

The Purpose Prize

for Americans leading with experience



2006 Finalists

Meet the 15 finalists for the Purpose Prize, the first significant investment in our country's greatest undiscovered force for social innovation: Americans over 60. Chosen from a pool of more than 1200 nominees, the finalists are using their passion, smarts, and experience to take on society's biggest challenges – from educating children at greatest risk...to preventing and treating life-threatening disease...to fighting intolerance and poverty. Five will win \$100,000 each; the rest will win \$10,000 each.

The Prize is part of a new national initiative to inspire and encourage millions of Americans to use their experience for the greater good in what used to be called the retirement years. The \$9 million effort, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and The John Templeton Foundation, includes a summit to convene experienced and aspiring social innovators from across the country. A \$1.5 million Fund for Innovation will provide grants to help Prize winners and finalists expand their community work and take breakthrough ideas to scale.

Civic Ventures is a think tank and program incubator helping society achieve the greatest return on experience. For more information, go to www.civicventures.org.



Frank Brady, Medical Missions for Children (NJ)

Improving access to children's health care through technology

A serious heart condition forced Frank Brady, a jet-setting international businessman, to retire 10 years ago. Recalling an earlier health crisis - he survived spinal meningitis as an infant thanks to experimental treatment with a new miracle drug called penicillin - Brady created Medical Missions for Children in 1999. The organization helps seriously ill children who lack access to quality medical care, and educates the medical professionals who care for them. Medical Missions for Children uses interactive video technology to allow pediatric specialists to remotely diagnose patients and recommend treatment, and internet and broadcast technology to collect and distribute cutting-edge information to thousands of medical professionals across the country.



Conchy Bretos, MIA Consulting Group, Inc. (FL)

Bringing assisted living services to public housing

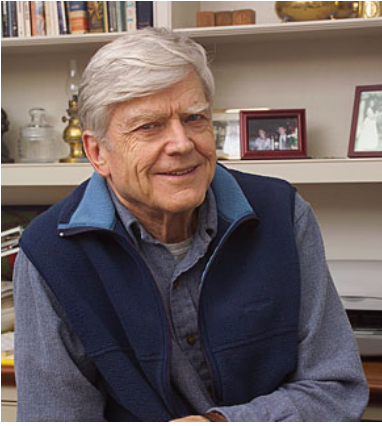
After a varied career in housing, marketing, health, and women's issues, Conchy Bretos ran for a seat on the Dade County Commission in 1993 and lost. She was then appointed to the job of Florida Secretary for Aging and Adult Services, a position that allowed her to see firsthand the thousands of low-income elders and disabled adults who were not getting the service they needed to stay in their homes. As a result, many ended up in nursing homes prematurely, because they could not afford in-home care or assisted living facilities. So Bretos became the driving force behind the nation's first public housing project – the Helen Sawyer building in Miami – to bring assisted living services to older adults who just need a little help to stay in their homes. Today she runs a consulting company that has helped 40 public housing projects in a dozen states bring assisted living services to their residents.



Robert Chambers, Bonnie CLAC (NH)

Providing low-interest car loans to the rural poor

Over a varied career in business, Robert Chambers had occasion to work as a car salesman, where he saw both the routine ways dealerships prey on low-income buyers and the bind that rural low-income buyers are in - they don't qualify for a loan to buy a reliable car and, without one, they often can't get a job that would allow them to build up their credit. So in 2001, Chambers created Bonnie CLAC (Car Loans and Counseling) to provide car loans at low-interest rates to low-income buyers, offer financial management courses, and help people get a leg up on a middle-class life. To make it work, Chambers works out agreements with car dealers and banks, and Bonnie CLAC guarantees the loans. So far, more than 725 people have purchased cars with help from Chambers, saving an average of \$7,000 over five years.



Charles Dey, National Organization on Disability (DC)

Engaging high school youth with disabilities in the world of work

At 64, after a career in education and a record of starting programs to ensure equal educational opportunities, Charles Dey was looking for his next career. His long-time friend Alan Reich, who founded the National Organization on Disability years earlier when an accident left him a quadriplegic, told Dey to “do for young people with disabilities in the 90s what you did for minorities in the 60s.” So Dey created Start on Success, a National Organization on Disability program to provide paid internships and to assign workplace mentors to predominantly minority high school students with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. To date, more than 1,500 disabled high school students have had internships at universities, hospitals, and small businesses in five cities. So far 85% of them have gone on to full-time jobs or further education. Without the benefit of any job training program, only about 30% of inner-city, minority students with disabilities have comparable success.



Bernard Flynn, River Partners (CA)

Restoring river ecosystems for sustainable flood control and habitat preservation

Barney Flynn, a former prune and almond grower, used his experience as a farmer and businessman to come up with an inventive way to help California farmers transform unprofitable land, save endangered wildlife, boost the local economy, and provide flood control - all at the same time. In 1998, after years of experiencing the annual flooding of farm land from breached levees, Flynn co-founded River Partners, a nonprofit organization that helps farmers navigate state regulations and craft deals to restore flood-prone riverfront acreage as habitat for wildlife, much of it endangered, while providing a sustainable flood-control alternative to levees and dams. River Partners also implements the restoration plans, pioneering the use of modern agricultural techniques to cut the costs of river restoration. To date, River Partners has restored about 4,000 acres and planted 510,000 native trees and shrubs.



Marilyn Gaston and Gayle Porter, Gaston and Porter Health Improvement Center (MD)

Empowering midlife African-American women to improve their health

African American women are dying at rates that are greater than any other group of women in the United States -- and most of these deaths are preventable. That fact inspired Marilyn Gaston (left) and Gayle Porter (right), both accomplished health professionals to change their focus and write *Prime Time: The African American Woman's Complete Guide to Midlife Health and Wellness* in 2001. But information alone wasn't enough to meet the need. So in 2003 they created Prime Time Sister Circles - part health course on exercise, nutrition, and stress, and part support group - to change how African American women approach their own health, and thus the health of their families and communities. Meetings, which take place in convenient community locations, such as churches and community centers, encourage goal-setting, peer support, and empowerment. To date, 130 women have participated in pilots in three states and the District of Columbia; 68% of them have maintained their health improvements for more than a year.

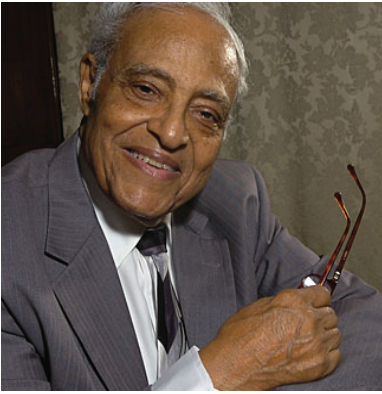


W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Amachi (PA)

Mentoring children of incarcerated parents

Wilson Goode is perhaps best known for his two terms as mayor of Philadelphia (from 1984 to 1992). But in 2000, at age 62, Goode earned a Doctorate of Ministry and took a job as director of Amachi, a nonprofit established to help the 7 million children who have one or both parents either in jail, on parole, or under state or federal supervision. The problem was close to his heart -- when he was 14, Goode's father was sent to jail for assaulting Goode's mother. The solution was just as personal. Goode paired a proven intervention - mentoring - with a faith-based recruitment strategy. He rallied pastors in predominantly African American communities, who then encouraged their congregants to serve as mentors. Today more than 240 programs in 48 states are affiliated or inspired by Amachi -- a Nigerian Ibo word

that means “who knows but what God has brought us through this child.” Mentors have helped more than 30,000 children of incarcerated parents. Without intervention, experts suggest, 70% of these children would follow their parents to jail.



Benjamin Hooks, The Children's Health Forum (DC)

Preventing childhood exposure to lead poisoning

Near the end of his tenure as head of the NAACP, Ben Hooks saw that the battle for legal access to voting, education, and employment had largely been won. He wanted to work on the next battleground - the health and environmental inequalities that impact minorities just as surely as these earlier challenges. Working with Jack Kemp, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Hooks founded the Children's Health Forum and selected lead poisoning -- considered the most preventable environmental health hazard facing children today -- as its focus. Hooks and Kemp worked with Congress to secure a \$50 million appropriation for use in communities with the highest incidence of childhood lead poisoning, an amount that has since reached \$200 million. One example of the group's success: The number of children in St. Louis with elevated blood levels decreased by 39% over four years, and the number of housing units designated "Lead Safe" nearly quadrupled.



Dagney Jochem, Partners In Caring, Duke University (NC)

Bringing HIV/AIDS education, prevention and care to rural minorities

In the 1990s, HIV/AIDS treatment and services in North Carolina were largely confined to medical clinics, focused primarily on the gay community, and concentrated almost exclusively in large urban areas. Dagney Jochem, a former economic analyst and consultant who became a divinity student in her 50s, was determined to work through channels overlooked or avoided by other advocates - especially rural and minority churches in African American and Native American communities. In less than 10 years, her organization, Partners in Caring, has created a myriad of programs to meet specific needs, including a prevention program for at-risk youth, an education program to promote healthy living with HIV, and a program to train peer educators to offer support services in a community setting, just to name a few.



James Ketelsen, Project GRAD Houston (TX)

Helping disadvantaged youth to graduate high school and enroll in college

James Ketelsen created Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams) when he was CEO of Tenneco, a Fortune 500 manufacturer of heavy equipment, in 1988. When he retired, he turned his full attention to doing more to help minority and low-income youth graduate from high school and attend college. Early efforts focused on tutoring and summer jobs, but Ketelsen wasn't satisfied with the return. Today Project GRAD includes college scholarships; rigorous new K-12 reading and math curricula; teacher training in classroom management; and a partnership with Communities in Schools, a nonprofit that coordinates school-based community resources. To date, 135,000 students in eight states have been served by Project GRAD; 1,707 GRAD scholars are attending college; 14,500 GRAD students are in high school and plan to go to college; and the high school graduation rate for GRAD participants is nearly double pre-program rates.



Suzanne Mintz, National Family Caregivers Association (MD)

Giving a voice to America's family caregivers

Suzanne Mintz became a family caregiver when her husband, Steven, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1974. In 1997, she left a career in interior architecture to take the reins of the National Family Caregivers Association, a nonprofit she co-founded to give voice to the 50 million people in the United States who provide care for a chronically ill, disabled, or elderly family member or friend during any given year. Mintz uses her own difficult experience - two extended separations from her husband, burnout, and depression - to put a human face on the difficulty and isolation of caregiving and to mobilize caregivers as a political force. It's a powerful message falling on receptive ears. The Association now reaches millions through speaking engagements, newsletters, pamphlets, a web site, and a helpline, and is working to support caregivers through legislation and policy change.



Judea Pearl and Akbar Ahmed, Daniel Pearl Dialogues for Muslim and Jewish Understanding (CA and DC)

Fighting intolerance, conflict and terrorism through dialogue and exchange

UCLA computer science professor Judea Pearl (right) has left math equations behind to defy the terrorists who murdered his son, Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, in 2002. “If they try to spread division among people, then we ought to spread friendship,” he says. Akbar Ahmed (left), a professor of Islamic Studies, is Pearl’s partner and envoy to Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. The two now travel the country to speak at “Daniel Pearl Dialogues for Muslim-Jewish Understanding Featuring Akbar Ahmed and Judea Pearl,” linking their life stories to a larger call for reconciliation and providing a rare forum for moderate Muslims in the U.S. to gather. Dialogue is central to all the work of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, which sponsors fellowships for journalists and an Internet news service for high school journalists, advocates press freedom, and organizes world music days to bring people together. One small example of progress: Ahmed will speak at the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, the first Muslim to be invited.



Martha Rollins, Boaz and Ruth, Inc. (VA)

Easing prisoner re-entry and restoring community vitality

While building an antique business, Martha Rollins became painfully aware of the disconnect between the people of privilege entering the front of her shop and the people in poverty living behind it. In 2001, she created Boaz & Ruth to help some of the 200 people released from prison each week in the Richmond area, spur commercial rehabilitation in a crime-ridden neighborhood, and form healing cross-cultural bridges in the racially divided city. Today Boaz & Ruth maintains a used furniture store, a cafe and catering operation, a furniture restoration business, a home repair and furniture moving enterprise, and eBay sales - all to provide jobs and job training for ex-convicts, revitalization for the neighborhood, and revenue to run the program. Of the 50 who have entered the program so far, 22 have found full-time jobs. Only five have been reincarcerated - that’s a 10% recidivism rate, compared to the statewide rate of 30%.



June Simmons, Partners in Care Foundation (CA)

Creating, implementing and evaluating new ways of delivering health care

Over the two decades that June Simmons worked as a social worker and hospital administrator, she saw a lot that’s right about health care - and a lot that isn’t. Frustrated by the immorality and inefficiency of the system, she established the nonprofit Partners in Care Foundation in 1998 to devise innovative approaches to health care delivery. A high-quality, cost-saving program to provide home care for dying patients was adopted throughout the Kaiser Permanente system. The Foundation has also worked in partnership with other organizations to train more social workers to work with the elderly, place retired doctors and nurses in existing clinics to treat the uninsured, and adapt a medications management program that reduces life-threatening errors, just to name a few examples. Under Simmons’ management, Partners in Care has grown tenfold in eight years.



Herb Sturz, Open Society Institute (NY)

Expanding after-school care and tapping older adults for community service

A long-time social innovator working behind the scenes on a wide variety of issues, Herb Sturz works to help one population while helping another - what he calls “double or triple social utility.” Most recently, Sturz has focused on two big problems - the lack of quality after-school care for children and the lack of opportunities for older adults to use their experience for the greater good. To push for solutions, Sturz helped create the After School Corporation, which now involves 250 after-school programs serving 40,000 children, while keeping kids off the streets, cutting crime, helping working parents, and providing much needed exercise, nutritious snacks, and intellectual stimulation for kids beyond the school day. Sturz’s newest project is ReServe, which places skilled retirees in part-time positions with social service and government organizations that need, but often can’t afford, qualified help.