

# TEMPLETON REPORT

NEWS FROM THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

September 23, 2009

## The “Give and Glow” Show

“There are 72,000 foundations in America, and most people can’t name one of them,” says Michael Guillen, the chairman and president of Philanthropy Project, “but we can change that.” Launched in 2007 with major support from the John Templeton Foundation, Philanthropy Project aims to raise awareness about the extent and variety of philanthropic activity in America—and to inspire more Americans to get involved.

Guillen and his team have already launched a “give and glow” video series on AOL, and they are at work on a full-length feature movie for national release.

“We’re using the power of the moving image to inspire and enable ordinary people to be philanthropists,” Guillen told the *Templeton Report*. A Cornell-trained Ph.D. in physics, former science editor of ABC News, and three-time Emmy Award winner, Guillen has made Philanthropy Project his passion, gathering thousands of stories “about American foundations doing something exciting.”

For the subject of the full-length movie, Guillen and his editors settled on the story of Zach Bonner, who in 2005, at age 7, began to gather water and supplies for people victimized by Hurricane Charley in Florida. Using his little red wagon, he collected and distributed the equivalent of 27 truckloads of provisions. Today the Little Red Wagon Foundation encourages kids to be philanthropists and is committed to improving the lives of the 1.3 million American children who are homeless. Zach, who is now 11, recently won wide attention in Washington, DC as he completed a 650-mile fundraising walk.

“We could have made a movie about Rockefeller, but no one would be able to identify with him,” said Guillen. “We want everyone to recognize that they have something to give.” The script will be written by the award-winning screenwriter Patrick Sheane Duncan, whose credits include the acclaimed movies *Courage Under Fire* and *Mr. Holland’s Opus*. A nationwide casting call will begin early next year, with the aim of releasing the movie in time for the 2010 holiday season.



Zach Bonner of the Little Red Wagon Foundation.



VIDEO: Philanthropy Project on AOL.

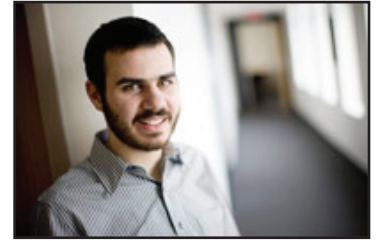
In the meantime, Philanthropy Project has drawn upon the talents of students at six of the nation’s top film schools (American Film Institute, USC, the University of Texas at Austin, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Florida State University, and Boston University) to create an inventive video series on AOL about America’s smaller philanthropies. Among those featured so far are the Petco Foundation, the Ben & Jerry’s Foundation, the Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation, and the Anschutz Family Foundation. The films use a variety of techniques, including animation, dramatization, interviews, and documentary footage, to get across their messages, and the winning student filmmakers have received \$10,000 scholarships.

Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr., the president and chairman of the John Templeton Foundation, sees Philanthropy Project as a unique vehicle for “dramatizing real-life stories of generosity in a memorable and emotionally engaging way.” It is his hope that, by describing “the true breadth and vision of our country’s love affair with philanthropy,” the films will encourage more Americans to be “proactive rather than passive or fatalistic” and to say to themselves, “I just want to do something. I just want to help.”

## NOTEBOOK

### Carrots, Sticks, and Cooperation

A team led by researchers at Harvard’s Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, a grantee of the Templeton Foundation, published its latest findings earlier this month in the journal *Science*. The paper, which is titled “Positive Interactions Promote Public Cooperation,” contradicts previous research suggesting that punishment is the better mechanism for building social cooperation and encouraging action for the public good. As the *Harvard Gazette* reported:



David G. Rand of Harvard’s Program for Evolutionary Dynamics.

The new study, which finds that rewards robustly build compliance and cooperation, could help in developing solutions for thorny problems requiring the cooperation of large numbers of people to achieve a greater good. It was conducted using a computer-based public goods game, a classic experiment for measuring collective action in a laboratory setting. . . .

Lead author David G. Rand, a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard’s Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, says the work has implications far beyond subjects’ behavior in a computer game. “All of us engage in public goods games, on both large and small scales,” Rand says. “Climate change is a huge public goods game: If each person does his or her part to conserve energy and reduce CO2 emissions, it benefits us all. On a more local level, public goods games include volunteering on school boards, helping to maintain public facilities in your community, or cleaning up after yourself and doing your share of work at the office.”

### Boost for the Purpose Prize

On September 1, the Skoll Foundation announced that Civic Ventures, the sponsor of the Purpose Prize, would be the first 2010 winner of the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. The Purpose Prize honors people age 60 and over who devise innovative ways of “taking on society’s biggest challenges,” and it has received major support from the John Templeton Foundation since its inception.

## The Purpose Prize

The Purpose Prize aims to encourage millions of retiring baby-boomers to pour their life experience into “encore careers,” which combine personal meaning, continued income, and social impact. The \$765,000 award from the Skoll Foundation will allow Civic Ventures to promote encore careers more effectively, with new continuing education programs, an Encore Fellows initiatives, and an online community at [Encore.org](http://Encore.org).

For more information about the Purpose Prize, see the January 22, 2009 issue of the *Templeton Report*.

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