


# HONOR



 Back in 1972, when Dan Bassill of Chicago (above left) was in advertising at Montgomery Ward, he volunteered to tutor one fourth-grader living in a housing project. His life hasn't been the same since. Soon he'd volunteered to head a tutoring program at work, managing hundreds of volunteers and students. Bassill says that companies concerned about diversity training can do nothing better than get their employees tutoring kids from different backgrounds. "We need working people out in the community, seeing what kids' lives are really like, working on solutions." By 1990 the program was so big it needed a fulltime director; Bassill left his good paying job to take it on.

When he broadened his vision to helping kids all over the city, his own board shot him down. A few volunteers who agreed with him signed on with Cabrini Connections, a new nonprofit that Bassill started with no money and a lot of hope. CC not only connects kids with mentors, it also runs motivation programs, organizes field trips to colleges and businesses, enlists corporations, hosts conferences at which tutor/mentor programs can share information, publishes newsletters and directories, stages mentor recruiting fairs, and runs a library of information on tutoring.

Today kids all across Chicago benefit from Cabrini Connections. Bassill's new vision?: Tutor/mentor programs in every neighborhood in every city in the country. Observers of Dan Bassill's drive and dedication won't be a bit surprised when he pulls it off.



Social responsibility has become a theme of many businesses. But not many of them are run by four sixth-grade girls.

Sara Richardson, Valorie Darling, Arielle Ring, and Sara DeCristoforo (below) of Spokane WA became the Helping Hearts Company after reading a newspaper article about the horrendous living conditions for orphans in Romania. They didn't have money to donate so they started the company to make some.

At an age when most kids are trying desperately to fit in, these girls took the risk of being decidedly different from their peers; they also had to operate in an often-daunting adult world. They quickly asked several entrepreneurs for business advice, wrote up a business plan, and got several shopkeepers to agree to sell their product: beeswax candles. One shopkeeper reported "I thought it was really cute, four sixth-grade girls selling candles for orphans. When I agreed to take a few, one of them responded 'Excellent. When would be an appropriate time to deliver the inventory?'"

The girls pooled their earnings from babysitting—about \$100 each—to buy their first supplies of wax and packaging, and got to work. Each of the girls also invested an amazing amount of time and energy, choosing to let their studies and extracurriculars slip a bit to take on the enormity of their project. When orders got too numerous to fill by themselves, they enlisted classmates to help.

By Christmas time, the candles were selling in a spreading number of outlets, including Spokane's premier restaurant and its best department store. By Valentine's, the girls had earned close to \$4,000 for Romanian orphans. They are now expanding the operation.

One businesswoman asked about Helping Hearts, said, "I've been astounded by their behavior, dedication, professionalism, and their willingness to continue on when it's not fun anymore. These girls have broken every rule for what adults should expect of kids."



## THE GIRAFFE PROJECT

The Giraffe Project is a nonprofit organization that moves people to stick their necks out for the common good—and helps them to do it better.

The Project finds and commends "Giraffes," people who are already sticking their necks out. Supporters of the Project are urged to spot such people and report sightings to the Project. Each quarter, a volunteer jury decides who will receive Giraffe commendations. They focus on the personal risks nominees have faced, and whether or not they were acting for the common good. The risks can be social, financial or physical, and can range from risking the loss of peer approval to risking physical harm. In defining the common good we can be this specific: we believe that the common good is not furthered by actions that are violent, unconstitutional or solely self-serving.

We tell the stories of Giraffes to media and in our materials for students, as part of our mission to "enCourage" others. Our strategy is simple: we want people to take risks for the public good, so we show them someone else going first. We want to overcome apathy, cynicism and feelings of powerlessness; so we show what an ordinary person with courage and caring can do.

The Project has placed stories about these heroes in hundreds of local and national print and broadcast media and is now developing television and radio programming for families and for children.

The Project also gives workshops, speeches and seminars that help companies, colleges, labor unions, government agencies, service organizations and entire communities use Giraffe spirit and street-smarts in their work.

For more information on materials, on education programs, on speeches and workshops, or on particular Giraffes, contact:

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