



# Giraffe Heroes Project

#StickYourNeckOut

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Dear Valued Customer,  
Here in the northern hemisphere, the days are getting darker as we descend into December, 2024. For many, all over the world, there's also a political darkening. Here at Giraffe HQ, we see times ahead when the world will need ever more people sticking their necks out, like the ten people here. We hope these glimpses of them inspire you.

***As long as there are Giraffes, there's hope.***

—Ann Medlock, Founder

PS: If you want to learn more about those who have websites, do click on the links we've given you.



Investment analyst **Trevor Murray** was fired for refusing an order from the world's largest private bank to change his analysis of investment options to profit the bank rather than his clients. He blew the whistle, and got a job in a grocery store while he sued the bank. After five years of legal battles, the US Supreme Court agreed with Murray that he and other whistleblowers do not have the impossible task of proving the mindset of employers who fire them. He's working now at a Charlotte NC bank, making sure his clients' interests come first.

Boston businessman and competitive runner **Tom O'Keefe** noticed that almost all the runners he saw were white people like him, people with the money and time the sport requires. He created Stride for Stride, a nonprofit that pays all the expenses of training, travel, and entry fees for immigrants to the US who want to run but can't afford to. The operation grew so large, it's taking all the time he once spent on his for-profit business. [See his work here.](#)



When Covid first hit the US, **Dorothy Oliver** saw that Paloma, AL, the tiny town where she owned the general store, had little information and no assistance. She got a distant hospital to agree to do a pop-up clinic in the town if enough residents signed up, fast. Oliver went to every household to explain the virus, and the danger, despite the risk to her own health. Thanks to her, Paloma lost none of its 400 citizens, in a state where thousands died.



Growing up on a big Iowa farm where her family produces cash crops of corn and soybeans for industry, **Lauren Schroeder** had no experience of growing fresh food for people's tables. But reading about people who can't afford healthy food, Schroeder decided she'd use some of her family's acreage and all her time to do something about that. Working solo with hand tools, the teen has planted, grown, harvested and delivered over 7,000 pounds of fresh produce to food

banks, soup kitchens, and a nursing home. She plans on 13,000 more pounds before she heads off to college in 2025.

**Curtis Shuck** spent decades as an oil company executive, siting wells and managing production. When he saw abandoned oil and gas wells in Montana, he was horrified. Looking into the matter, he learned that there are at least 126,000 “orphan” wells in the US alone. No one owns them and they’re all releasing contaminants into the air and water. He created the Well Done Foundation to properly shut them down. He and his fellow volunteers have plugged 40 wells in 10 US states and are determined to do as many more as they can, despite scoffers in the oil business telling them that they’re deluded alarmists. [Check out his work here.](#)



**Saket Soni** was an undocumented immigrant in the US when he started championing other undocumented people, loudly and visibly. A theater guy, he's staged dramatic events that bring their mistreatment to public attention. As when he directed a breakout of trafficked laborers on the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, all of them enslaved by companies contracted to clean up the mess. *Five hundred* of them marched on DC, telling their story of abuse all along the way. Now a US citizen, Soni founded Resilience Force, organizing post-disaster workers, and lobbying for changes in labor laws and corporate policies. [Keep up with him here.](#)





Blind since she was 12, **Sabriye Tenberken** and her sighted partner **Paul Kronenberg** are championing a better life for people dealing with blindness *and* assisting change agents with the tools to launch and sustain new social ventures. Based in Tibet, the couple have to counter a culture that hides blind children, and Chinese rulers who are so suspicious of their work that they've arrested Kronenberg. The couple persists, with their Braille Without Borders and with trainings for social entrepreneurs from 55 nations. [Their work is here.](#)



Nigerian attorney **Chika Ugochukwu** struggled to care for a son with cerebral palsy while also earning the money she needed to maintain their lives. Finding no help from public or private agencies, she founded Flora's Trust Center to assist parents

who are struggling as she was. The Center provides special needs children with professional therapists for speech, strength and skill-building, while their parents continue earning incomes, knowing their kids are being cared for. [Her work is here.](#)

Alarmed by AI's "scraping" of artists' works, Singapore art photographer **Jingna Zhang** sued in a Luxembourg court when her own work was appropriated. She won. She's now suing corporations that are pushing AI, including Google, which the suit cites for misusing billions of copyrighted images to "train" their image-generator, Imagen. To help her fellow artists protect their livelihoods, she's created Cara, a social network and art platform with hundreds of thousands of users, where artists showcase their work, protected from AI infringement. [Find out more here.](#) (Photo by Jingna Zhang)



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**Hope these Giraffes gave you some ideas about ways  
*you* can stick your neck out to make the world a better place  
for your fellow beings.**

**Do whatever you can to be a light  
in all the darkness.**

**AND HANG IN THERE!**

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**We post Giraffe stories in social media every day  
from the vast storybank we've created over the decades.  
That storybank is on [our website](#),  
along with all the other freebies we've created over the years,  
all yours for the taking.  
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