

"Giving 2.0 empowers everyone—from volunteers to donors to advocates—to get the most out of their giving and themselves."

—MELINDA GATES, cochair and trustee, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

LAURA
ARRILLAGA-ANDREESSEN

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GIVING 2.0

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TRANSFORM YOUR GIVING
AND OUR WORLD

Praise for *Giving 2.0*

“At last! This terrific book cuts through the jargon to demystify philanthropy, proving what’s possible when givers put their hearts and minds to issues that really matter. Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen’s profiles in great giving are beautifully rendered, her insights fresh and compelling, and her practical how-to’s pitch perfect. *Giving 2.0* should become the indispensable guide for everyone who’s ready to make the most of what they have to give!”

—Sally Osberg, president and CEO, Skoll Foundation

“Through vignettes of individual and family philanthropists, Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen, a great philanthropist and leader in her own right, captures both the passion and the tough analysis and decision making necessary to turn that passion into results. In a highly engaging style, she covers the value of having clear goals for one’s own philanthropy; the importance of supporting an organization’s real needs, even for quotidian back-office functions; and how to undertake appropriate due diligence and evaluation. *Giving 2.0* offers a bounty of valuable information for donors of all levels.”

—Paul Brest, president, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and coauthor, *Money Well Spent*

“Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen has made a great contribution to the philanthropy of this country, combining personal experience and passion with professional insight to create a deeply valuable resource that will help families throughout their philanthropic journeys. *Giving 2.0* is a book that provides rich stories, inspiration, and information relevant to all as they continue to give generously of both time and money.”

—Carol Larson, president and CEO, Packard Foundation

“*Giving 2.0* opens the door to a new era of philanthropy in which everyone, at every giving level, can combine new and innovative approaches with the power of the Internet to achieve positive social impact and personal joy, whether by helping their neighbors next door or across the world. It offers a rare perspective from one of philanthropy’s most thoughtful leaders that makes it essential reading for anyone who wants to make giving a meaningful part of his or her life.”

—Leslie Crutchfield and Mark Kramer, coauthors, *Do More Than Give*

“Research shows that happiness comes from spending time connecting with others, not just having or spending money. *Giving 2.0* shows how connected the world is, and how to determine the role you’d like to play in changing the world. Whether donating time, money, skill, or voice, *Giving 2.0* can show you how to gain greater happiness and fulfillment from your efforts.”

—Jennifer Aaker, coauthor, *The Dragonfly Effect*, and professor, Stanford Graduate School of Business

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To the Givers
I love most in this world:
Marc Andreessen and John Arrillaga Sr.
I am who I am because of you.

For Frances Arrillaga

1940–1995

In celebration of a beautiful giving life

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INTRODUCTION

A philanthropist is anyone who gives anything—time, money, experience, skills, and networks—in any amount to create a better world.

For all of us who give, there are moments, people, events, and experiences that prompt us to take action; that inspire us to live outside ourselves. When we are so moved, we can no longer stand back passively and watch injustice, cruelty, and inequality; we have to *do something* to make the world better.

My own first inspiration came from my family, and in particular my mother. Frances Arrillaga was my best friend, my mentor, my soul mate. In her living, she inspired me, and in her dying, she showed me a new life path. I took the tragedy of losing her and transformed it into my life's greatest blessing—my giving.

Giving was more than a part of my mom's life. It *was* her life. She sat on multiple nonprofit boards (serving as chairman on several of them). She co-founded two nonprofits and ran the family foundation she and my father created. With a radiant smile for everyone, she found it easy to recruit volunteers for causes and organizations she supported—but she'd never ask anyone to do anything she wouldn't do herself. She had an astonishing sense of purpose, and she created an extraordinary community around her. Watching her on visits to local nonprofits was inspiring—everyone loved her. Seeing how she helped set up and build new organizations encouraged me to think that perhaps one day I could do the same. I saw how her light drew others to her side. I saw her purpose, her passion, and her peace. And I wanted to live the life she'd led—to share her purpose, her passion, and her peace.

The day my father, brother, and I learned of her illness, I quit my job, deferred my Stanford MBA, and stayed at home to take care of her. Watching my mom in unbearable pain, unable to do anything about it,

was the hardest experience of my life. That's when I learned the reality of human suffering and what it felt like to be completely powerless. Yet I also realized that while forces we cannot control may be ranged against us, they should never stop us from fighting on. What mattered, I discovered, was not achieving the next goal for myself, but making life better for those around me—whether I knew those people or not.

As my mom grew sicker, I became petrified. I felt horribly isolated and yet scared to ask for help, for fear of appearing weak. Then something happened. People came from all over our community to share how my mother had touched their lives. They brought homemade dinners, flowers from their gardens, prayers, and kindness. I discovered that in asking for help, I could give others the opportunity of doing something to help me—just as I was helping my mother.

Devoting myself to her care taught me how to live outside myself. Even in the worst hours of her suffering, my mother showed me, and those around her, grace, gratitude, and unconditional love. Through the terrible experience of losing her, I gained the deep understanding of suffering, compassion, humility, and selflessness that is the force behind my giving.

Her illness also taught me that passion, while driven by our hearts, must be supported by research, goals, and sound strategies. My family and I knew we had to do everything we could to fight her disease. Even if ultimately unsuccessful, our efforts might one day help save someone else's life. Applying these lessons to my giving has been challenging—such moments of learning can be intensely painful as well as frustratingly difficult. But they're also beautiful opportunities for transformation, because they give us fresh perspectives and take us on new paths in how we live and how we give.

Just twenty months after receiving her diagnosis, my mother was gone. But as hundreds of people—many of whom I'd never met—came forward to offer their condolences, I learned of her immense contribution to our world, of the selflessness with which she'd given her time and energy. And in those last days, I experienced a profound realization of the reason I was born into my family and what my future should hold. I made a promise—to her, to God, and to myself—that I would keep

her light shining brightly, turning her pain and my grief into something positive, helping her spirit live on through me.

In doing so, I was not alone. For I'm blessed to be the daughter of two extraordinary philanthropists, and my father, John Arrillaga Sr., is one of his generation's most generous. For more than two decades, he's devoted at least half of his time to giving. He uses the expertise acquired through a career in real estate development to bring to fruition dozens of essential building projects for local schools, universities, and nonprofits. And with the profits from his business, he funds a huge portion of their general operating costs.

Since losing my mom, he and I have become the best of friends and effective partners in our family's philanthropy. Every day, we get together or talk by phone about how he and I can do more to transform our world for good or about the giving plans I'm making with my husband, Marc. Sometimes we drive around to visit the sites of my father's nonprofit building projects (he is famous for walking campuses and hallways and picking up any trash he finds along the way).

Intensely private and humble, my father has spent much of his life giving, permitting no acknowledgment of his tremendous generosity. He's accepted only one of the countless philanthropic awards bestowed on him—Stanford University's highest volunteer honor, the Uncommon Man Award. Even then he insisted that the awards dinner (an event attended usually by several hundred) should include just eight people (Stanford's president and his wife, the provost and his wife, and our immediate family). His commitment to giving bonds us more closely, and his unconditional love has supported me in my philanthropic aspirations and actions.

My parents embody the philanthropic spirit at its finest, both individually and as one. Together, they created the Arrillaga Foundation, and together they contributed to countless causes. They were an incredible team, supporting each other's efforts at every turn. My mom was the public face of their giving. My father was the silent force behind her volunteerism, supporting all her efforts, providing her with an essential platform of stability, resources, and love—support he now gives to me as I strive to live up to their shining examples.

My parents are my philanthropic heroes. Perhaps you feel the same about yours. Perhaps you, too, want to emulate their beliefs and values. Or it could be that you're driven by other experiences; things that have touched you in a significant way—battling a disease, losing a loved one, caring for a sick child. You may have witnessed or experienced the horrors of domestic abuse, poverty, or discrimination. Or maybe your life was changed by something far from your own world—something you read in a newspaper article or saw in a disturbing television report.

What inspires you may also be positive—the peace and strength of a religious community or the natural beauty of a landscape. The generosity of a friend or colleague may have moved you, or a stranger may have funded your college scholarship. On any day of the week, you could have a conversation with someone or observe something that could change your giving path forever. Each of these moments represents an opportunity, a responsibility, and a privilege.

* * *

We give from the heart—our most powerful engine for action. And we give because it makes us feel good (in fact, medical tests have shown that giving stimulates a part of the brain that gives us the same gratification as when we eat food or have sex).¹ We live in a frenetic world, with incessant demands on our time, money, and energy. At home we care for spouses and children and support aging parents; at work, we face constant pressure. Even when times toughen and wallets shrink, we stretch our resources to help those with even less. (In 2009, at a time of deep recession and personal hardship, annual individual giving in the U.S. still averaged almost \$2,000 per household).² But what never ceases to astound me is that through everything, one powerful, beautiful force persists: our giving. And why? Because giving *feels good*.

But feeling good in the moment doesn't necessarily accomplish our greater goal—making the world a better place. Too often the warm glow that drives us to give is not backed by knowledge, research, and strategy. We write checks, but we rarely find out exactly how our money is used. We unknowingly waste resources—reinventing the wheel when we could

be learning from others—and ultimately at the expense of those we are trying to help. As you probably already know, giving away money is easy—doing so effectively is much harder.

Today, while big problems demand increasingly complex solutions, the world’s philanthropic resources are ever more tightly stretched. We need to do more with less. We need to channel precious philanthropic resources into innovative ways of giving—learning constantly, partnering with others, pooling funds through collaborative giving, inventing new, entrepreneurial models of social investment, and applying more rigorous performance measurement to everything we do philanthropically. For between the signing of a check and the delivery of vaccinations to a family in Liberia or better education to low-income sixth graders in Detroit lies a complex set of decisions, strategies, and infrastructure, all of which contribute to the impact of the money itself.

It was the desire to help other philanthropists navigate these complexities that shaped my philanthropic path. For the past fifteen years I’ve been developing support systems and designing giving “products”—organizations, networks, and resources—that I hope will educate, empower, and inspire anyone who wants to give (myself included) to do so—and more effectively. This book is an important part of those efforts, and I plan to donate all of my royalties from its sales to charity.

My first big step on this philanthropic path came soon after my mom died. I knew I wanted to create an organization to support other philanthropists—but in the meantime, I needed support of my own. As I set out on this journey, I’d never felt so alone or unprepared. I had no idea where to start and, aside from some of the seasoned philanthropists I knew through my parents, I could find no community of givers with whom to share ideas, compare stories, and figure out how to proceed. There was no organization to join that could teach me (or the countless new potential philanthropists born of Silicon Valley’s 1990s technology revolution) how to give more strategically, how to pool resources for greater impact, and how to learn through doing. No gathering place existed where individuals like me could share passions and exchange ideas about what had or hadn’t worked. Like many individual donors, I felt frustrated and isolated.



So I decided to create a new organization—one through which philanthropists could get together and support each other while learning how to give more effectively and dive more deeply into certain social issues. I called it the Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund (SV2). In SV2, I wanted to help people make investments that were relatively small financially but big in terms of expanding their own skills. At SV2, donors (we call them *partners*) gain hands-on experience by working directly with nonprofit leaders and fellow philanthropists. We invest time in educating ourselves, bringing in field experts to talk about the issues we fund. We not only give and pool our money; we collaborate on grantmaking decisions and use our skills and knowledge to help the cutting-edge nonprofits we support become more effective and scale up their operations. The success of our partners in doing this sends a powerful message: you don't need to donate huge dollars to have a huge impact.

The experience of setting up and running SV2—along with my volunteer and board service for a number of nonprofit organizations—gave me part of the grounding I needed to help my father steward our family's philanthropic resources. However, this was just the beginning of my learning journey.

When Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB) invited me to join its faculty in 2000, I embarked on a formal study of “strategic philanthropy.” Researching and teaching at Stanford has taken me deep into the world of individual giving, philanthropic foundations, venture philanthropy, corporate philanthropy, global social investing, and social innovation. Over the past decade, I've taught some amazing students, a few of whom have even gone on to found or run some of the organizations that appear in this book.



As I became immersed in the world of academia at Stanford and the world of practitioners in the professional philanthropic field, I was struck by the gap between the incredible knowledge and insights of my academic colleagues and the extraordinary generosity and vision of my philanthropic sector colleagues. To create a hub where these two communities could share their wisdom, I founded a new university center—Stanford PACS (Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society)—which I now chair.

Working as both a hands-on philanthropist and an academic, I've become what I call a *pracademic*—part practitioner, part scholar. And over the years, immersed in philanthropic pursuits, I've gained confidence in my abilities. But I often think of those early days, when I assumed everyone knew much more than I did and wondered how on earth I could ever gain enough knowledge and experience to be an effective philanthropist. Even with my Stanford education, I felt overwhelmed by how much material I needed to absorb. At board meetings, when I was often the youngest person in the room, I was reluctant to ask questions for fear of sounding hopelessly uninformed.

What I've learned, of course, is that there are no questions unworthy of asking—in fact, it's a good thing to further your knowledge or challenge norms. And even though I'm sometimes still shy about asking for feedback and results from my gifts, I try to remember that it's all part of empowering the nonprofits I fund to do better. Yet, fifteen years into my giving, I still feel that all philanthropists out there (myself included) could benefit from greater support—more knowledge about what works and what doesn't; a resource from which they can learn about different issues and explore new models of giving; something to show us all not just how to make gifts that feel good but how to make a real difference with those gifts.

The result is this book, and the following chapters address the hundreds of questions that individual givers have asked me over the years about issues we've all faced. This book won't tell you *why* to give (if you've started reading it, you already have a giving heart). But it will tell you *how* to give, and it will provide you tools with which to give more effectively.

Writing this book has transformed my own philanthropy from “giving 1.0” to “giving 2.0.” For me, it's been a chance to renew, evolve, and reenergize my giving—to go from being reactive to proactive, to create a strategy that capitalizes on past giving experiences but also embraces new philanthropic activities. I hoped to tap into the amazing reach of the Web and overcome my fear of engaging in the world of social media. I wanted to deepen my exploration of volunteerism, different giving vehicles, social entrepreneurship, advocacy funding, and

family foundation best practices. I aspired to have the impact of my giving go beyond the emotional rewards of the moment to something that would be intellectually and spiritually satisfying over the long term.

Over the course of my career, I've made gifts that were spectacular successes and ones that were miserable failures. I've made gifts whose impact I can measure accurately—and ones for which I couldn't tell you what happened to the money if my life depended on it. But I've tried to learn from every experience. And when I look back on the timid, uncertain girl that I was when I started giving, I realize I'm much more optimistic, ambitious, and empowered today than I was back then.

Part of that empowerment has come to me through writing this book. Even as an experienced giver, the process of setting down the range of philanthropic options, formulating the right questions to ask, and coming up with tools for making gifts with greater impact has fueled my appetite to achieve more. It's given me the courage to formulate plans that are much bolder than those I would have made even a few years ago. I hope it will do the same for you.

* * *

Giving 2.0 is a book for anyone who gives anything at all—money in *any* amount, time, skills, networks, or expertise. While you'll find industry terms used throughout, it talks clearly and simply about different forms of giving. A “Jargon Buster” section at the end of the book demystifies the language that often makes the “strategic philanthropy” described in so many books seem intimidating. And because giving is so deeply personal, I present no formulas or mandates on how you should give. Instead, I offer up an ocean of possibilities for enhancing whatever path you choose to take, helping you design a giving life that's suited to the way you live and expresses who you are.

Here's how it works: each chapter takes you through a different form of giving, highlighting opportunities, considerations, and challenges. It explains how to define your aspirations, take stock, change direction, renew existing strategies, acquire critical skills, and create or participate in exciting new models of giving. It shows you how to maximize the

impact of your gifts while strengthening your personal connection (the emotional force behind your generosity) to social transformation.

The “Making It Happen” section at every chapter’s end provides an extensive set of questions you can ask yourself and others, as well as suggestions and things to think about when considering the form of giving covered in the main text of the chapter. These sections will help you construct your goals and how you can go about achieving them. They’ll suggest ways of planning your giving, either alone or with your partner, spouse, friends, or children.

Since many volunteers and donors learn their values from their parents, each “Making It Happen” section also includes a component called “For the Family.” “For the Family” shows you how to instill these values in your children and how, through a host of different activities, you can pass philanthropic values down to future generations.

In Chapter Three, I show you how to start a giving journal to track your donations of time and money (an essential thing to do if you want to increase your impact). But I also refer to this journal at various points throughout the book, and Appendix I provides an extensive list of questions and suggestions to help you build your own giving journal. As you go through each chapter, the “Making It Happen” sections give you a portfolio of questions, ideas, and innovations to consider and apply to help you develop your journal, as well.

This book is itself a journey—early chapters focus on volunteering and direct giving, discussing what you can do to make gifts of time or money more rewarding for those you support and for yourself. Other chapters show you how to engage in collaborative giving, or how you can participate in exciting newer models of philanthropy that support entrepreneurs using market-based models to bring about lasting social change. Later chapters tackle more complex forms of philanthropy, such as setting up an unstaffed family foundation or embarking on advocacy. They also provide advice on things such as how to establish a board of directors or what to think about when considering starting a nonprofit.

Yet, no matter how straightforward or complex the type of philanthropy being examined in it, each chapter shows you how—even with

just a few hundred dollars or hours of your time—you can participate. You may not, for example, have the wherewithal to engage in advocacy right now. Yet I'll show how you can donate to organizations that are conducting advocacy, or go online and use social networking websites to create your own campaign for a cause you care about.

Some chapters feature forms of giving established decades ago—tried and tested models such as donor-advised funds, charitable trusts, and tithing. Yet while some systems for giving may have existed for more than a century, they may be new to you. Even if they're familiar, you can adapt them to your current goals or use them as a way to set yourself more ambitious ones.

For better or worse, we all become creatures of habit, and I'm no exception. I've found that my own giving needs a reboot every few years. Sometimes I find myself funding organizations year after year without really knowing what work they're doing, or giving reactively based on the requests of friends and family, rather than pursuing my own passions. At other times, the chaos of work and family life means I neglect my own philanthropic learning—something I always regret. Here's where your giving journal can be a critical support tool. By keeping it up to date, you can keep yourself on track.

Throughout the book, you can also follow the giving journeys of the committed and talented individual philanthropists profiled in each chapter—how they found their passions, how they made their giving decisions, their first volunteering experiences, and what they did to make their philanthropy more meaningful and have more impact. These individuals don't conform to the traditional image of a philanthropist—that of a wealthy older man making large gifts to prestigious institutions. Today, in fact, women play a leading role in philanthropy. In a 2009 national survey, almost half the women surveyed said they made the family's decisions on which nonprofits to give to and how much to give, while more than 80 percent of men say they defer to their spouses on giving decisions.³

I believe that *anyone* who gives *anything* is a philanthropist. After all, the word itself derives from the Greek *philanthropus*, which translates as “love of humankind”—and there's nothing in this definition to suggest

we need to give away huge sums of money, if any money at all, to make a difference.

The women, men, and organizations featured in this book have been chosen not because they are necessarily more effective than others or because their causes are more important, but because together they illustrate this century's true philanthropic community in all its glorious diversity. Some donate a few hundred dollars a year using online tools, while others give only their time and expertise. Some have joined forces, pooling their funds to give thousands of dollars collectively. Others tap into the expertise developed by professional foundations to make significant personal investments. A few have even established impressive non-profits or philanthropic funds. All have married their passion with their knowledge.

Following their journeys will, I hope, help you think about your own. For me, however, their stories were just a beginning. Trying out ideas inspired by the stories of others is how I continue to develop my philanthropy. I hope you'll do the same. In an age of "giving while living," it's a time to experiment, to renew existing forms of giving, and create new ones that are uniquely yours.

It's also important to think of giving as an evolutionary process. I find it's helpful to treat every gift not as an independent transaction but as a single note that contributes to a lifelong symphony of philanthropic action—a whole greater than the sum of its parts. And whether you're giving money, time, skills, or compassion, the opportunities you'll encounter at different times come with varying levels of complexity—each of which you may embrace at certain stages in your life. Things that worked at one time may not be appropriate at another. Your passions may turn you on to one cause early on in life, while another draws your attention later. You might start modestly, giving to a nonprofit whose work you admire, and intensify your impact by serving on its board. You might even decide to found your own philanthropic or nonprofit organization.

So when do you begin this journey? When do you start acquiring the knowledge needed to enhance your giving? When should you think about doing more with your time and skills? When should you stop

simply worrying about the world's problems and start looking for innovative ways of helping solve them? When should you renew or even reinvent your giving? The answer to all these questions is the same—NOW. If you can manage your personal financial investments more effectively, you can manage your philanthropic ones more effectively, too. If you're able to learn from what you read in books or online, you have the ability to learn more about how to have a bigger impact. We can all do more to support people who strive to solve the world's problems and even to help develop those solutions ourselves. We can all transform our giving for the better—let's start right now.

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One final note: Throughout the book, whenever you see a Web logo in the margin of this book (as in the margin here), please visit the Giving 2.0 website: www.giving2.com. There you will find direct links to (and in some cases additional information on) the organizations featured in this book, as well as ongoing updates on developments in the world of individual giving. This site will serve as a living, evolving hub, hosting giving blogs (mine and those of inspiring individuals and other philanthropic leaders), interviews, and videos, as well as providing updated references. The Giving 2.0 website also will host a wide range of links to organizations, articles, books, publications, and other resources to use for inspiration, education, action, and community. A section dedicated entirely to this book will have a chapter-by-chapter breakdown for related ideas, resources, and links to help take your giving to the next level. This site will also serve as an online community for philanthropists at all levels to meet and share information—a virtual home for givers globally.

GIVING YOURSELF

A Donation More Valuable Than Money

Jump in and engage—add value by giving your time, experience, skills, and networks.

Giving is a universal opportunity. Regardless of your age, profession, religion, income bracket, and background, you have the capacity to create change. Everything you do, from spontaneous acts of kindness to an hour of your time, constitutes how you give. Indeed, making a gift of time, coupled with expertise and compassion, is a powerful way to make a positive impact on our world.

Hector Chau is one of millions transitioning out of the workforce and, as such, redefining his professional and personal relationships to his community. Now retired and living in Westchester, a neighborhood of western Los Angeles, Hector lives on a pension that doesn't leave him a large amount of money to give to charity. Hector is an active philanthropist, however, as he gives away something even more valuable—his time. Hector volunteers with a program called Tax-Aide, an initiative launched in 1968 by AARP, an organization that provides services to people over the age of fifty. Tax-Aide helps low- to middle-income taxpayers—many over the age of sixty—complete their yearly filings, with volunteers like Hector leading them through the process.



Born in Mexico, Hector has been living in the United States since 1977, when he moved from Mexico City to Santa Monica with his family. Hector, his wife Olga, and their three children (aged nine, eleven, and thirteen)—were all on holiday in California. Olga and the children were enjoying themselves so much that they told Hector they wanted to

move to America. “We decided that since we were in a democracy, we should take a vote on it,” says Hector. “And I lost, four to one.”

Hector had left his home town of Tuxpan on the Mexican Gulf Coast once before to live in the United States. He attended a Texas high school funded by the Presbyterian Church, and later graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. After leaving college, Hector moved back to Mexico City, where he married his Texas-born university sweetheart and got a job with an accounting firm where he remained for the next sixteen years. He later worked as a salesman for an equipment manufacturer, a job he loved, as he enjoys meeting people and hearing about their lives.

In his new role as a volunteer, Hector is able to enjoy so much of what he loved in his profession. The Tax-Aide program has not only drawn Hector back to the accounting world; it has also given him a chance to make new friends. In between tax seasons, he exchanges jokes and letters, keeping in touch with his fellow volunteers via email. He also meets a wide range of people among the clients who use the Tax-Aide service. There was the hundred-and-two-year-old man who still managed to drive his car to the center, with his girlfriend (in her nineties) beside him. And the young aspiring actress who claimed her breast implants as tax-deductible items since she’d had them done to improve her chances of getting work.

“Sometimes we get our heartstrings pulled, and sometimes it’s simply fun,” says Hector. Cheerful and outgoing, Hector still loves meeting different people and finding out about their lives. Working in sales afforded him this opportunity during his career; volunteering has restored it in retirement. “It’s very satisfying when you’re helping someone and then, when you see them next time, they’re doing well,” he says.

Hector is one of millions of Baby Boomers who’ve decided to take up volunteering or increase it in retirement. For some, it’s a chance to give back to society. For others, it means they can continue to learn and develop while meeting new people and expanding their horizons. These opportunities help countless high-energy retirees enhance their self-esteem and fill the void that can open when people give up paid work.

Thousands of new opportunities to do volunteer work emerge all the time, and not just for retirees, whether it's making the occasional call for a nonprofit or helping construct libraries in a developing country. And these opportunities are mushrooming thanks to the power of the Internet. With the connectivity of the Web and online search tools, you can tap into a new world of community service, finding activities that match your skills and organizations that meet your goals.

Volunteering does not have to be a lifelong commitment (although it can be). You might start by doing a couple of hours a week playing dominos with a senior citizen and end up on an intensive six-month school-building project in an impoverished African village. You can work directly with people, giving your compassion and care, or help a nonprofit by giving your legal, financial, or marketing expertise. But you'll make a bigger impact and get more out of it if you think carefully about the kind of work you want to do, how much time you have to devote, and how your skills and experience can best be used. As with any form of philanthropy, planning, tracking, and taking stock are critical first steps (find out how to do this in Appendix I, *Creating Your Giving Journal*), because if you establish the right volunteer relationships, your involvement will provide your greatest personal connection with giving.

A GIFT TO YOURSELF

In search of happiness, we read about everything from how we need to simplify our lives to avoid stress to how we should eat well, exercise, and surround ourselves with positive people. We are all obsessed with being happy, it seems. And after all, who doesn't want to be happy? Well, it turns out that one of the things that make us happy is giving. And volunteering is no exception. What's more, volunteering even appears to be good for human health.

That's right—volunteering could lead to fewer pills and fewer trips to the doctor. The 2010 “Do Good Live Well Study” found that people who volunteered through their job rated their physical and emotional health more positively than nonvolunteers.¹ Some 92 percent of

the respondents said they were satisfied with their current physical health, compared to 76 percent among nonvolunteers. And 72 percent of volunteers claimed to have an optimistic outlook on life—tellingly this was true for only 60 percent of nonvolunteers. Moreover, 68 percent of volunteers reported that volunteering made them feel physically healthier.

Other evidence supports the observation that helping others brings benefits to those doing the helping. In a paper on the subject, Stephen Post, a renowned bioethicist, cites work conducted by researchers at Brown University Medical School.² The researchers studied members of Alcoholics Anonymous, the largest self-help group in the United States, to assess the difference between individuals who helped other alcoholics recover and those who didn't. The study found that those who were helping others were far less likely to relapse in the year following treatment. Post also points to studies that show teenage girls who volunteer are less likely to become pregnant or take drugs, and these young women are more likely to do better at school and to graduate. A similar review conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) found that states with higher rates of volunteerism also had lower rates of heart disease.³



What's more, among the many studies that Post cites in his paper, research shows how people who volunteer tend to have fewer of the symptoms of depression. "We are perhaps substituting happiness pills for the happiness that flows from pro-social opportunities and more authentic community," he writes.

Even if you're already healthy of mind, body, and heart, the volunteer spirit brings with it countless rewards. For a start, the more you take on, the more you'll find you have time to do. Being happier as a result of giving will increase your productivity at work, enrich your relationships at home, and put your own problems into perspective by focusing on the greater problems of others.

And volunteering can bring thrills rarely found elsewhere—particularly when volunteers get to see the difference they are making. "Some people say there's a pop or a spark," says Michael Lombardo, describing the moment when his volunteers see the turning point in a

student's progress. "They often talk about seeing a new light in the child's eyes."

Michael is CEO of Reading Partners, a nonprofit providing one-on-one tutoring for K–6 students from low-income communities (it was one of SV2's early grantees and a recipient of a Social Innovation Fund, or SIF, investment). Reading Partners volunteer tutors (retirees, full-time parents, high school students, and working professionals) spend twice-weekly sessions with individual children, forming a close bond with them, watching their journey through frustration and disengagement toward understanding, excitement, and pride.



"We can all remember times as children and adults when we finally *got* something we were trying to understand," says Michael. "And the real emotional nourishment for our volunteers is seeing the kids have that happen on a weekly basis—not only make a huge stride in their learning but also receive a huge boost to their confidence."

As well as giving you emotional nourishment, community service also helps you maintain your skills during a period of unemployment, while demonstrating your energy and initiative to potential employers. When you're looking for work, volunteering can expand your network of contacts. On an event committee for your city's art museum, for instance, you might meet another volunteer whose company has job openings. Meanwhile, feeling productive can help keep your spirits up at a time when it's easy to become discouraged.

It's worth noting some of these benefits. Has volunteering helped you make new friends or find a community of like-minded people, for instance? Have you been able to attend lectures or events that you might not otherwise have known about? Has volunteering helped you get a new job or led to other service work? It's this personal contact that makes volunteering so rewarding—in helping others, you help yourself.

For Hector, the Tax-Aide program has given him more than a chance to brush up his accounting skills. "I like meeting different people," he says. "And part of the procedure is that, once you've finished a return, someone has to audit it to make sure it's all correct and that you haven't missed anything important. While you're waiting for someone to do this,

you have four or five minutes to chat with people—and those moments are fun.”

Community service as a family is also a way of introducing your children to giving and the idea of caring for others, while also showing them how they can contribute to solving some of your community’s problems. For your children, taking on new challenges—whether that’s helping plant trees on a neglected street or going on a fifty-mile bike ride to raise money—helps them learn new skills, gain greater self-confidence, and become more responsible. However, before embarking on any social adventure with your child, it’s a good idea to sit down together and decide as a family what projects or causes you want to spend time on. You could even select four or five possibilities and vote on it—thus, as Hector Chau did, giving your kids a lesson in democracy in the process.

Volunteering as a family takes many forms. You could involve the whole family or just a few members. You could take on a challenge for a day—or embark on something longer term. You could participate in an adoption-type program, through which your family might take on responsibility for helping an individual in the community on an ongoing basis—a recent immigrant, perhaps, or an elderly person without relatives (community organizations and churches can help facilitate these relationships).

Volunteering as a family is a great way to spend time together. Equally important, however, is the fact that when families work on community service projects, it provides a real opportunity for you to teach and transmit values to your children. This exposure has a more powerful and enduring impact on them than simply talking about the importance of giving. This was confirmed by a 2011 study called “Heart of the Donor.”⁴ It found that of people who grew up with parents who were frequent volunteers with nonprofits, almost half (49 percent) had volunteered with a nonprofit in the past year, and of those with parents who occasionally volunteered, 31 percent are volunteers. Among those who never saw their parents volunteer, only 20 percent do so now.

Whether you’re going to volunteer alone or with your family, you should think about what you’re embarking on as a true commitment—not being paid for your work makes it no less an obligation. So be realistic



about what you promise to do. At too many nonprofits, volunteers come and go, many of them losing interest or leaving when another more exciting activity presents itself. Volunteering is a serious business—the business of transforming and saving lives. I’ve never been paid for my work at SV2 or Stanford PACS (Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society), for example, but because of the impact of what we do, I work just as hard as I did when I worked in the for-profit sector, if not harder. You may experience the same thing—how passion can amplify your commitment. But practically speaking, if you’d never walk out on a paid job, you should treat your gifts of time and expertise, regardless of their scope, with the same level of seriousness.

THE VALUE OF COLLECTIVE PASSION

When Alexis de Tocqueville, a French philosopher and political scientist, traveled across the United States in 1831, he was deeply impressed by American volunteerism. He witnessed Americans’ ethic of coming together to solve problems collectively, working in unison to improve life for those in their communities. Nearly two hundred years later, ever-growing numbers of Americans give their time, energies, knowledge, and experience to organizations and causes that they believe can improve life for their fellow citizens, tackle injustices, and help protect the natural environment. More than 63 million Americans, or almost 21 percent of the population, volunteered in 2009, according to the CNCS—that’s 1.6 million more people than volunteered in 2008. And the numbers are growing particularly fast among certain sections of the population. Since 1989, for example, the volunteer rate among sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds, in terms of hours given, has almost doubled, according to the CNCS.

If you’re among the many millions who volunteer, you may not think of what you’re doing as making a financial donation. But in a sense you are. For collectively, the value of those millions of hours given runs into the billions of dollars. According to the CNCS, the monetary value of

volunteering services in 2009—which totaled more than 8.1 billion hours—was almost \$169 billion. And, that assumes an hourly wage value of roughly \$20—probably a huge underestimation of the actual value of volunteer time and expertise.

Behind every single one of these dollars is an individual such as Hector Chau, bringing individual gifts of time and talent. According to a survey conducted by the National Society of Accountants in 2009, the average fee for tax preparation is \$229. During the tax season, Hector completes about seven to ten returns a day. This adds up. The AARP says that, every year, Tax-Aide volunteers such as Hector are able to help more than 2.6 million taxpayers to file their federal, state, and local tax returns. At an average of \$229 per return, that’s almost \$600 million—an astonishing amount of money, and all given free of charge by AARP’s army of more than 34,600 volunteers.

Volunteers are also essential in times of trouble. In the wake of the devastation of Gulf Coast hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, for example, more than 110,000 national service volunteers, along with 648,000 community volunteers, contributed more than 9.6 million hours. These volunteers helped transform the relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts—removing debris, creating shelters for the homeless, running call centers for those in need, coordinating benefits, and establishing schools and youth programs. The CNCS values these efforts at more than \$200 million to the Gulf Coast states. We’ve also seen a rise in the number of volunteer efforts that support our troops overseas and veterans as they return home.

As these statistics and examples demonstrate, by giving your time, knowledge, and experience—whether your skills are as a lawyer, a construction worker, or a parent—you’re providing an essential service that would otherwise not be delivered or would have to be purchased.

Of course, sometimes it’s hard to calculate the value of service in monetary terms. Some even say it’s wrong to do so, arguing that putting a cash price on volunteering cheapens its worth. Others suggest that to measure volunteering in this way implies that volunteers simply replace paid workers—when in fact their gifts can be far more valuable in human terms.