



BY ANNA CARLSON, JULIE CHERNOFF, MINDY FAUNTLEROY,
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We founded Make It Better to connect and help our audience amplify their philanthropic efforts. We found this leads to more connections and ideas, a heightened feeling of community, more money raised by good people, and better business for everyone. It's a virtuous circle.

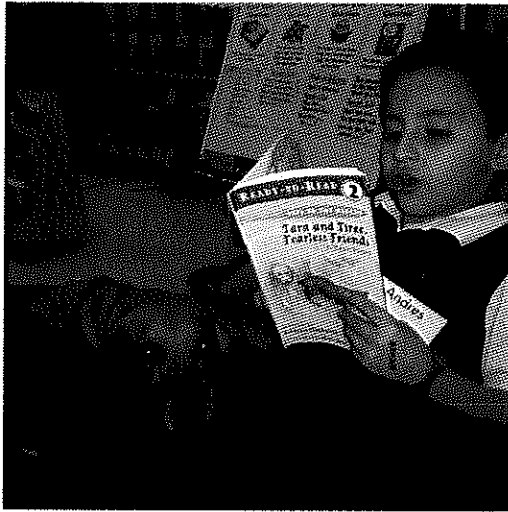
To amplify this feeling of good will, we established our annual Philanthropy Awards. An impressive group of judges—thoughtful, strategic philanthropists all—choose winners from applications submitted online.

Traditionally, winners are notified on Nov. 15, National Philanthropy Day (this past year, it fell on a Saturday, so

we opted for Nov. 14 instead), with a surprise visit to each nonprofit. Their prizes include videos and articles that bring to life their missions and demonstrate that donated dollars are well spent.

Our sincerest congratulations to the inspirational and innovative winners, and to the dedicated employees and volunteers who keep these nonprofits going strong.

Stay tuned for a “Save the Date” for our gala 2014 Philanthropy Awards celebration to be held in April. To see the winning videos and more in-depth information on each organization, as well as a video of our Philanthropy Awards delivery, please visit makeitbetter.net/philanthropyawards.



SIT'STAYREAD LOCAL EDUCATION

MISSION: SitStayRead seeks to promote the love of learning and improve literacy proficiency for at-risk children in first through fourth grades. They address reading fluency in a fun way by incorporating reading assistance dogs into the program.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Their innovative approach to reading fluency has shown remarkable results. Classrooms enhanced by SitStayRead's volunteers—canine as well as human—have shown significant improvement on assessment tests. According to SSR's 2014 Annual Report, children in the program are making 47.8 percent greater fluency gains than peers who aren't participating. Services are provided gratis to public schools and community centers that focus on the needs of low-income Chicago families. The 192 human volunteers are special, too, and served over 2,000 students in 76 classrooms in 2014. New programs for 2015 will address reading comprehension and written expression, and incorporate "our two hallmark traits: dogs and fun!" - *Julie Chernoff*



SPONSORED BY NANCY SEARLE

The Searle Funds focus their efforts on biomedical research, education, community renewal and conservation. Projects funded by the Searle Funds reflect the intent of the donor, John G. Searle and the values of the family. Ms. Searle continues to be committed to improving educational outcomes in Chicago and is currently working to raise an additional \$60 million for charter schools.

SOLIDARITY BRIDGE SOCIAL JUSTICE

MISSION: The mission of Solidarity Bridge is to train and equip the medical communities in Bolivia and Paraguay to empower them to serve the most needy. This is achieved through domestic and international partnerships, metaphorically bridging the distance between North and South America.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Mission teams long ago discovered the connection between poverty and ill health in Bolivia. So Solidarity Bridge, which was formed in 1999, partners not only with hospitals and doctors—many of who give freely and generously of their skills and resources—in South America's poorest countries, Bolivia and Paraguay, but also with U.S. foundations and corporate partners to help make this good work possible through sponsorships, in-kind donations and monetary contributions. Solidarity Bridge also partners with Doctors Without Borders to combat the transmission of Chagas disease in Bolivia. -*Julie Chernoff*



OUR ACADEMY OF JUDGES INCLUDES:

Make It Better Judges: Mindy Fauntleroy, Mauro Floherty, Susan B. Noyes, Sandy Tsuchido; *Former Philanthropy Award Winners:* Sherry Arthur, Lydia Home Assoc., Brian Florian, Bonnie's Book Bank; Seth Green, YOU Evanston; Cherie Hrusovsky, GLASA, Dawn Kobot, Girls in the Game; Kim Michelson, Beyond Sports Foundation; Jamie O'Malley, Midwest Care Center; Katie Taylor, Northwestern Settlement, Neli Vazquez-Rovland, A Safe Haven; Seth Weinberger, Innovations for Learning; *Civic Leaders:* Heather Blackwell, Global Trotters Fund, Matt Doubleday, Wintrust, Liam Krehbiel, A Better Chicago; Sandra Miller, RIC, Michael Rosengarden, Autohaus/Mercedes Benz, Tom Salatino, Wolgreens; Nancy Searle, philanthropist

Additional underwriting provided by *The Enelow Fund* (theenelowfund.org)

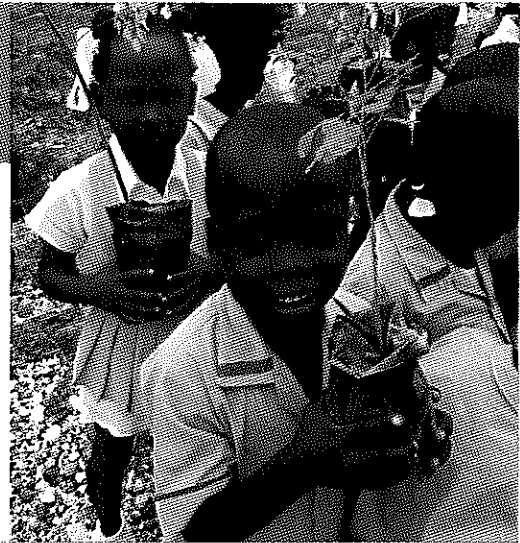
PHOTOS COURTESY OF EACH ORGANIZATION

TREES THAT FEED FOUNDATION

ENVIRONMENT

MISSION: The Trees That Feed Foundation has three goals: to plant trees to feed people in developing countries, create jobs and protect the environment.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Their efforts have made a lasting impact on countries around the world. A Jamaican farmer recently called founder **Mary McLaughlin** to tell her, "You've given me trees. These trees are about to bear fruit. And this will change my life." McLaughlin founded Trees That Feed knowing firsthand the benefits of food-producing trees. Having often eaten breadfruit while growing up in Jamaica, McLaughlin realized that planting more food-producing trees would not only combat the world's hunger problem but would also help the environment. In five years, Trees That Feed has planted more than 60,000 trees. Currently, the foundation is working on reforestation in Haiti and planting trees at every school in Jamaica, among other projects. — *Anna Carlson*



CRUSHERS CLUB

ATHLETICS

MISSION: To be the strongest alternative to gangs. They arm young people with the support and skills they need to restore their lives and improve their neighborhood. Crushers Club is rooted in four ideals—respect, discipline, ownership, and love—that give members a fighting chance.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: **Sally Hazelwood** moved her family to Englewood and asked youth which activity would motivate them to try harder in school and keep them away from gangs. Their answer: boxing. Hazelwood singlehandedly obtained a funding grant, rented 12,000 square feet in a local church, and gained permission from CPS to take students out of school 20 minutes early to join her club, where students learn to box and develop leadership skills. Crushers Club has served over 200 youths and offers academic help and mentorship to find jobs outside of Englewood. Schools report improved academics and attitudes for 90 percent of the Crusher Club participants, and all of the youth report that they feel happier and safer. — *Susan B. Noyes*

SKIN OF STEEL

MOST IMPROVED FUNDRAISING

MISSION: To fund the first national, collaborative Melanoma Tissue Bank, which will give researchers across the country access to the fresh-frozen tissues they need to enhance melanoma treatment and eventually find a cure.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: This innovative team led by melanoma survivor **Susan Steel** works tirelessly to promote sun safety as well as inspire volunteers to raise funds and awareness for local research and comprehensive treatment of melanoma—specifically raising funds for a Melanoma Tissue Bank to be located in Chicago. Melanoma researchers don't have the fresh-frozen, primary tissue they need to make the type of significant progress seen in breast and prostate cancer research. Skin of Steel intends to make this happen. Skin of Steel stands out for their ability to raise awareness and fundraise collaboratively within the community. They have truly made a difference by developing and implementing innovative and creative fundraising methods as well as educating school-aged children. — *Mindy Tauntenoy*





REFUGEEONE

HUMANITARIAN

MISSION: RefugeeOne is a resettlement agency that provides assistance to refugees in the Chicago area. Refugees who want to become independent in their new communities can get help learning English, finding employment, obtaining medical care and applying for U.S. citizenship.

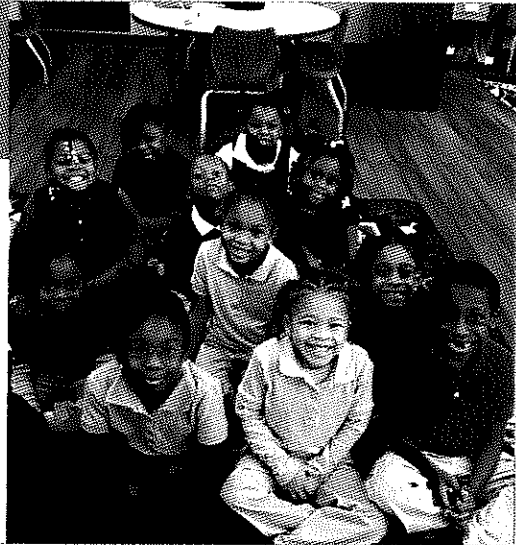
EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Over the past 30 years, RefugeeOne has helped tens of thousands of refugees build new lives after fleeing Cambodia, Rwanda and other countries. They also helped displaced families after Hurricane Katrina. Currently, the majority of the people RefugeeOne is helping to settle in the U.S. are Iraqis who helped the U.S. militia operations; persecuted Christian Iraqis; Burmese who have escaped government violence and Bhutanese who have fled ethnic cleansing. In 2013, fundraising proceeds from RefugeeOne's annual gala increased by 41 percent. The group provided backpacks and school supplies to 200 children, winter coats to more than 600 refugees and helped collect cash and household items for 15 families. — *Meghan Strett*

PHALEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

NATIONAL EDUCATION

MISSION: To ensure that students master key academic skills and demonstrate strong character exhibited by: honesty, service to others, superior work ethic and a strong vision for their futures.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Phalen Leadership Academy (PLA) is a dream come true for parents in underserved urban Indianapolis. Founded in 2012, this nonselective charter school partners closely with parents to provide an outstanding, differentiated grade school education for a student population that is largely eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. The curriculum includes art, music, physical fitness and significant use of technology. Overall student math proficiency has already increased from 14 percent to 84 percent. Reading scores are equally impressive. — *Susan B. Noyes*

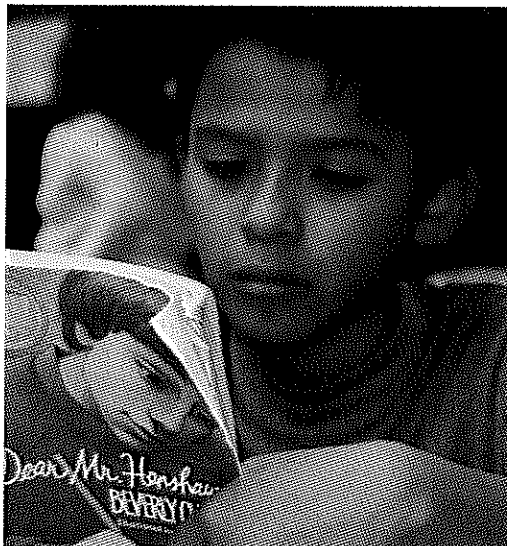


HORIZONS FOR YOUTH

AUDIENCE CHOICE

MISSION: Horizons for Youth commits to helping children across all academic abilities, socioeconomic statuses and neighborhoods recognize and achieve his or her full potential. They believe with the proper support every child can graduate high school and college—and successfully enter the workforce.

EXEMPLARY BECAUSE: Horizons For Youth tracks student performance closely through an individualized approach to ensure that each student's unique needs are met. The organization carries out its mission by ensuring students attend quality schools, matching them with a mentor and tutor and providing students with counseling services. The organization meets with students in first grade and remains with them through their college placement. Executive Director **Audrey George** says the organization holds the bar very high and the students rise to meet their expectations. In the 24 years that the organization has been in existence, 99 percent of their students have graduated from high school and 80 percent of them have gone on to attend college. — *Miruna Flaherty*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EACH ORGANIZATION



PHILANTHROPY AWARDS

BY THE NUMBERS

SITSTAYREAD

- » **2,021** children served in **76** classrooms, visited by **192** volunteers and **60** dogs
- » **18,784** books read in program last year
- » Children in the program make **47.8%** greater fluency gains than their non-participating peers

SKIN OF STEEL

- » One person dies of melanoma every **57** minutes
- » Only **6** FDA-approved therapies for metastatic melanoma exist
- » The Tissue Bank will gather over **500** specimens, yielding **50,000** assays for research
- » Fundraising goal of **\$3.5 million** will cover **3 years** of Tissue Bank start up and maintenance

SOLIDARITY BRIDGE

- » In 2014, **1457** patients served
- » **70** Missioners on **6** trips
- » Celebrating **15** years of Solidarity
- » **\$7,540,453** donated in medical supplies
- » **441** Surgeries performed

TREES THAT FEED FOUNDATION

- » **62,000** trees distributed
- » **50** U.S. Volunteers
- » **1200** schools partnered with; **600** schools supplied thus far
- » **50** partnering organizations
- » Cost for one tree: **\$15**
- » **\$200** will provide **400** breadfruit meals to a school in Haiti

REFUGEE ONE

- » In 2014, assisted **447** refugee arrivals from **43** countries
- » Helped **541** people become U.S. Citizens
- » Taught English to **280** people
- » Found jobs for **198** refugees
- » Engaged more than **400** volunteers
- » **89%** of funds raised go toward program services
- » **\$1000** provides furnishings for a family apartment
- » **\$250** buys harvesting

HORIZONS FOR YOUTH

- » Over the **25 years** of the program, **99%** of students graduate from high school; **80%** go on to college
- » **200** students currently served
- » **350** volunteers involved
- » Over **\$127,851** awarded in grants and scholarships to the class of 2014

CRUSHERS CLUB

- » **200** young men served with **90%** improved academic performance; **1** Golden Glove winner
- » **85%** of participants from the juvenile justice system did not reoffend
- » Annual cost is **\$3500** per person, as opposed to **\$27,500** per person to incarcerate

PHALEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMIES

- » **8-hour** school day (vs. standard 6.5)
- » **200-day** academic year (vs. 180)
- » currently serving **300** students grades K-3
- » **93%** of students eligible for free or reduced lunch
- » Math proficiency increased from **14%** to **84%**
- » Reading proficiency increased from **33%** to **90%**