

Giraffe Heroes Project 2018 Annual Report

MISSION & MEANS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Giraffe Heroes Project moves people to stick their necks out for the common good, and gives them tools to succeed.

I. Background

The world needs people who stick their necks out for the common good. The Giraffe Heroes Project has been a pioneer in finding and honoring such people. We call them "Giraffe Heroes." They are men and women, young and old, from every ethnic and economic background, and they're tackling every public problem you can think of, from environmental pollution to gang violence. Others see, hear or read these stories and are moved into action themselves, helping solve the public problems of most concern to *them*.

The Project's leaders write books, articles and blogs, and give speeches and workshops, offering people both the inspiration and the practical tools they need to meet the community and global challenges they care about.

Since 1991, the Project has also been developing and distributing classroom materials for character development, service learning, civic engagement, experiential learning and literacy. Giraffe curricula help young people build lives as courageous and compassionate citizens. Using the compelling stories of Giraffe Heroes and a unique coaching framework developed for a wide age-range, Giraffe programs have helped over half a million kids create and carry out their own initiatives to solve public problems of concern to them. In the process they learn critical academic and life skills, as well as how to be active and successful citizens in their communities and beyond. Much of the curricula is now available to teachers as free downloads on [the Project's website](#).

[Giraffe Heroes International](#) (GHI) is the Project's fast growing, on-the-ground, global arm. At the end of 2018, GHI comprised eight independent affiliates in India, Nepal, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Singapore and Argentina. In

addition, in December of 2017, GHI launched Giraffe Heroes Europe, an ambitious expansion of the Giraffe Heroes movement to an entire continent. GHI has shut down its affiliate in Egypt because of threats by the military government there.

All GHI operations are dedicated to replicating the same activities that have worked so well for the US-based Project for over three decades—finding local and regional Giraffe Heroes and getting their stories told in both traditional and social media, inspiring others to emulate these heroes, sticking their own necks out to help solve the public problems that are most pressing for them – corruption, poverty, crimes against women, poor leadership, environmental degradation, tribal violence and much more.

The Project also has a large global audience online. From a base operation near Seattle WA, the Project reaches around the world, via its website at www.giraffe.org; its [Facebook Page](#); its *Heads Up* e-zine, and its blogs and Op-Eds.

Descriptions of all the Project’s programs are at www.giraffe.org. There, you’ll also find an “[About Us](#)” section that contains Giraffe FAQs, notes on our donors, our most recent 990, a history of the Project, our privacy policy, this Annual Report, our board and staff, and “25 Reasons to Support Us.”

II. A Summary of the Project’s Accomplishments in 2018

The Project did well in meeting its stated mission, goals and objectives for 2018.

Program: Giraffe Heroes Stories—selecting Giraffe Heroes, writing and editing their stories, and putting those stories into a searchable web database.

2018 Goal met: The Giraffe jury in the US met regularly online throughout 2018 and commended 36 new Giraffe Heroes, adding their stories and pictures to the 1,400+ already honored. GHI branches (see below) honored 43 new Giraffe Heroes, making a total of 79 new Giraffe Heroes for 2018.

2018 Goal met: We finished the massive job of reprogramming and redesigning the entire Giraffe Hero database and moving it to a platform where it is much more functional and findable. We edited, updated and posted in this new database the inspiring stories of the 36 Giraffe Heroes chosen by the US jury in 2018, complete with photos and contact information. The websites of individual Giraffe Heroes are linked to their online Giraffe profiles in the new database, so anyone viewing these stories can also link directly to the Giraffe Heroes’ own websites.

We invite you to visit this [amazing story bank](#) of inspiring heroes. This online database is a key part of the Giraffe Project's long-term gift to the world; a treasury instantly available, free, to teachers, parents, kids, media—anybody who can get onto the Internet, anywhere in the world. With this updated database, now more than ever, our attractive, state-of-the-art website is our “home-base” in the world.

Program: Outreach — bringing Giraffe Heroes stories and Giraffe inspiration and skills to global audiences through traditional and social media.

2018 Goal met: Giraffe OpEds, speeches, interviews, podcasts and blog posts about citizen action, and current events were picked up by thousands of websites across the world. In May Project Founder Ann Medlock was introduced at the Hero Round Table conference in San Francisco as the person who had been finding heroes and telling their stories longer than anyone else. Her address described the current work of the Giraffe Heroes Project and invited the audience to use the database of over a thousand Giraffe Hero stories and our curricula in their own work. That same month, Medlock did the *Daily Good* podcast, reaching over half a million people. GHI Director John Graham continued his speaking and blogging in 2018, including a conference keynote in Seattle and a blog piece that reached 680,000 readers and reverberated for weeks on the Internet.

2017-18 Goal met: The Project is increasingly online, reaching far more people with far less expense. We have greatly increased the pace, variety and reach of our social media operations, constantly refining them to take advantage of the latest and best options and making sure that our social media messages and website pages really “pop” on phones, tablets, computers—and whatever may come next, especially where young people access the Internet.

2018 Goal met: We continued to expand and improve our social media strategies on Facebook to reach potential allies, partners, customers and funders, as a way of inspiring vast numbers of people to stick their necks out for the common good. Our Facebook fan base continued to grow. Our followers get a daily Facebook feed of stories of real heroes; many of these followers share these Giraffe stories and messages with friends—who share with still

others. The stories we post on Facebook also go to Instagram. Take a look at the content we're posting: <https://www.facebook.com/giraffeheroes>.

2018 Goal met: We continued to expand the number of people reading our quarterly *Heads-Up* e-zine, containing selections of inspiring Giraffe stories, spreading the Giraffe message of courageous, compassionate service, and attracting support for our work. (If you aren't getting it, email office@giraffe.org and ask to join *Heads Up*).

Our adaption to ever changing communication opportunities has greatly increased the Project's outreach, now substantially bigger than ever thanks to social media.

Program: Giraffe Heroes International (GHI)

2018 goals met: Led by Director John Graham, GHI helps our partners overseas launch their own affiliate programs to find and honor their country's inspiring heroes, fostering active citizen engagement in places that urgently need role models of compassionate, courageous service. GHI also offers citizens the tools and training they need to move into courageous service. Specifically~

- We put substantial resources into helping assure the success of Giraffe Heroes Europe (GHE). GHE has now begun finding and honoring its own Giraffe Heroes. It is now working with schools and youth and is planning a major Giraffe event in Spain for 2019. The GHE team is comprised of first rate professionals, including business people with access to potential donors. What we've seen so far of the graphics and other materials produced by GHE is first rate. All Giraffe Heroes honored by GHE will also become part of our searchable web database.
- In 2018 and now, we are paying special attention to Giraffe Heroes Zimbabwe and doing whatever we can to support our partners there in forging a new government that can bring stability, justice and prosperity to that beleaguered nation.

In 2018, GHZ honored it's 89th Giraffe Hero. Many of the Giraffe Heroes whose stories are told in Zimbabwe are political activists who opposed the corruption, mismanagement and violence of dictator Robert Mugabe's regime and now are now fighting to make sure that the new rulers will finally bring to the country the stability, justice and prosperity it deserves. Some of these

brave Giraffe Heroes have been imprisoned and beaten and one was snatched off the streets by government thugs and is presumed dead.

Giraffe Heroes Zimbabwe has now become a significant political force in the country, supporting those fighting for change and giving hope to the many Zimbabweans who yearn for new leadership that is honest, competent, fair and nonviolent. See www.giraffe.org/global-Zimbabwe.

- The newly formed affiliate in Argentina is growing rapidly. It has found and honored nine Giraffe Heroes to date, created a bilingual web page, and organized a major program in Argentine schools using Giraffe materials for service learning and civic education.
- We continue to support other GHI programs in Ghana, Sierra Leone, India, Nepal, Singapore and Kenya. Giraffe work in Egypt is on hold because of government repression.

For an update on all GHI programs, see <http://www.giraffe.org/global>.

Program: Civic Engagement Programs including training programs building civic engagement skills, and a K-12 curriculum helping kids build lives as courageous and compassionate citizens.

2018 goal met: We continued to build our growing global web dialogue with teachers and other users of our curricula. Over 700 teachers have now downloaded for free one or both of our two flagships K-12 programs (including interactive, digitized lesson plans, handouts, audios and videos online) You can find these free downloads at <http://www.giraffe.org/resources/teaching-materials>.

2018 goal met: 150,000 people/month saw our ads on Google Adwords and we continued to sell "[Giraffe Heroes Kits](#)," the most popular version of our curriculum for kids aged 8-14.

Financial Goal

2018 goal met: The Project finished 2018 in the black. See statement below and also our 2018 [Federal Form 990](#).

III. Giraffe Heroes Project—Financial Information for 2018

The Project's work has been funded by private donors, by foundations and by the sale of our books and school programs. Our financial documents are filed on Form 990 with the Internal Revenue Service; you can see a [copy of our latest filing](#) on the Project's website.

The Project's budget is remarkably small for its impact because of the generosity, talent and enthusiasm of volunteers.

The following is a summary of our financials for 2018, compared to 2017:

	2017	2018
a) Year-end net assets (equity):	29,939	34,271
b) Income		
Contributions from individuals	81,395	80,108
Foundation and corporate grants	1,896	1,000
Sales of products and services	793	1,208
Other income	<u>2,373</u>	<u>1,648</u>
Total income	\$86,457	83,964
c) Expenses		
Program services (66.7% in 2018)		
Civic engagement programs	2,500	3,000
Giraffe Heroes, selecting and publicizing	15,547	15,172
Giraffe outreach	23,942	25,269
Giraffe Heroes International	15,208	9,641
Supporting Services		
Fundraising (8.4% in 2018)	6,099	6,725
Administrative (24.9% in 2018)	<u>19,770</u>	<u>19,825</u>
Total Expenses	\$83,066	79,632

IV. Giraffe Heroes Project — Our Goals, Objectives and Recommendations for Future Actions in 2019

Giraffe Heroes Stories

- Commend 24 new Giraffe Heroes and put them into the database. Also add to the database 1) all those stories of Giraffe Heroes previously commended but whose stories are incomplete; and 2) all stories of Giraffe Heroes commended by our GHI affiliates.

Outreach

- We'll continue our active schedule of blogs, Op-eds, interviews, speeches and podcasts.
- We'll continue to expand and improve our social media strategies on Facebook and other avenues to reach potential allies, partners, customers and funders.
- Because high-quality visuals are essential to succeeding on social media, a 2019 priority is finding higher quality still photos of Giraffe Heroes and, funds permitting, creating short video interviews with some Giraffe Heroes.
- We'll go live with a closed group page on Facebook that will provide a forum for all Giraffe Heroes to interact with each other and with Project staff.

Giraffe Heroes International

We'll continue to:

- work with our partners in Europe to build Giraffe Heroes Europe.
- help Giraffe Heroes Argentina become a major voice for civic education in Argentina and to translate our Giraffe materials into Spanish for use in Spanish-speaking classrooms across the world.
- use our media power to amplify the brave voices of the Giraffe Heroes in Zimbabwe who are risking their lives to help create a government there that is honest, fair and competent.
- support all GHI affiliates with coaching, media power and other resources.

Civic Engagement Programs

- We'll continue to build our growing global web dialogue with teachers and other users of our curricula.
- Funding permitting, we'll do a training video for teachers; its purpose will be to help them get optimum results from their uses of Giraffe curricula.

Finances

- We'll continue to keep our finances in the black, relying increasingly on the growth in the number of monthly pledges that began so promisingly in 2018, and on the generosity, skills and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

V. Giraffe Heroes Project Board for 2019

Ron Reed, Chair

Jayasri Ghosh, Secretary

Malory Graham, Treasurer

Ann Medlock

Pat Wright

Peter Tavernise