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The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the largest workplace giving campaign in the world. During the past 55 years, federal employees have raised more than \$8 billion through the CFC to help those in need in our neighborhoods, across the country, and around the world. That success would not have been possible without your generosity, willingness to care for others, and dedication to public service.

Last year, you and your co-workers in the National Capital Area pledged more than \$46 million to thousands of charities through the CFC. Through this giving, we are able to have a direct and positive impact on the lives of millions of people who need our help. During this campaign season, I am certain that we will again unite as

a federal workforce to make a difference for the charities who take part in the CFC.

This year's theme encourages us all to Show Some Love by getting involved in the campaign and making a pledge to one or more of the many worthy charities who rely on these donations throughout the year. As you plan your gift, I encourage each of you to spend a moment reflecting on the causes that inspire you. Whether you are moved to support medical research or services for men and women in the military, fighting poverty or improving education, the CFC includes charities that support those passions.

With many ways to give and many charities to support, I hope that you will consider a contribution through the CFC and Show Some Love to the causes that mean the most to you in this year's campaign.

Thank you,

Vincent N. Micone, III  
Chairperson

Local Federal Coordinating Committee

**About this section:** This advertising special section was prepared by the Advertising Custom Content department of *The Washington Post* by freelance writer Margaret Rankin, Production Coordinator Jamie Richardson and Art Director Jill Madsen and did not involve *The Washington Post* news or editorial departments. For more information, please contact Account Managers Cheryl Wood, at 202-815-6280, and Melissa Abell at 202-334-7024. Cover photos courtesy of CFCNCA.

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CFC#11325



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# Mount Pleasant church helps students from 8 to 90.

Last summer Mary Ann Brooking, 74, learned how to use her smart phone along with 70 other seniors at an IT workshop put on at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church.

“It was excellent, everyone there was ready to learn something new about what we have in our hands and what we can do with it,” she says. “It’s really exciting to see people in their 70s and 80s get that worked up about something!”

Mary Ann admits she had been using her smart phone in the same way she used her landline, but there were people there in much worse shoes than her own.

“One woman didn’t know how to turn on her phone, and another had a flip phone and didn’t understand why it wouldn’t do all of the things that iPhones and Androids do,” she says.

The workshop was offered through the Metropolitan Police Department as part of community outreach activities, Mary Ann says, and it almost took police muscle to get the seniors to go home.

“We got there at 10 and it was supposed to last until 1, but we wouldn’t leave,” she recalls. “Finally we did leave, but first they promised to come back and teach us about internet security.”

Today, Mary Ann accesses whatever she needs from her phone, and

...THE MPBEDC SUMMER CAMP HELPS KIDS DEVELOP CAREER SKILLS THEY CAN USE THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES. THIS SUMMER THEY LEARNED THE CODING THAT ENABLED THEM TO CREATE THEIR OWN VIDEO GAMES.

has even stopped carrying her bible to church.

“I can pull it up on my phone now and I say, hey, hallelujah,” she says. “I’m emailing and texting and I’m doing a little bit of everything now. I can’t wait until they get the next class up and running because I’m going to be the first one down there to sign up for it!”

## Extra Help for College Entrance Examinations

Tiffany Hicks, 17, has a plan. She wants to score at least 1300 on her SAT so she can get into her school of choice, Nova Southeastern in Davie, Fl., and when the MPBEDC gave her a chance to improve her test-taking skills with one-on-one support, she took it.

“It was a free program at my church and I didn’t want to go [into the tests] blind,” she says. “It gave me a lot of help in showing me what I’m actually going to be seeing.”

The church puts on a five-month course to help kids like Tiffany improve their performance in the subjects that are hardest for them. Tiffany’s is math, but with the help of course teacher Shuyinthia Hembry, Tiffany says she’s feeling much more confident.

“Miss Shuy is really good at math, and the way she explains things makes it so that everyone can understand,” she says. “Everyone gets the attention and help they need.”

There are only six kids in the course this year, and Tiffany knows them all.

“I’m very comfortable with asking questions and being with everyone that’s there,” she says, “Miss Shuy is always there for me. I can ask her anything.”

Shuyinthia, owner of Butterfly Works test preparation service, has been teaching this SAT/ACT prep course for five years. It focuses not only on test taking skills, but on college readiness, interviewing,



MPBEDC summer camp kids attend a Mad Science series on “Things That Go Boom” at the Shaw Library.

financial aid, applications and essay writing.

The MPBEDC, she says, funds everything needed for the course except for the class workbook, and even those are sometimes donated by the congregation. Course enrollment has varied over the years from this year’s six students to a previous class of 22. The course is open to the public.

“When we open it up to the public, we get a really good outpouring of information,” she says.

## Coding for Kids

Dominique McBride volunteers with the IT ministry at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, and last summer he served as assistant camp director for the church’s summer camp. But there are no campfires or roasted marshmallows to be seen.

Instead, the MPBEDC summer camp helps kids develop career skills they can use throughout their lives. This summer they learned the coding that enabled them to create their own video games.

“They seemed to be extremely engaged in the whole process,” Dominique says of the course, which enrolled 14 kids between 8 and 12 and was offered twice a week from June through August. “Most of them own video games themselves, and are huge fans, so being on the developer side and designing their own games was really fascinating.”

Dominique says he hopes he’ll be able to be involved with the camp again in the coming summer.

“It gives the community a chance to really expand their horizons in terms of the different career paths they can take, I’m sure none of them thought they could design, develop and produce their own video game,” he says.

“It’s an opportunity for them to really grow and realize what’s out there for them to take part in.” •

**Story by Margaret Rankin, mpbedc.com, CFC# 45777.**



Exploring artifacts at the National Museum of Natural History.





# Tapping into creativity to save the environment

The environment—we know it needs help, but images of sea animals struggling in oil spills or forest fires in California can make us turn away rather than tune in. That, says Environmental Education Fund (EEF) President Lindsey Kayman, is because we don't know how we can help.

"I wanted to find a way that any ordinary person could do something important - help increase awareness about a critical issue by showing an informative, inspiring film to his or her community," says Kayman. "Films in the EEF collection can help us shift from fear and denial to inspiration and action."

EEF, based in Trenton, NJ, promotes eco-literacy and stewardship of the environment by encouraging and helping individuals, communities, schools, religious and other organizations plan and hold engaging programs using film and multimedia events. Express interest in showing a film on any particular environmental issue, and the EEF

will research and find the best options for you. EEF obtains rights to screen films and makes arrangements with filmmakers and thought leaders to provide Q&A speakers.

"This supports the critical work being done by independent filmmakers, whose fantastic films are not seen by nearly enough people," Kayman says. "EEF focuses on films that tell a story creatively and with impact and facts."

"Bag It", for example, is a documentary directed by Suzan Beraza about how plastic waste is causing a range of harms in our oceans, and many communities reduced plastic waste after screening it. "Taking Root: the Vision of Wangari Maathai" is another EEF favorite, chronicling a Kenyan woman's campaign to plant trees in a country where most had been cut down.

For those who don't have a burning passion, sometimes small actions can be the tipping point in taking a stand for the environment, Kayman says.



Filmmaker Emily Driscoll's environmentally focused documentaries are available for public showings through EEF.

PHOTO COURTESY JAMES KARL FISCHER

"A person requesting that his or her school, local library or other organization show a film or hold a festival is an important step in developing leadership. It can be a life-changing event that puts people on a road to getting involved. Even just posting film fliers can make people feel involved."

EEF makes it easy for organizations to hold high-impact events at extremely

affordable rates. Their EcoCinema Cafe routinely attracts 3,000 attendees at 3-day campus events, showing films on a variety of topics all day in places where students congregate and eat. For information on holding an event in your community, visit [environmentaleducationfund.org](http://environmentaleducationfund.org).

**Story by Margaret Rankin**  
[environmentaleducationfund.org](http://environmentaleducationfund.org),  
CFC# 23500.





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# Wycliffe Bible Translators: Meet Humbelina



5

Humbelina sat, puzzled, with a pile of pencils.



KATE KUYKENDALL, WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

*Humbelina never anticipated a life in ministry, but now she and her team teach students literacy skills in classes, on the radio and through one-on-one lessons.*

Humbelina returned to her community devastated. She and other women began praying, asking God what they could do about this great need for literacy. God answered Humbelina repeatedly, "You will be useful! I can use you."

Humbelina never anticipated a life in

ministry. When she was young her parents wanted nothing to do with the church. She went to school to learn to be a seamstress and planned to make a living using her sewing skills.

It wasn't until she met her husband, a Quechua Bible translator, that she began to consider God's mission in the world. Now God was promising to make her part of that mission.

With her new passion for literacy, Humbelina and her team created Huallaga Quechua primers for pre-literacy and basic literacy needs. Once participants complete both primers, their reading level is high enough to do the "Women of the Bible" study. The literacy team teaches students in classes, on the radio and through one-on-one lessons.

Humbelina remembers one student in particular, a woman named Leonarda. "She came to the training, but she always seemed very hard and cold," Humbelina

said. One day after the workshop, Humbelina saw Leonarda sitting and reading with some older friends.

When she saw Humbelina, she jumped up with joy on her face and introduced Humbelina to her friends as "the sister who taught me to read."

"Our desire is to keep bringing the Word of God in the mother tongue so people can understand it," she said. "When we share it with women, they don't keep it to themselves. They share it with their children; they share it with other women. The Word of God in the mother tongue is what has an impact in people's hearts, and it's what changes people's lives."

Wycliffe Bible Translators is grateful for all who take part in supporting translation and Scripture use projects like this one, including those who give through the Combined Federal Campaign. •

**Story by Katie Kuykendall, [wycliffe.org](http://wycliffe.org), CFC# 23500.**

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# Covenant House Washington sends 21 homeless young people to college

Covenant House Washington (CHW) reached new heights in fall 2016 when it sent 21 homeless, disconnected and exploited young people to college and post-secondary education programs in the D.C. area, as well as across the country.

**IN 2015 COVENANT HOUSE WASHINGTON SERVED OVER 62,000 MEALS, PROVIDED SAFE HOUSING FOR 225 YOUTH, PLACED YOUTH IN 156 JOBS, AND ENROLLED 21 HOMELESS AND DISCONNECTED YOUTH IN COLLEGE.**

CHW's President and CEO, Dr. Madye Henson, is a huge advocate of education. She embraced this new height and aims to exceed it in 2017. In 2015, CHW served over 62,000 meals, provided safe housing for 225 youth, placed youth in 156 jobs, and enrolled 21

homeless and disconnected youth in college.

CHW is one of the region's leading nonprofits working to transform the lives of homeless, disconnected, and exploited youth. It opened its doors at 2001 Mississippi Avenue, SE in 1995 as an affiliate of Covenant House International, and since then has welcomed more than 50,000 young people who avail themselves of its wrap-around services.

"We provide support to our youth at every angle, which goes far beyond just a place to sleep," Dr. Henson says.

CHW's services include "Safe Haven" - a program offering short-term, emergency housing to homeless youth aged 18 to 24 and "Rights of Passage" - transitional living and supportive housing apartments for youth aged 18 to 24. Its "Career Pathways" program provides help with workforce development, training and job placement, as well as education classes for adult basic education and GED completion. Then its "Street &



*Covenant House Washington youth, Vashaun, 18, obtained his GED through CHW's Career Pathways program, and will be attending Prince George's Community College in the Spring of 2017.*

Community Outreach" program provides youth on the street with food, hygiene supplies and information about community programs that serve their needs.

CHW also operates a child development center for children up to 36 months, providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating learning environment in which CHW's parenting young people can leave their infants and toddlers while pursuing family-sustaining jobs, education and training.

The solutions CHW creates for young people go beyond short-term housing and support. Its holistic approach gives young people the opportunity to become self-sustaining adults and active members in our communities.

With your support we can end homelessness among youth in the D.C. area - let's transform the lives of homeless and disconnected youth! •

**Story by Kyle Whitehead**  
**covenanthouseDC.org, CFC #65964.**

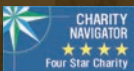
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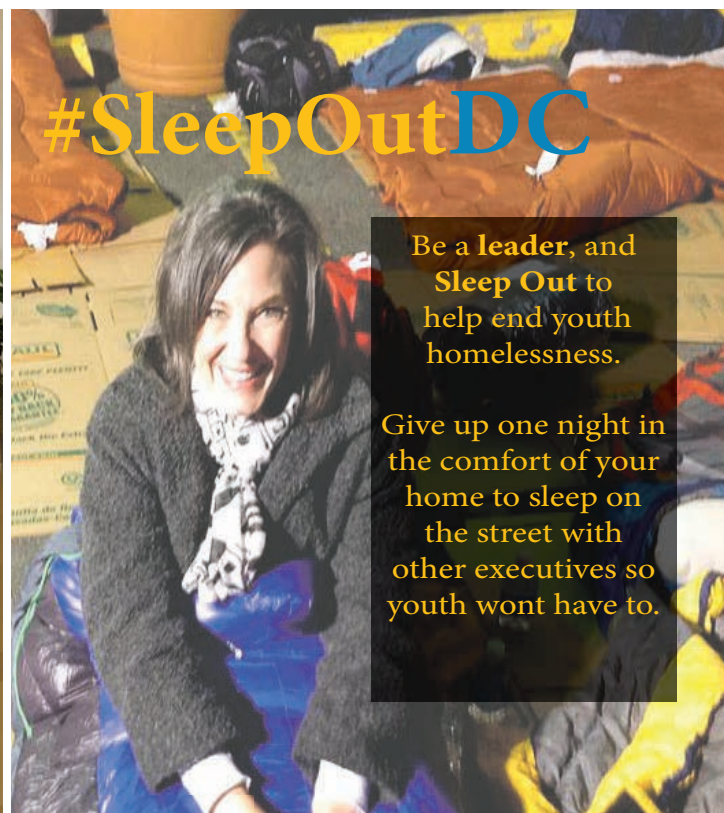
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# Let girls learn

When girls are educated, all of society benefits. Girls who attend school tend to delay marriage and pregnancy, are less vulnerable to disease and are more likely to increase their earning power for life.

However, an estimated 32 million adolescent girls are not in school. These girls require a tailored, proven academic program to catch up with their peers, build their confidence and impart the skills they need to succeed. CARE brings this kind of program to countries where that need is greatest.

In 1999, CARE co-founded a residential school called Udaan, meaning “to soar,” in India’s Uttar Pradesh state. There, girls who never went to school soar through five grade levels in less than a year. Since CARE started Udaan, 98 percent of enrolled girls passed their fifth grade exams and 90 percent enrolled in the formal school system.

Girls like 12-year-old Laxmi in rural India grow up believing they don’t belong in school. They do housework and look after

“IF I DIDN'T GO TO UDAAN, I WOULD HAVE BEEN CLEANING HOUSES WITH MY MOM AND SOON MARRIED OFF. BEING AT UDAAN ALLOWED ME TO DREAM ABOUT MY FUTURE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

– LAXMI

their younger siblings until they marry at about the age of 14. Laxmi, the oldest of five, cared for her brothers and sisters, feeling trapped, while her mother cleaned houses and her father struggled to find seasonal farm work. Laxmi broke tradition when she first set foot in an Udaan classroom, becoming the only member in her immediate family to go to school. She graduated from Udaan and went on to secondary school.

“If I didn’t go to Udaan, I would have been cleaning houses with my mom and



PHOTO COURTESY ALLEN CLINTON / CARE

soon married off,” Laxmi says. “Being at Udaan allowed me to dream about my future for the first time.” Laxmi’s dream is to become a teacher.

CARE has partnered with First Lady Michelle Obama through the Let Girls Learn initiative to ensure more girls get the education they deserve. As a Let Girls

Learn partner, CARE aims to reach 3 million adolescent girls in seven countries through their Udaan Second Chances academic program, which will replicate and scale up the successful project developed in India to reach girls in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan and Somalia. •

**Story by CARE, [care.org](http://care.org), CFC#11678.**

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# Changing Maasai villages in Kenya—one girl at a time

Nancy Sopilal Lekuka was the 10-year-old daughter of a poor Maasai maize farmer in 2003 when the Maasai Girls' Education Fund (MGEF) came to her village and changed her life forever.

"They were going about the regions selecting girls from needy backgrounds that could not be educated by their parents," says Nancy, now 22. "I come from a family of eight siblings – four boys and four girls.

There was nothing to support us, and usually in those circumstances the parents say, well, if we can't educate them, let's marry them off."

The fate of the Maasai child bride is a common one in Kenya. A girl usually is circumcised between the ages of 11 and 13 and then married off to a man of her

father's choosing in exchange for cattle and cash. She joins her husband's other wives, and will have as many children as possible.

Once married, the Maasai woman works much harder than her husband. In addition to caring for the children, she builds and maintains the mud-hut home, tends the cattle, cooks, and collects water and firewood. She milks the cows and goats, butchers livestock and tans hides. She also weaves, does the beadwork for traditional Maasai body ornaments and washes the clothes. Her days typically last from dawn until midnight, and her life expectancy is 45 years.

One of Nancy's own sisters was married off at 14, but Nancy's life will be very different, thanks to MGEF. During that 2003 visit, the DC-based nonprofit got



▲ In 1999, Barbara Lee Shaw met Ntanim Tarayia, pictured above caring for one of her siblings. Barbara asked Ntanim's parents if she could sponsor Ntanim's education. A year later Barbara founded MGEF as an NGO.

► MGEF founder Barbara Lee Shaw with student.



PHOTOS COURTESY MGEF

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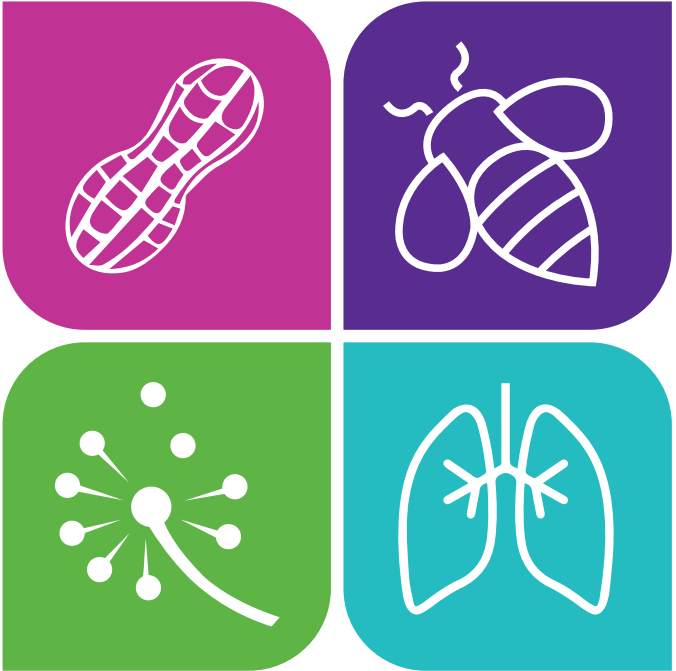
episcopalrelief.org



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her parents' permission to enroll her in a private boarding school. Funds donated by MGEF sponsors covered her school fees, room and board, books, personal hygiene items, mosquito netting, school uniforms and healthcare throughout her education.

In December, 2018, Nancy will graduate from the University of Nairobi with a law degree and will be the first MGEF-sponsored student to become a lawyer. She says she'll focus on women's rights.

"Law has been my passion all along," she says. "We come from a place where girls have no voice, and so many girls suffer because they do not know their rights. I want to be there to enlighten them about their rights. I'm living to save some girl down in the village who is not lucky, whose rights have been neglected."

#### Lives of Passion and Meaning

In 1999, Barbara Lee Shaw quit her job at a DC capital investment firm, put a darkroom in her basement, and left for Kenya with a camera to document the lives of Maasai women.

**"EVERY YEAR MORE AND MORE GIRLS HAVE RECEIVED MGEF SCHOLARSHIPS—WHICH ARE ALL PURELY NEED-BASED AND THIS YEAR WE ADDED A RECORD 29 NEW GIRLS TO OUR ROSTER—MORE THAN ANY SINGLE YEAR TO DATE."** — TRACEY PYLES, DAUGHTER

OF MGEF FOUNDER BARBARA SHAW

There she met a little girl named Ntanin Tarayia.

"The girl was clearly bright and curious. None of the kids in that village had ever seen a white woman, let alone one with a camera," says Tracey Pyles, Barbara's daughter. "But Ntanin didn't run away like the others. She bowed towards Mom, inviting Mom to touch the top of her head. Even though she was very shy, she was so brave, and she followed Mom around and watched everything she did. They formed a special bond, and before Mom left her village, she asked Ntanin's father for permission to pay

for her to go to school."

Barbara's childhood friend, Charlene Goss, was traveling with her, and also wanted to sponsor the education of a little girl who had touched her heart, Sempeyo Sarinke. Permission was granted, and the two went off to school together.

"The word of the two girls' sponsorship spread, and over the next year, eight more Maasai girls who badly wanted to go to school were brought to Mom's attention. She found sponsors for them among her friends and family, and formally founded MGEF as an NGO in 2000," Tracey says. "Every year since, more and more girls have received MGEF scholarships—which are all purely need-based—and this year we added a record 29 new girls to our roster—more than any single year to date."

In 2013 Barbara died of ovarian cancer, and since then Tracey, an emergency physician who is now MGEF president, has kept her mother's vision strong.

"All of this happened because Mom followed her passion. She loved the ►►

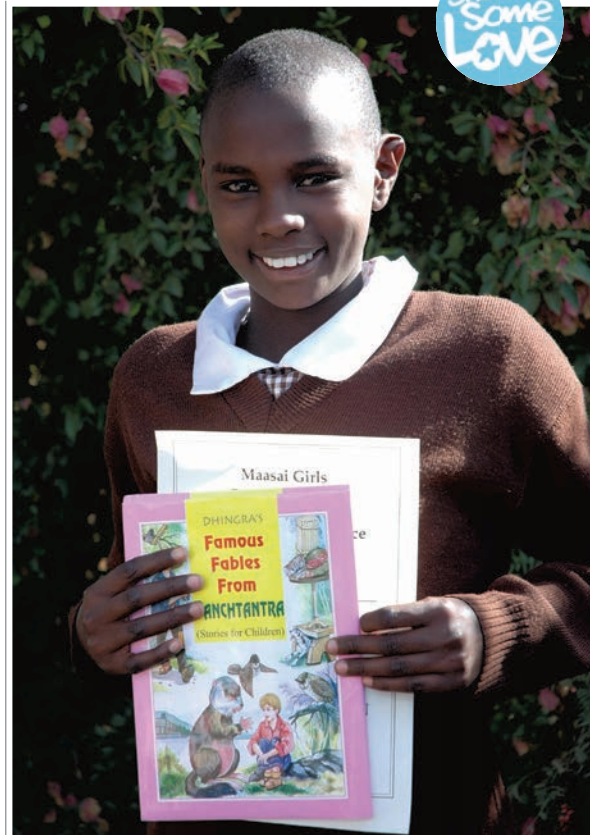


PHOTO COURTESY MGEF

► For students like Ntanin Tarayia, above, MGEF funds cover school fees, room and board, books, personal hygiene items, mosquito netting, school uniforms and healthcare throughout their educations.

## Support Our Heroes



Dennis Gordon, Adaptive Adventures

The DAV Charitable Service Trust supports programs and initiatives that improve the quality of life for veterans like Dennis Gordon. Last year, more than 97% of donated funds went directly to programs that assist disabled veterans and their families.

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PHOTO COURTESY MGEF

*A Maasai man shows off his new child bride, whose face is swollen from crying.*

Maasai girls, and she loved every day of her work after she started MGEF. Now I'm experiencing those same powerful feelings on at least two levels.

**"THE GOAL IS THAT THERE WILL BE A GENERATION OF YOUNG, EDUCATED, EMPOWERED WOMEN WHO ARE NOT ONLY ROLE MODELS FOR THEIR YOUNGER MAASAI SISTERS, BUT WHOSE EDUCATION BENEFITS ALL MAASAI."** —TRACEY PYLES

"The first level is the honor of inheriting the legacy of someone I admired and loved so much," she says.

"Then there is the inherent reward from interacting with Maasai girls, and even with people here in the U.S. Our sponsors are amazingly generous people, and they care so much about girls they've never even met. There's a whole level of concern and passion out there that I had never experienced before, and there is no greater reward than being a part of that and seeing so many young girls' lives change because they're getting an education."

To date, MGEF has sponsored 178 girls, with 122 currently enrolled. Of those who started in primary school, 98% went on to secondary school. Thus far, 95% of all secondary school graduates have enrolled in college, university or vocational school. A total of 36 have completed post-secondary

education programs - a 97% graduation rate—and returned to their communities as leaders and role models.

"The goal is that there will be a generation of young, educated, empowered women who are not only role models for their younger Maasai sisters, but whose education benefits all Maasai. As they return to their communities as teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, and businesswomen, their success is living proof of the value of educating girls," Tracey says.

#### **The Only Maasai Girl in Her Med-School Class**

Tracey and her colleagues at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Md. currently sponsor Gloria Kotente Mumeita, 24, who in December will graduate from medical school in Nairobi. She is the only Maasai girl in her class of 312, and the MGEF's first graduating physician.

The path to becoming a doctor has required incredible amounts of work and determination while being apart from her family, but Gloria calls herself "one of the lucky Maasai girls."

"It's important to educate girls because education gives a girl a voice," Gloria says. "You can choose when to marry, to whom, when to give birth and to how many children. Once a girl is educated her opinion matters not only in her family but to society as a whole." •

**Story by Margaret Rankin**  
[maasaigirlseducation.org](http://maasaigirlseducation.org),  
 CFC# 11265.

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# A heart for service

The heart of a soldier, a sailor, an airman or any member of the armed forces beats for the people they serve. These selfless men and women regularly sacrifice their time, and sometimes their lives, to help others.

Former service member, Ty Boswell, and his

"[WE'VE] MET A LOT OF AMAZING PEOPLE, VOLUNTEERS THAT COME OUT DAY AFTER DAY BRINGING A LOT OF DIFFERENT SKILL SETS TOGETHER."

— TY BOSWELL, FORMER SERVICE MEMBER

wife were on vacation in Texas when tornadoes struck earlier this year. They could have continued with their trip, but when they saw the hurting around them, they knew they had to respond.

"It felt like the right thing to do," Ty said. "We turned around and headed this direction."

With his military background and

his wife's medical experience, they felt prepared to help people during their darkest hours. The couple connected with Operation Blessing's team already on the ground and offered their time and skills.

Wearing his Camelbak camouflage backpack and white Operation Blessing t-shirt, Ty jumped in to remove debris and fallen trees from residents' yards and homes. Communities devastated by the tornado welcomed the teams of volunteers who made quick work of the hard labor.

"[We've] met a lot of amazing people, volunteers that come out day after day ready and willing to work bringing a lot of different skill sets together," Ty said. "The team concept that Operation Blessing uses makes us a lot more effective and a lot more efficient and just creates a better experience because we do connect not only with people in the neighborhood and people who have been impacted, but also connect with those individuals who we're working side by side with."

The volunteers Ty served alongside were



Members of the U.S. National Guard visit Operation Blessing's base of operations during West Virginia flood relief deployment, in summer of 2016.

tireless, hard-working and dedicated to helping those in need. It is an environment he knew well after his service in the military.

"We've been [working] with some fantastic other volunteers," Ty said.

For disaster victims, serving hearts like Ty's make the difference between hopelessness and hope. Ty may no

longer be active duty military, but he has never stopped serving others. Thanks to hardworking volunteers and support from men and women like Ty, Operation Blessing is able to continue serving those in need in our communities and around the world. •

Story by Operation Blessing International  
ob.org, CFC# 10530.

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# Employee Giving Practices Are Evolving at a Rapid Pace. How Do You Stack Up?

*Snapshot 2015 Report: The New Corporate DNA Details Increasing Importance of Volunteerism, Authentic Leadership, and Corporate-Nonprofit Alignment in Meeting Next Generation Employee Demands*

It's no secret that nearly 70% of US employees do not feel engaged at work. There are multiple reasons for this startling rate, and this remains a pain point for many professionals that are charged with devising new and improved ways to engage employees.

America's Charities' *Snapshot 2015* report explains:

"Effective engagement programs are beneficial to all key stakeholders, including the company, employees, customers, and nonprofit organizations. In fact, engagement has become a central feature in employee recruitment and retention strategies. Furthermore, companies recognize they must also meet rising expectations of their employees and customers."

A growing number of companies have implemented employee giving programs, but do so with a limited budget and with high expectations for one or two personnel to oversee the program without an expert partner to help with the strategy, planning and implementation of the program. This typically results in these programs falling victim to multiple failures, including not having the proper tools, support and partnerships to build a successful program. With some small adjustments and expert guidance, employers can easily turn employee giving and engagement program failures into successes.

Download the full *Snapshot 2015* report at: [www.charities.org/snapshot2015](http://www.charities.org/snapshot2015)

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# "Amazing Hard Work" Energizes Brandon during Navy SEAL Wish

A row of green helmets stretches more than 50 feet at the Naval Special Warfare Training Center, stenciled with the numbers and names of prospective Navy SEAL operators who opted out of training.

Some may return later, better prepared for the physical and psychological challenges. It's their choice. But 15-year-old Brandon doesn't have that choice. Every day, he contends with the effects of cystic fibrosis, facing constant therapy, treatment and medication. He can't opt out.

That, explains a SEAL medic, is why he wrote "You're my hero" on a U.S. flag the team presented to Brandon.

## Something Memorable

Since the age of 6, Brandon has looked up to elite military personnel, and his father, Tony, referred him to Make-A-Wish as soon as he learned

Brandon was medically eligible.

"It was an opportunity to do something that he couldn't do on his own," Tony said.

Brandon's family could barely believe it when his wish was granted, and Brandon was still processing it as they flew from Ohio to San Diego.

## A SEAL Team Grants a Wish

A SEAL team is a family, pulling together whenever their skills are needed. Brandon's visit gave them an unusual new reason to rally, and everyone from snipers to troop chiefs welcomed him.

They dressed him in digital camouflage for a visit to the Obstacle Course, where he faced a 50-foot net and other obstacles.

"I've never gotten to challenge myself like that and I loved it," Brandon said.

"That's the most amazing hard work I've

ever put into anything."

No one ever said "maybe you shouldn't do this." Instead, they encouraged him, and helped him conquer obstacles he couldn't surmount on his own.

The medic understood Brandon's challenges. There's a condition brought about by extreme stress while swimming that mimics Brandon's symptoms.

"They go through an exercise that puts the operator in a state much like what Brandon endures, but his condition is much more progressed and extreme," he said, expressing amazement that Brandon wanted to endure the O Course.

"It means a lot to me that someone would make this wish," he said. "I wouldn't have passed this up for anything." •

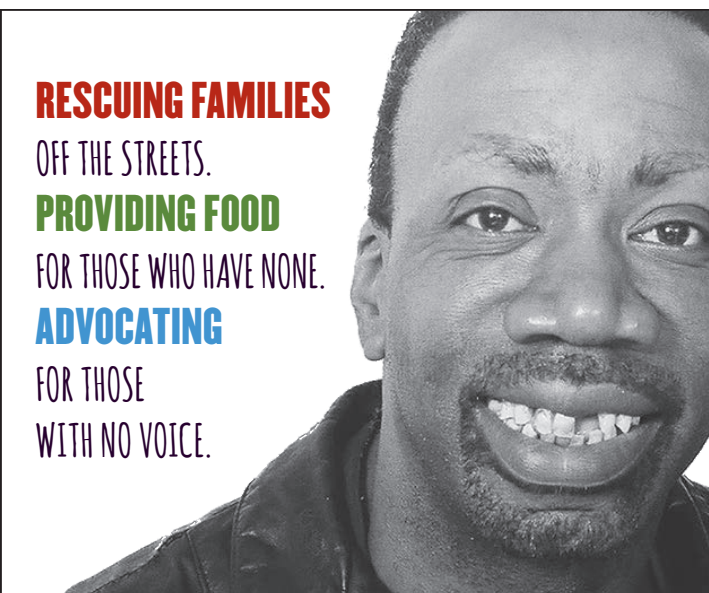
**Story by Make-A-Wish**  
**makeawish.org, CFC# 11375.**

"I wish  
to be a  
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Brandon, age 15 has Cystic Fibrosis.

PHOTO COURTESY/TREVOR STOLEBARGER



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# VFW grant comes at the right time

"After returning from Kuwait in 2014, I was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. My first few months home were filled with suicidal thoughts and severe depression," said Kyle Orian, an Army and Air Force veteran.

Orian served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Desert Storm. After nearly 15 years in the military, he also suffers from nerve damage in his hands, chronic back pain and a traumatic brain injury.

"My psychiatrist recommended I do a year-long treatment, but I wasn't comfortable being gone that long.

But I did end up going away for a few months," said Orian.

Orian applied for Line of Duty benefits to help cover his expenses while he was unable to work. He is currently waiting on word back about his case. In the meantime, his brother

**"THE VFW KEEPS THEIR PROMISES AND WE WERE BLOWN AWAY AT HOW SMOOTH THE PROCESS WAS."**

— KYLE ORIAN, ARMY AND AIR FORCE VETERAN

takes care of him while his wife Sarah works full-time to pay the bills.

"While I was away in treatment, my wife did a lot of research and came across the VFW Unmet Needs program. When I came home, we applied for it," says Orian.

"We needed a reliable car to get me back and forth to the VA Medical Center for my almost daily appointments. Within the last three months, I've had surgery on both hands."

Orian and his wife applied for a \$1,400 grant to cover repairs on their

car. They were approved and got the money in just two weeks.

"The VFW keeps their promises, and we were blown away by how smooth and immediate the process was," said Orian. "This experience has been a lifesaver. We also received a \$500 gift card to Wal-Mart—which was unexpected and so beneficial!" says Orian. "Hats off to the VFW supporters. They're angels in our eyes."

The VFW Unmet Needs program assists service members and veterans who have been deployed in the last six years and have run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity. To learn more about VFW Unmet Needs program or to apply visit [vfw.org/UnmetNeeds](http://vfw.org/UnmetNeeds).

**Story by Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
**[vfw.org](http://vfw.org), CFC#10511.**



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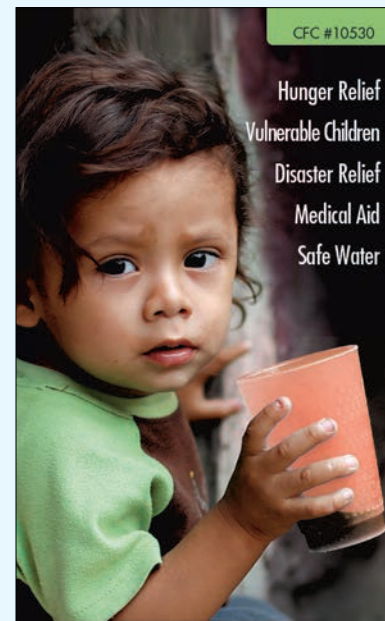
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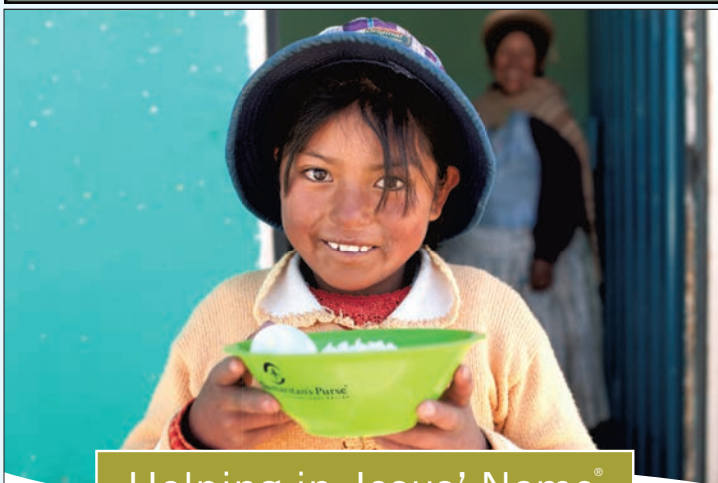
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# Arts and Humanities field trips open up worlds of possibilities for D.C. school children



*The DCAHEC arranges field trips to theaters, museums, and other cultural venues for D.C. school children.*

PHOTO COURTESY TERRY THOMAS

October is a big month this year for the DC Arts and Humanities Collaborative (DCAHEC). Not only is it National Arts and Humanities month and the nonprofit's 19th anniversary, but it's when the Arts and Humanities for Every Student series of field trips for D.C. school kids kicks into high gear.

There are hands-on excursions to the Kennedy Center, Alvin Ailey dance performances, tours of the Kreeger Museum and photography workshops at the Pulitzer Center, to name just a few. Terry Thomas, a visual arts educator at Seaton Elementary, is on the programming committee for the trips and helps to set them up with the cultural institutions that are the



*Seaton Elementary School students are grinding corn in Mount Vernon's green house with Donna Boutler.*

PHOTO COURTESY TERRY THOMAS

DCAHEC's members. She loves to find programs that not only have an impact on individual children, but whole families.

"Because many of our students' parents work a lot they don't have the time or inclination to take their children to the Kennedy Center themselves," she says. "There is also an intimidation factor in that some parents may feel that they and their children don't belong in such a setting as the Kennedy Center."

With the trips, provided to schools at minimal or no cost, kids "see things and hear things, and they take them back home. They talk about what they've seen and share their experiences with their families," Terry says.

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*A day outside the classroom offers new inspiration.*

Patricia Pride, Principal of Hardy Middle School and a DC Collaborative board member, says the field trips are important in exposing kids to activities they'll enjoy for their whole lives.

"Kids don't know yet what they're

are completely different from classroom instruction.

"There's a huge difference between music class and going to see Beethoven's 5th with the NSO at the Kennedy Center or going to see an exhibit at a museum," she says. "Being

**"THERE'S A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MUSIC CLASS AND GOING TO SEE BEETHOVEN'S 5TH WITH THE NSO AT THE KENNEDY CENTER OR GOING TO SEE AN EXHIBIT AT A MUSEUM."**

— PATRICIA PRIDE, PRINCIPAL HARDY MIDDLE SCHOOL

great at, they have to try," she says. "I did, and I found out I cannot sing in the choir...But then I tried photography and I found out that I did have something I could do then and go on to enjoy as an adult, which was wonderful."

Field trips, Patricia emphasizes,

able to actually talk to the lighting technician or the performer lets you know you can be something else. It gives them that full-circle experience that tells them this is something they can actually do. It's attainable." •

**Story by Margaret Rankin**  
**[dccollaborative.org](http://dccollaborative.org), CFC# 66894.**



*Seaton Elementary School students reading "The Nutcracker"*

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