younger generation and corporations alike."

Ironically, selecting *how* to give back can be the biggest challenge of all. Amanda Hearst, great-granddaughter of William Randolph Hearst and board member of Riverkeeper ([riverkeeper.com](http://riverkeeper.com)), says, "The motivation is there. We hear about global warming, disease, hunger and other issues

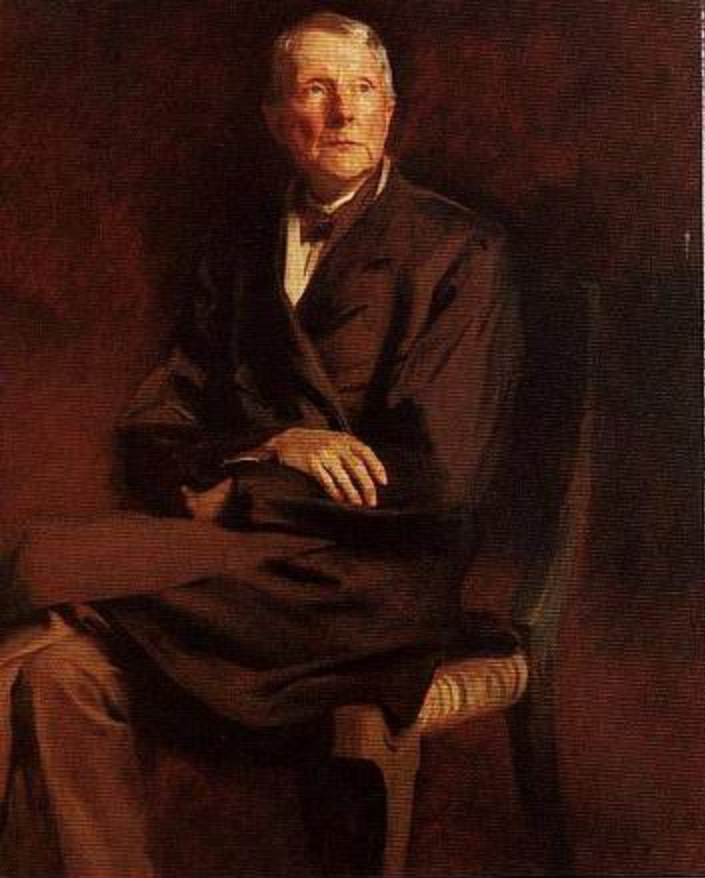
all the time. There are so many challenges and when you really want to help, it can be depressing to think, 'There's so much wrong. What can I do?' Personally, I've realized that I'm not going to change the world by myself, but that I should just pick one thing I'd like to improve and focus on that."

Hearst picked Riverkeeper, "an advocacy group that monitors the Hudson River ecosystem and challenges polluters, using both legal and grassroots campaigns," as her primary focus. Hearst originally got involved through her mother, who joined the board 15 years ago after being enlisted by her good friend, Bobby Kennedy, Jr. Hearst was invited to join the board three years ago due to her strong interest in environmental causes, and quickly founded a Junior Committee. She credits her family's farm in the Hamptons, and growing up with lots of animals as pets, for her passion for nature.

Hearst admits being delighted by how many friends have supported the organization, either by attending her first big benefit, which she threw last October as Junior Committee co-chair, or by joining her on trips







*Above, left to right: Oil billionaire John Paul Getty (in a portrait by John Singer Sargent) gave millions to culture; Society mainstay Babe Paley's descendants include niece Minnie Mortimer (opposite page), who vice-chairs the International Fine Arts and Antiques Show for Memorial Sloan-Kettering.*

down the Hudson River. Hearst likes to feel that she's "doing something and not just putting my name on an invitation." Hearst, who cites Oprah Winfrey as a role model, says, "My friends and family and everyone around me give back. It was never anything that I questioned." Hearst suggests being proactive about organizations of interest, even if that means contacting the development office after a benefit when the cause piques your interest. Hearst, along with two other soon-to-be-named notables, is also getting involved in a nascent for-profit organization called Legacy, run by Ralph Destino (Chairman Emeritus of Cartier), Ralph Destino, Jr., and Christine Schott. Each girl, a "legacy" in her own right, will design, produce, market, and sell products from jewelry to organic clothing and cosmetics, and then donate the after-tax profits to Riverkeeper and other charities of their choice.

Cronkite compares finding the right non-profit to dating. "If you get involved and find there's no synergy, try getting involved with multiple groups to find the one that's right for you. Sometimes you'll get along great, but sometimes they're just not the one for you."

Gaudiani advises taking a deeper look inside. "Look around the world and decide what you would like your grandchildren to only know about from reading history books, but never see in the world around them and that's what you should attack with your intelligence, education, funding, and peer group,"

she says. Gaudiani suggests traveling to developing countries and less developed parts of the U.S. to understand what it "looks, smells, and tastes like when people don't have control of their well-being." Talk to someone you care about and ask them to interview you about your passions. Do research. And pursue the causes you care about.

Occasionally, organizations don't get prospective volunteers involved quickly enough due to lack of staffing resources. Beck, with her lean staff of five, says she constantly hears people complain about this vis-a-vis other organizations. "Friends will offer to help tutor a child, but then it takes months for the organization to get back to them, so they get frustrated," she says. "I tell them to keep at it or look for smaller organizations where you can come in any day and even just lick envelopes." Having a sense of personal passion and determination is key. "We need people to transform the world, not just adjust it slightly," Gaudiani says. "People will tell you it's impossible. You have to *make* it possible. Rockefeller stepped up and invested in tremendous long shots, but his investments gave us penicillin and many antibiotics we use today. Don't take no for an answer."

Finally, Eden adds, "Don't be afraid to fail. The surest way to fail is to worry about it. Just do one small thing. It's our job as a universe to put the penny in the pail. If it's that simple, why aren't we all doing it?" ♦



PHILANTHROPY

