



Giraffe Heroes Project

#StickYourNeckOut

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Dear John,

Four months into 2025, we're here to tell you about brave humans all over the world who are resisting the rising tide of tyranny, of greed over public safety, of disrespect for the dignity of all. Brave, caring people are speaking out for the right of human beings to govern themselves and to strive for justice.

Here are quick looks at just a few to remind you that—

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

—Ann Medlock, Founder



In Idaho teacher **Sarah Inama's** sixth-grade classroom there's a sign that says, "In this room, everyone is welcome, important, accepted, respected, encouraged, valued." The school's principal told her to take the sign down because it's "not something everybody believes." It violated a state law and school policy about creating "a positive learning environment"!!! Astonished, she complied. But thinking it over that night, she resolved that public schools had to welcome everyone. She went back to the room over the weekend and put the sign up again. The result was hundreds of parents and kids chalking the sign's words on sidewalks, a walk-out at a nearby high school, and thousands of people wearing

Everyone is Welcome Here T shirts.
Inama has been told again to take the sign down or
lose her job. She's not taking it down.

Santiago Paredes was a lead safety inspector at Spirit AeroSystems, a company that makes parts for Boeing planes. Paredes and his team did the final checks on fuselages for the 737Max. When he reported too many of them, the company told him he was a "showstopper," that they didn't have time to fix the defects. Paredes protested, knowing that mistakes could cause deaths.

The company responded by demoting and harassing him. He found a job in another city, uprooting his family, and restarting his career. Spirit pursued him, calling his new employer to disparage him, leading to rumors among his co-workers that he wasn't to be trusted. Paredes has blown the whistle on both Spirit and Boeing, reporting that both companies knew the 737Max shouldn't be in the air. He's also providing expert testimony in a lawsuit brought against Spirit by its shareholders.



Journalist **Patsy Widakuswara** was the Voice of America's White House bureau chief when she asked the prime minister of Ireland a question about Gaza at a press briefing. The president of the United States was not pleased, asking, "Who are you with?" Two days later President Trump signed an executive order eliminating the Voice of America and its "radical propaganda."

Hundreds of reporters, writers, and broadcasters were locked out of their offices, and the Voice of America went silent for the first time since 1942. Widakuswara, who's been at VOA for 22 years, is now the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit to get the Voice of America back on the air, doing the job she explains as presenting America's story, not an administration's.

Here's a link to

her: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patsy-widakuswara-b63001134/>



Colombian-born American **Juan Merchan**, a New York State Supreme Court judge, presided over the trials of a former president of the United States, a man accused of multiple felonies and claiming that his actions were covered by a Supreme Court decision that US presidents can't be prosecuted for official acts. Merchan knew Trump could also be a *future* president, knew that the defendant was defaming him, threatening court staff, and encouraging threats in social media, including calls to assassinate him and his daughter, and publishing their home addresses.

Calmly and judiciously, Merchan stood with the laws of the land, ruling without fear or favor that the actions in question were not "official," and holding Trump guilty on all 37 felony counts.

Joohn Choe is an expert in digital activism, finding and calling out disinformation and info warfare. After the January 6 attack on the US capitol, Choe was hired by Facebook to study extremists' use of that platform and of Instagram.

He found many such users, including the Belarusian secret police, who were using the platform to spy on people in that nation, to spread lies about Ukraine, solicit funds, and recruit fighters.

In response to his report, the company did nothing. Choe went public with his findings and worked with Whistleblower Aid to file complaints about Facebook's failure to act, calling on the US Departments of Justice and Treasury and the Securities and Exchange Commission to make the



company take responsibility for the platform's misuse.

His whistleblowing cost him his contract with Facebook, as he knew it would. He's piecing together an income via public donations to keep pressuring social platforms to take responsibility for stopping dangerous lies.

You can keep up with him here:

<https://www.facebook.com/choejoohn/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joohnchoe/>



When Episcopal priest **Cayce Ramey** came back to Virginia after a trip to Ghana, he was a changed man. He had stood in a Christian chapel directly over a dungeon where Africans were imprisoned, awaiting shipment into slavery in the United States. Churches throughout Virginia were built by slaves. Most clergy there, before the Civil War, owned enslaved people.

The experience convinced him that the church needed to acknowledge its complicity in slavery.

"What example am I providing if I'm willing to celebrate Holy Eucharist at an altar that we set up on plantation land on top of the bodies and blood of people enslaved on that land?"

Ramey stopped offering the eucharist at his church, saying he would resume when the church atones for being part of institutionalized white supremacy. A Black assistant bishop in his diocese accused him of appropriating Black suffering. The church opened disciplinary proceedings and recommended he be defrocked. He's appealing but it's a costly process and Ramey has no salary. Nevertheless, he is resolute, saying the church must admit and acknowledge its past wrongs.

Here's his website: <https://racialheresy.com>



At five years old, **Shabana Basij-Rasikh**'s parents disguised her as a boy so she could attend school in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, where educating girls was not allowed.

After the Taliban were driven from power, she was chosen by the US State Department to study in the US. While a college student, Basij-Rasikh founded SOLA, the School of Leadership Afghanistan, for teen-aged girls in Afghanistan—or it was until the Taliban roared back into power. Faced with arrest and a curtailed life for herself and her students, Basij-Rasikh made a run for it. She destroyed all records of SOLA and took the entire operation, including 250 students, staff members, and families across the world, to Rwanda.

Every year, thousands of girls apply and 30 join the student body of girls Basij-Rasikh is sure will be compassionate and confident Afghan women with the leadership skills to rebuild Afghanistan and guide their homeland into a better future.

You can learn more here: <https://www.sola-afghanistan.org>

Romanian **Paul Radu** is on the enemies list of many a corrupt oligarch and compromised public official. His nonprofit, the Organized Crime & Corruption Reporting Project, is a global network of fellow journalists plus scientists, programmers, and ordinary citizens who help track down dirty money and dirty deals. OCCRP's investigations have led to the freezing or seizing of more than ten *billion* dollars, and to over 700 arrests and indictments. The group's findings are also credited for helping bring about the resignations of corporate CEOs and of the former president of South Africa. Radu's been sued for libel, but the case was



dropped due to his accusations being true.
One of OCCRP's ways of bringing public attention to the misuse of power is to give a sarcastic annual award to the best Person of the Year at promoting crime and corruption, including President Erdogan of Turkey, President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, and President Donald Trump of the United States.
There's more about his work here: <https://www.occrp.org/en/projects>



British multi-millionaire **Gary Stevenson** insists that he and his monetary peers should pay more taxes. After growing up in a lower middle-class family, Stevenson made a fortune as a trader, a very successful one. Aware of how hard life is for people of meager means, he left trading and became a full-time advocate for a wealth tax, one that would hit him hard as well as the other uber wealthy Brits who are publicly denouncing him as a communist. Undaunted, Stevenson continues to make noise, including on YouTube, where his "GarysEconomics" has half a million subscribers. Stevenson is resolved that no matter he's called, he'll keep advocating for the equity and justice of a wealth tax.
Here's Gary's Economics: <https://www.youtube.com/garyseconomics>

Since he was 17, **Daniel Hunter** has been working to move power from rulers down to the people, people who want to live in a just and peaceful world. Traveling wherever he sees a need, and with no regard to his own financial security or personal safety, Hunter has been a community organizer and mobilizer in Myanmar, Indonesia, Ghana, and Sierra Leone.
These days, he's worked with striking Canadian postal workers and with Philadelphians blocking casinos and promoting affordable housing. He's written eight books that guide people in winning tactics for standing against abuses of power. He's currently working with Israelis and Palestinians who want peace, and his nonprofit "Choose



Democracy” is helping US citizens resist the Trump Administration’s authoritarian actions, providing action plans and coaching.
There are great resources for helping you move into action yourself at his website: <https://choosedemocracy.us>

**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!

**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.
*You'll like it all. We promise.***

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