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## News Release

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Debut of web site of Focusing Philanthropy  
-- helping donors target contributions  
to extraordinary smaller non-profits

(LOS ANGELES) Focusing Philanthropy announced today the launch of the new organization's website, initially showcasing 14 non-profits chosen for support from a beginning list of over 300. Focusing Philanthropy, a non-profit organization itself, was created to help especially-deserving and well-managed smaller charities through the generosity of significant givers nationwide. The website is [www.focusingphilanthropy.org](http://www.focusingphilanthropy.org)

"We created this resource for personal philanthropy in reaction to our own experience as donors," said Larry Gilson, Chairman and one of the founders. "We are all exposed to non-profits tackling worthy causes but which of them have substantial impact? Which are institutionally credible? Which have shown the capacity to use additional donations effectively? And how can one learn about opportunities that are off the radar but with extraordinary promise?"

Answering these kinds of questions turned out to be surprisingly difficult. We were inspired to create Focusing Philanthropy because we knew that other busy people wanted their significant donations to have maximum impact but lacked the time or background to search for or vet a large number of organizations. Focusing Philanthropy cast a wide net, then narrowed the candidates to a very special 14 through an exhaustive year-and-a-half process."

Gilson noted that this organization is at the other end of the spectrum from donation jars on retail counters and direct mail appeals for small amounts. "Focusing Philanthropy was designed to meet the objectives of the donor who wants to achieve maximum impact from significant gifts," he said. Gilson noted that giving to organizations and programs showcased by Focusing Philanthropy has a number of advantages for the serious donor.

First, many of the targeted opportunities are of a size and focus so that a key donation can "get the whole job done." In contrast to many donations, philanthropists here can say "my donation accomplished this..." Second, donors will be joining others with similar motivations, achieving a pooled impact through the concentrated giving of like-minded individuals. Third, donors have confidence that

their generous dollars are impacting a well-screened and monitored pool of extremely deserving recipients.

Gilson said, "Our goal is to make other conscientious donors aware of the opportunities we have winnowed through this intensive vetting." The fourteen organizations ultimately chosen represent Focusing Philanthropy's goals of building community infrastructure and resources, increasing self-sufficiency, and raising individual and community income through programs in the U.S. and abroad:

- FareStart & Catalyst Kitchens – culinary training and job placement for the homeless, being adapted and rolled out in 100 U.S. cities
- Seva Foundation – preventing blindness and restoring vision in 11 developing countries through in-country capacity building to permit high-quality, low-cost cataract surgery and other techniques; reducing Type II diabetes among native Americans
- Wheels for Humanity – refurbishing and distributing wheelchairs in 16 countries
- The Liberian Mental Health Program of the Carter Center – dramatically improving and expanding the national capacity to diagnosis and treat mental illnesses in Liberia following a 14 year civil war
- Casa Latina – rolling out proven models nationally to enroll day laborers and match them with job opportunities in a "business-like way;" and to teach English as a second language, additional job skills and workplace safety
- Spark – expanding the reach of this national apprenticeship program linking at-risk students with professional mentors that has thus far resulted in high-school graduation rates of ~98%
- East Bay for East Africa – developing and supporting a Kenyan technical training school and other community infrastructure and educational facilities
- BEN Namibia – training and equipping low income Namibians, mainly women, to own and run bicycle repair shops; preparing for a roll-out elsewhere in east Africa
- charity:water – identifying, evaluating, seeking funding for, and facilitating delivery of technical support for local non-profit organizations in 19 countries with promising projects to bring clean water and sanitation to under-served communities
- Community Voice Mail – providing private local phone numbers with voice mail capabilities for low income people in 21 states who lack regular phone service or a fixed address so they can interact with prospective employers, landlords, doctors, caseworkers and family members; expanding this program to help homeless veterans
- Small Enterprise Foundation – a micro-finance institution providing loans and encouraging savings to women in four extremely poor South African provinces
- Scripps College Academy – providing intensive support, including a residential on-campus summer program, to underprivileged high school girls in southern California to prepare them to apply for, be admitted to and succeed in college
- Great American Dream Foundation – supplementing resources of low income students in certain Southern California high schools to enable them to pay "required fees" that are a pre-condition for full participation in school activities thereby overcoming an "invisible" barrier to full engagement in school
- Hope Renews – providing financial assistance for families to permit completion of residential treatment for diagnosed mental health challenges

After a 17-year career as founder and chairman of an investment firm that acquired over 60 companies and managed over \$1.5 billion of equity capital provided by pension funds, insurance companies, college endowments and high net worth individuals, Gilson has adapted to the philanthropic world the methods he used to identify and assess potential investments.

All funds donated through Focusing Philanthropy to support showcased non-profits go to the designated recipients as one hundred percent of Focusing Philanthropy's operating costs and any credit card transaction fees are paid by Gilson.

Focusing Philanthropy will be adding additional extraordinary non-profits to its roster as it identifies and vets them, and will continue to monitor all listed organizations to assure continued compliance with its screening criteria.

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