



Giraffe Heroes Project

#StickYourNeckOut

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Dear John,
It's spring in the northern hemisphere and here we come, planting new Giraffe Heroes in your in box. May their stories lift your spirits, just as the sun lifts new life from the awakening ground.

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

—Ann Medlock, Founder



When forest ecologist **Rose Abramoff** saw that her learned papers on the climate crisis weren't stopping or even slowing that crisis, she left the ivory tower and took action. She chained herself to the White House fence. She was arrested. At a conference of the American Geophysical Union, she unfurled a banner reading "Out of the lab and into the streets." The banner was ripped out of her hands and the research she had presented was deleted by the AGU. That protest led to her losing her job at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory for engaging in "personal activity on a work trip." Abramoff wasn't surprised and she isn't deterred, saying, "When scientists take action, people listen." And the follow up—"When scientists take action, they're sometimes fired." It's worth it to Abramoff. "I'm all for decorum, but not when it will cost us the Earth." Follow her work on [her website](#).



Minutes after grad student **Amelia Bonow** learned that the US House of Representatives had voted to defund Planned Parenthood, she wrote an online message of gratitude to the organization, thanking them for the abortion she'd had there. She ended with #ShoutYourAbortion. Tens of thousands of women responded. So did furious people threatening Bonow's life. Frightened but determined, she put her studies on hold and started a website and a Youtube channel where women share their experiences and support each other in protecting the freedom to choose. [Here's her website](#).



Nalleli Cobo has been an environmental warrior since she was 9 knocking on hundreds of doors (with her mom) in her South Central Los Angeles neighborhood, talking with residents about the damage being done to their health by the oil wells pumping near them. She went on to found People Not Pozos (oil wells) and a youth group whose members work for a safe environment. The groups sued the city for violating the state’s environmental laws. They won. Wells were shut down and oil extraction in the city and county was banned. Cobo has survived cancer at 19, cause “unknown,” leading to three surgeries and being bed-ridden for six months. Back in action now, she’s proud that “A community that people saw as invisible . . . made that change, made history. We made history.” You can [follow her work on Instagram](#).



Jacqueline Garrick, a US Army vet, was working at the Pentagon when she discovered conflicts of interest and contract frauds. She reported these to her superiors, but the ethical issues were not addressed. Instead, she was reassigned to a lesser job and harassed. She filed a formal complaint, and was retired on “disability,” without pension. A court eventually awarded her retirement benefits. In the meantime, she had founded Whistleblowers of America to assist other truth-tellers. [Here's that website.](#)



Retired carpenter/contractor **Randy Hudson** lost a brother who was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. Knowing from his own experience that fishing can be a healing activity, Hudson founded Purple Heart Anglers, rallying hundreds of volunteers to help him get wounded vets out on the water. Paying the bills himself, Hudson has organized expeditions for thousands of vets with PTSD, bodily wounds, and chemical poisoning like his late brother. During COVID he got a company to give him a van so he could drive vets to fishing sites without using public transportation.

His [Purple Heart Anglers website is here.](#)



Cassidy Hutchinson became famous to some, notorious to others, when she testified before the US Congress about what she saw and heard in her job at the White House about the January 6 attack on the Capitol. When she was asked by the investigating committee to testify, she began getting messages promising her “a really good job in the Trump world” if she demonstrated her loyalty in her testimony. She reports being so scared she fled home to her parents’ house. But when she read about the importance of Howard Dean’s testimony during Watergate, she realized she had similar knowledge and the same responsibility to tell the truth, which she did. Instead of the cushy future she’d have for lying, she’s in a secret location, fearing the revenge of Trump supporters.



In a very short time, **Shirley Raines** experienced the deaths of her toddler, her dad, her son's father, and her grandmother. Felled by grief, she was incapacitated until she joined a group to feed the homeless and realized, "My God, they're broken just like me." She and her kids started handing out food, drinks, hygiene kits, and beauty products. She was soon cooking 400 meals a week in her small apartment in Long Beach CA, then driving them 20 miles to LA's Skid Row. She does haircuts and shampoos from a portable hairdressing station. Worried about exposure to COVID, family members have begged her to stop, but she's insisted that it's no time to give up on the homeless. Her [Beauty2theStreetz is here.](#)



Maria Ressa, an American born in the Philippines, went back as a CNN reporter and founded Rappler, a website that spotlights governmental corruption and human rights violations there, documenting their spread of disinformation and the harassing of opponents. Despite the Nobel Prize she received for this work, the Duterte government sued her for “cyber libel” and for tax evasion. She’s been acquitted on the tax charge but was found guilty of the bizarre libel charge and faces years in prison. Ressa is sure that no matter what happens next, in the long term, right will win. Her [Rappler is here](#).



Oliver and Barb Semans created the nonpartisan group Four Directions decades ago to advocate for First Nations' voting rights. When the US recently passed the RESPECT Act, the couple, members of the Sigangu Oyate tribe, were honored by tribes across the US for helping win that repeal of 11 federal laws that were discriminatory against First Nations. Thanks to Barb and Oliver Semans, not only are those damaging laws gone, voter turnout among First Nations people has almost doubled. For [Four Directions, click here](#).



When an earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, former Greenpeace captain **Sequoia Sun** set sail for Port au Prince, bringing in desperately needed supplies. Seeing how widespread and long-term the needs are, he's gone back, again and again, delivering gifts of food, medical supplies, solar panels, computers, schoolbooks—even sails for local fishing fleets. He's founded Sail Aid International, a nonprofit that extends his reach to isolated coastal villages and islands in the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, St. Martin, and Dominica, all areas that have suffered from hurricanes, earthquakes, or other natural disasters. There are outbreaks of cholera and dysentery, all contagious and deadly. There are marauding armed gangs that plague the communities, trying to steal anything they can sell. No matter. Captain Sun sails in. [Here's his website.](#)

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from the vast storybank we've created over the decades.
That storybank is on [our website](#),
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