WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY?
A documentary by SALVATORE ALAIMO

If you think you know about giving, think again.

“What Is Philanthropy? is by far the most definitive and well-produced presentation in video format on the subject.”
Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership

Subtitles available in Mandarin, Spanish, French and English (SDH)
Twenty (20) Scene Selections
Four (4) Special Features

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A Thought Provoking Films Production
TPF Productions LLC
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Dear Educator:

The documentary *What Is Philanthropy?* portrays and discusses the concept of giving within the American context. This is done through a critical lens and the perspectives of a variety of people from across the country and from different backgrounds.

I produced this film for educational purposes, but I believe you and your students will also find it entertaining. **You are strongly encouraged to show the entire film to your students so they can be exposed to the depth and breadth of the concept of philanthropy.** However, I realize you may be limited by time, and that’s why you have 20 scenes to pick from. Feedback from instructors and students at four universities was used to maximize the documentary’s utility for you as an instructor and for your students’ learning experiences. *What Is Philanthropy?* generates critical thought and discussion, hence the film’s tag line, “If you think you know about giving, think again.”

The use of this guide is flexible. You can pick the content that best complements your curriculum and course(s). You can add questions and activities of your own to align with the film. You can be as structured or as open-ended as you feel best fits your course. Regardless of your choices, I believe your students’ knowledge of the concept of giving will be expanded and enhanced.

If you are in a country outside the United States, this film and guide can serve as the means for comparative analysis and discussion about the concepts that apply to your country or the reasons why they don’t apply. In addition, some questions in this guide are written specifically for people living outside the United States. While this film is set in the American context, I do not claim that all aspects of American philanthropy are the best. I believe that all countries can learn from each other.

Please feel free to print and duplicate these materials for your students and colleagues. They are available for free at [http://hdl.handle.net/2022/21095](http://hdl.handle.net/2022/21095). I hope you and your students enjoy watching *What Is Philanthropy?* and that you find the materials in this guide useful and thought-provoking. I’d love to hear from you. Send me your feedback at alaimos@gvsu.edu or (616) 331-6582.

Thank you!

*Salvatore Alaimo*
ABOUT THE PRODUCER

Salvatore Alaimo is an Associate Professor in the School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration at Grand Valley State University, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. Dr. Alaimo has published book chapters in The Jossey-Bass Reader on Public and Nonprofit Leadership; Volunteer Administration: Professional Practice; Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: A Reference Handbook; Handbook of Research on Nonprofit Economics and Management; and International Encyclopedia of Civil Society and has published journal articles in New Directions for Evaluation and Journal of the Grant Professionals Association. What Is Philanthropy?, a documentary about the concept of giving, is his first film.

Dr. Alaimo has nine years experience working at nonprofit organizations and has consulted for nonprofits. He earned his PhD in philanthropic studies at what is now the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University and his MS in urban studies at Georgia State University. He is certified in volunteer administration (CVA). Dr. Alaimo served as president of the Council of Volunteer Administrators of Metro Atlanta (COVA) and the Atlanta-area Evaluation Association (AaEA). He can be reached at alaimos@gvsu.edu or (616) 331-6582.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge individuals and organizations that helped make *What is Philanthropy?* a reality. Robert Payton, who we lost in 2011, was one of my professors in the PhD program studying philanthropy at Indiana University. I consider him a mentor because of the formal and informal advice he gave me during my two years in Indianapolis. One day, he told me that he noticed I wasn't satisfied with the status quo in philanthropy and that I would likely do something entrepreneurial to change that. I didn't know then what that would be, but in the fall of 2008 I hatched the idea to make this documentary. Please watch the special feature Tribute to Robert Payton to see why he was so influential.

Over the past eight years I have greatly appreciated the encouragement and support from family and friends that kept me and this project going even when I thought about quitting as an easy and desirable option. Special acknowledgement is for my Mom and Dad who have passed on in recent years. They instilled in me the work ethic and perseverance necessary to see a project like this to completion.

The funding from various sources made this project possible financially, and this includes contributions from many individuals, foundations, corporations and my employer, Grand Valley State University. Special thanks go to Dorothy Johnson, and David and Michelle Bottrall who not only contributed to the project but helped leverage other funders as well. I also thank the many funders who ironically operate within the sphere of philanthropy that didn't see educating people about giving as an idea worthy of funding. Some also felt the film would never be finished, so I say to them: SURPRISE, HERE IT IS!

As a first-time producer I could not have made this film without the help of professionals, including camerapersons, sound technicians, color correction experts, digital file managers, editors, transcribers, and others who assisted with the production. There are many individuals who helped in other ways by writing letters of support for this film, serving as formal or informal technical advisors, working with me to license the content they represented, or providing knowledge or other resources vital to the production of this film. There were many organizations who served as part of the infrastructure for this production, such as promoting the film, seeking funding, networking with other film makers, etc. The names of all these individuals and organizations are too numerous to mention here, so please look for them in the closing credits. I also appreciate the good folks at Indiana University Press for all they do to promote, market, and distribute this film.

I also want to thank Susan Matheson for editing this guide and Linh Huynh for designing it.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge you as educators for believing that philanthropy education is important, for using this documentary as a teaching and learning tool, and for all you do to impact the lives of your students.
BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM

To prepare your students for this film, explain to them that what they will be watching is produced within the American context. For American students, it is important they understand that this concept of giving is not exclusively American in origin or form, and they should consider and explore it within other countries and cultures for a global perspective. This serves as an important reminder that the American context doesn't necessarily constitute the only ways or the most effective ways of giving. For non-American students it is equally important they understand the film's content may or may not represent their country of origin or culture. There may be some similarities and some differences, which set up the healthy exercise of comparative analysis and discussion. Please remember that subtitles are available in Mandarin, Spanish, French, and English; select subtitles before selecting the content to be viewed.

The film's tag line, “If you think you know giving, think again,” implies that viewers will probably be surprised by the film and will learn new things about philanthropy. Our goal is to change perceptions and explode myths. This presents a wonderful opportunity for students to engage in “before” and “after” exercises. Preparing students beforehand increases their visual literacy. A discussion or written activity prior to viewing the film will help students know what to look for in the film, construct meaning from what they view, retain and analyze concepts, and be better prepared to discuss the film afterwards. Here are some ideas:

- Ask your students what “philanthropy” means to them; go beyond just defining it and ask them to describe their understanding of the concept.
- Have your students write their philanthropic autobiography, which includes answering these questions:
  - Who has influenced your philanthropic activities? How have they influenced you?
  - Who do you give to and why? How do you give?
  - What influences your giving in your academic life? In your professional life?
AFTER VIEWING THE FILM

After viewing the film or a number of sections of the film, set aside time for a general discussion of the overarching themes. Consider discussing some of these questions.

1. What stood out most for you in this film? Why?
2. Has your understanding of philanthropy changed? If so, what is your new understanding of this concept?
3. Were you surprised by anything in this film? If so, what surprised you?
4. Reflect now on your philanthropic autobiography. Will you now engage in any new philanthropic activities? Will you change any previous activities?
5. What is now most important to you regarding your philanthropic activities? Why?
6. Do you feel it is important for citizens to understand the concept of philanthropy? Why or why not?
7. Beyond our own lives, what role can philanthropy play in our society?
8. How does engaging in philanthropy represent citizen participation in society?
9. How does what you viewed relate to this week’s readings or course content? Any similarities and/or differences?

After the discussion, you can refer your students to the resources at http://hdl.handle.net/2022/21095.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

1 – What Is Philanthropy?

1. **Question:** In the opening scene, George Costanza from the hit television series *Seinfeld* tells Jerry, “I would have all this money and, and people would love me. Then they would come to me and beg.” While this obviously was intended to get laughs, what can you say about this comment in relation to the reality of philanthropy?

2. **Activity:** Watch the movie *Schindler’s List* on your own time and answer the following questions:
   - What does Itzhak Stern mean when he says, “The list is an absolute good. The list is alive”?
   - How did Oskar Schindler’s act constitute philanthropy?
   - What ethical theory did his actions represent and why?
   - How would his actions relate to today’s concept of corporate social responsibility?

3. **Question:** Why do you think there was such a variety of answers in the film to the question, “What is philanthropy?” What does this variety reflect? For those who live in countries outside the United States, how would you describe philanthropy in the context of your country?

4. **Question:** Why is there seemingly a lack of understanding of the concept of philanthropy, yet so many Americans engage in it?

5. **Question:** What do you think caused the evolution of the definition of philanthropy from the ancient Greeks’ definition of *philanthropia*—the love of human kind—to the modern definition coined by Robert Payton—“voluntary action for the public good”? Do you feel this evolution has been healthy and productive for society or detrimental to society? Be specific and explicit.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

2 – Historical Evolution

1. **Activity:** Read about Benjamin Franklin’s contributions to society and answer the following questions:
   - What was different in Franklin’s approach to philanthropy compared to the norm for engaging in giving at that time?
   - Franklin founded an organization in Philadelphia, the Junto, where local businessmen got together to discuss how they could contribute to addressing the community’s problems. What benefit might the local businessmen have received from such a group? How might such a group benefit businesspeople today?
   - How did Franklin’s approach represent what we might call today “community building”?

2. **Activity:** Read excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* on voluntary associations and answer the following questions:
   - History professor Olivier Zunz talks in the film about Tocqueville’s concept of self-interest properly understood. What did Tocqueville mean by this concept?
   - How does this concept resonate with the current political and social climates in the United States?
   - If you live in a country outside the United States, how does this concept resonate, if at all, with the current political and social climate of your country?
3. **Question:** What has been the impact of Andrew Carnegie's libraries on American society? Think holistically.

4. **Question:** Why do you think Andrew Carnegie required a financial commitment from local communities before establishing libraries instead of just paying the full cost himself?

5. **Question:** Do you think that most people are aware of the role of women's groups in philanthropy, such as the role women played in the Carnegie Library examples discussed by Professor Nancy Robertson? Why or why not?

6. **Question:** What does this cartoon of Andrew Carnegie represent?

7. **Question:** How should philanthropists ultimately be judged regarding their contributions to society?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

2 – Historical Evolution

8. **Question:** Professor Stanley Katz mentions the views of two US presidents, Franklin Pierce and Ronald Reagan, with regard to the roles of government and the nonprofit sector. How were their views similar and different?

9. **Question:** What is meant by the “devolution” of our federal government? Why is it typically referenced as beginning with the Reagan administration?

10. **Question:** What did Professor Oliver Zunz mean when he said, “The states and civil society do not operate on the same budgetary scale at all. But I do think that philanthropy has a huge role to play in finding creative solutions”?

11. **Activity:** Select one person featured in the montage (accompanied by the song “Tomorrow People”) and write a one-page essay on their important philanthropic contributions to society. Include what was unique about their contributions and/or their approaches.

12. **Question:** Ziggy Marley sings, “Tomorrow people, where is your past? / Tomorrow people, how long will you last?” and “Don’t know your past, don’t know your future, come on.” What do you think he is trying to tell us? How does this relate to our understanding of the history of philanthropy?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

3 – Faith & Religion

1. **Question:** Karen Armstrong talks about how compassion is consistent across the major world religions. How important is compassion for philanthropy?

2. **Activity:** Imam Achmat Salie talks about the practice of Zakat within the Muslim faith, and Rabbi Rosenthal discusses Tzedakah within the Jewish faith. Read about both of these religious concepts and provide three similarities between them.

3. **Question:** Dale McGowan discusses secular philanthropy, and we see a billboard that says, “You don’t need God – to hope, to care, to love, to live.” We know faith and religion have been significant influences on philanthropy in the United States. In their absence, what might motivate secular people to engage in philanthropy?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

3 – Faith & Religion

4. **Question:** For those who live outside the United States, how does faith and religion influence giving in your country? Is there also the practice of secular giving, that is, giving from those who don’t practice religion?

5. **Question:** David Siler and Rabbi Meyer each, in their own way, tell us that it’s important to put our faith into action to serve God. Why do you think they emphasize taking action over serving simply serving God through prayer and religious study?

6. **Question:** The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s arguably couldn’t have taken place or have been successful without the help of churches and the people that managed them. Dr. William G. Anderson reminds us that the movement’s meetings took place in churches. This is an example of how religious institutions can participate in social activism. What are some other examples of how religious institutions can actively participate in the political process? Do you feel religion should take on this role or do you feel it is inappropriate? For those living outside the United States, have religious institutions ever participated in political processes like advocacy or activism in your country?

7. **Question:** Dale McGowan talks about how people of different religions, and even secular people, can work together for the common good. What shared values and activities can help bring together people from such different backgrounds to engage in philanthropy?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

4 – Motivation & Empathy

1. **Question:** In this segment of the film, we see and hear from people who have different motivations for engaging in philanthropy. The narrator says, “Why we give is personal and unique to us.” What typically motivates you to give?

2. **Activity:** Pick four people you know (family, friends, coworkers, etc.) and ask them what motivates them to engage in philanthropy? Record their answers and reflect on the variety of reasons. Are some of the reasons political? Social? Religious? Cultural? Another reason? A combination of reasons?

3. **Question:** Reflect on your own giving. How much of it has been driven by altruism and how much by egoism? How much does the good feeling you get when you give drive your actions? How much of your thought process focuses on your own good feelings versus the cause and recipient of your giving?

4. **Question:** What is empathy and how important is it for philanthropy? Is empathy the same thing as compassion (which we discussed in the last segment)? If not, how is it different? Why is it important? Do we need to experience the same hardship as the people we are helping in order to have empathy? Can we learn empathy in other ways?
1. **Question:** Professor Dennis Young helps us understand why nonprofit organizations exist by explaining theories of market failure and government failure. Explain these theories and provide two examples of nonprofits resulting from each. For those living outside the United States, how do these three sectors (nonprofit/non-governmental organization, business, and government) interact to address the needs of the people within your country’s society?

2. **Question:** Dr. Patrick Rooney reminds us that government doesn’t necessarily have the answers to complex social problems and that nonprofits sometimes can be more flexible in addressing them. Why do you think he said that? Do you agree?

3. **Question:** Mike Farrell talks about “responsible capitalism and irresponsible capitalism.” Provide three examples that represent each, and for each example explain what the impact is on society.
4. **Question:** We see in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco that citizens are not sure nor agree on how the park is funded. Do you think most citizens know that tax revenue is not enough to support the majority of national, state, and county parks? Why or why not?

5. **Activity:** Contact your county, city, or local government responsible for maintaining the parks in your community. Ask them what percentage of support comes from tax revenue and what percentage comes from philanthropic dollars? Ask them if they have volunteers helping to maintain the parks. If so, ask which tasks they perform. Ask the government representative how important the philanthropic support is for the overall maintenance of the park(s).
1. **Question:** Private philanthropy has played an important role in the arts world in the United States. What role has philanthropy played in increasing access to the arts (including visual, performing, and literary arts) for lower income people in the United States? Is there more work to be done in this area? For those living outside the United States, what role has philanthropy played in the arts in your country?

2. **Question:** In times of economic downturn, the arts are typically framed as more of a luxury than a staple when it comes to funding causes. Food, shelter, job readiness, and other similar causes are prioritized by funders in an economic crisis. Is this focus justified and responsible? If you worked at an arts nonprofit organization, what would you say about funding the arts during tough times?

3. **Question:** Christina Augello from the Exit Theatre tells us that the performers themselves are philanthropists because they typically have a separate full-time job and only receive a stipend for their artistic performance. Do we typically think of performers as philanthropists? Why or why not?

4. **Question:** What role within civil society is played by nonprofits that enables us to participate in and experience the arts? How important is this role in, what the Ancient Greeks would call, “our quest for the good life”?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

7 – Social Entrepreneurship

1. **Question:** What is social entrepreneurship? Why is it important in today’s environment? What is necessary for it to reach its potential in addressing the complex issues of our time? Be specific and explicit.

2. **Question:** What did you think of Derreck Kayongo and the Global Soap Project? What are the issues addressed by soap recycling?

3. **Activity:** Ask the manager of a local hotel what they do with their used soap. Ask them to send their soap to the Global Soap Project.

4. **Question:** What were the multiple issues addressed by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute? If necessary, consult their website for a thorough list. Is it typical for a nonprofit organization to bring diverse groups together to address issues of importance that are common to all of them? Do you see opportunities for more of this kind of work?
5. **Question:** What common themes and threads did you see across the three examples of social entrepreneurship: the Global Soap Project, the Atlanta Community Tool Bank, and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

8 – Giving Circle

1. **Question:** Did you know that the majority of philanthropic dollars in the United States comes from individuals? Why do you think many people don’t realize this? What implications does this have for fundraising?

2. **Activity:** The women in the giving circle Impact 100 made a conscious effort to become educated about the important issues that Indianapolis faced when determining their giving priorities. Research your community by talking to citizens, government officials, nonprofit representatives, funders, and other key stakeholders to get a sense of the most important issues. Write a two-page essay explaining what you discovered and what you think should be the top priorities, justifying why you think that.

3. **Question:** What is social capital? How can a giving circle generate social capital?

4. **Question:** Would you consider joining a giving circle? Why or why not?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

9 – Foundations

1. **Question:** Bobbie Munroe and Virginia Esposito make excellent points about family philanthropy. If you were to establish a family foundation, would you want it to exist in perpetuity so that the values of giving and the family legacy would carry on through generations? Or, would you want to see the foundation spend down its money during your lifetime? Either way, what might you do to get your family involved in the giving process?

2. **Question:** Do you believe that family foundations should honor the founder’s intent forever, or should the funding focus change if the times and cause for the original focus have changed?

3. **Question:** What are the pros and cons of establishing your own foundation versus a donor-advised fund within a community foundation?

4. **Question:** The Josie King Foundation is an example of a foundation established to help address a specific issue faced by a family; in this case, it was the loss of their daughter. How can such action help a family deal with loss? What should a family do to impact the very issue that prompted them to establish the foundation?

5. **Question:** In the interview with Alex Smith, the producer purposely did not ask him about football, and he seemed to appreciate that. He clearly was interested in discussing the issue of foster kids transitioning out of the system and his foundation work. What do you think prompts a successful professional athlete like Alex, who was not a product of the foster care system and in fact had a strong support system throughout high school and college, to care about such an issue? Alex surprised the producer with his knowledge of the issue of foster care, and he referenced statistics without any notes. He also extended himself to testify at the state capitol in Sacramento in support of a bill to raise the age limit of care from 18 to 21. Why is it important for someone to be knowledgeable about the cause(s) their foundation addresses?

Alex Smith, Quarterback, Kansas City Chiefs
courtesy of Kansas City Chiefs
6. **Question:** The issue of deciding on perpetuity or payout remains a discussion within the world of foundations. Should foundations strive to remain in operation as long as they can or should they address the problems of today and spend down their assets?

7. **Activity:** Independent and corporate foundations have to give away a minimum of 5% of their assets annually to nonprofit organizations according to the 1969 Tax Reform Act. Randomly select 100 foundations in these categories, look up their 990 tax return forms, and find the percentage of assets paid out for the most recent fiscal year. Create a graph showing these percentages across all 100 foundations, from least to greatest. Reflect on the data you have, record your thoughts on foundation giving, and discuss them in class.

8. **Question:** Phil D’Anieri from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation talks about the importance of knowledge, learning, and partnership with grantee organizations. What do you suggest that foundations and their grantees do to become partners in learning? Be specific and explicit.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

10 – Role of Business

1. **Question:** If we subscribe to Robert Payton’s definition of philanthropy—“voluntary action for the public good”—then how do we explain the phrase corporate philanthropy? Is a corporation’s chief motivation to increase public good or to improve their image in the community through branding, marketing, goodwill, and meeting corporate social responsibility goals and objectives? Can businesses achieve their goals for their philanthropic action while impacting the public good in a positive way?

2. **Question:** Have you ever engaged in philanthropy on behalf of your employer? If so, what activity did you participate in? How did it make you feel? Did you have a renewed value of your employer and/or your work? Did you establish new relationships, gain new skills, learn new things, etc.?

3. **Activity:** Newman’s Own Organics and the Estée Lauder Companies serve as examples of good corporate citizens through their philanthropic work. Choose a few businesses in your community, large or small, and research which activities they engage in to be good corporate citizens. Examples may include: giving philanthropic dollars or goods, encouraging employee volunteerism, being good stewards of the environment, and/or treating employees fairly. Write a two-page essay on how these activities have impacted the business, their employees, and the community.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

11 – Health & Education

1. **Question:** Do you think the need for the services of the Gennesaret Free Clinic’s mobile unit would still exist even if we had universal healthcare? Why or why not?

2. **Question:** Is healthcare something that should be funded in part by philanthropy or guaranteed by our government? Or is there a hybrid model you prefer where the two work together to ensure that healthcare is provided to everyone? Justify your answer.

3. **Question:** Dr. James Trippi says, “Keeping everyone healthy is important.” Beyond our obvious desire to be healthy, what do you think he meant?

4. **Question:** Some people firmly believe we all should work a job, be self-sufficient, and contribute to taxes and our economy but don’t believe in guaranteeing healthcare for these workers. If people have to be healthy in order to be self-sufficient and contribute to society, then how do you explain this disconnect?

5. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, how is healthcare provided in your country? Does philanthropy play a role? What role does government play?

6. **Question:** Do you think that tuition alone covers the expenses of your academic institution? Why or why not?

7. **Question:** Do you feel that in the future philanthropic funding of education will increase, decrease, or stay the same? Explain why. Is philanthropic funding of education a positive or negative thing? Might the large contributions from prominent philanthropists and foundations come with strings attached that might threaten academic freedom?

8. **Question:** What did you think of Lyn McDermid’s description of her responsibilities as board chair of Mary Baldwin College? How important is the role of board chair concerning the governance and stewardship of a nonprofit organization?
QUESTIONs AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

12 – Giving Beyond Money

1. **Question:** Why do you think most people consider that philanthropy is only about giving money? What might drive these ideas?

2. **Activity:** Pick a nonprofit you are involved in or one you care about. Think about things the organization needs beyond money and explain why they need each of those things. Also, explain how you would go about securing those non-monetary items for this organization. Be strategic, holistic, and creative in your thinking.

3. **Question:** What did you think of the courage of the mothers who had lost their babies but still donated their milk for other babies? One of the mothers talked about how donating her milk helped her grieve her lost children. Why is it that philanthropy can sometimes help the one doing the giving? What is it about philanthropy specifically that helps the giver in these tough situations?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

13 – Volunteerism

1. **Question:** Archie Bunker from the hit television series *All in the Family* didn’t understand the concept of volunteerism and seemingly took the hard-line view that said something was valuable only if money was exchanged. What would you say to Archie if you explained the concept of volunteerism to him? Are there other people you know who don't understand the need for or the value of volunteerism?

2. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, what role does volunteerism play in the culture and society of your country? Are people expected to volunteer? Or is it an infrequent activity? Why or why not?

3. **Question:** Amber Kriech talks about how she and a group of 18 volunteers established a children’s library. What are the benefits of people volunteering in groups? Think about the volunteers themselves, the organization they volunteer for, and the people served by that organization.

*Amber Kriech courtesy of Parade Magazine*
4. **Activity:** The segments on the Big Sable Lighthouse and the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad were examples of how philanthropy can play a role in historic preservation. If you had the chance to participate in the restoration of something historically important to you, what would it be and why? How would you get others to join you in your effort? What would need to be done to restore this item? For a holistic approach to your historic preservation, think about personnel, supplies, equipment, technology, knowledge, skills, etc.

5. **Question:** The women in the Caregivers Sewing Group technically could just buy the clothes and donate them to foster care children. Instead they choose to sew clothes for these children. Why do you think they make this choice? What makes their effort special to you? What benefits from volunteerism are applicable to this group and why?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

14 – Community Building

1. **Question:** What common characteristics did you see between the residents of the small Vermont town in “A Town Solves a Problem” and the members of the Pascack Sustainability Group? Why is it important for members of a community to take ownership of the challenges their community faces?

2. **Question:** Rosemary Dreger Carey, founder of the Pascack Sustainability Group tells us, “We have to start seriously considering about what kind of planet we’re going to leave our kids.” What are some other examples of how philanthropy today can benefit society tomorrow? What are our moral responsibilities to future generations?

![Image of people in a meeting](Pascack Sustainability Group)

3. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, how does the concept of community building play out in your country? What do you think drives this activity—societal expectations, cultural norms, traditions, customs, other factors?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

15 – Advocacy

1. **Question:** Do you feel the nonprofit sector participates enough in advocacy to affect matters of policy? Why or why not?

2. **Question:** Nell Newman, Alex Smith, Evelyn Lauder, Mike Farrell, Evanne Gratte, and others in the film serve as great examples of people who advocate for their causes. What does it take to successfully advocate for a cause? What characteristics and traits do the advocates possess that are conducive and helpful for that process?

3. **Activity:** Pick a cause that you are most passionate about. Write a two-page advocacy plan for that cause. Think about your timing, your approach, who you would ask to help advocate, the organizations or people you would target for your advocacy, and the knowledge and skills you would need to be successful.

4. **Question:** Quite often individuals and organizations misunderstand advocacy as an all-or-nothing proposition, meaning that if policy is not enacted, defeated, or changed, then the effort was unsuccessful. This is not true, as advocacy is a building process. What are some examples of the more short-term gains and successes from advocacy that can eventually lead to affecting policy? What lessons can be learned from the advocacy and lobbying efforts of for-profit organizations and their representatives?
1. **Question:** Why do you think that social activism is typically left out of discussions about philanthropy? Why do some people not consider it a form of giving?

2. **Question:** Professor Stanley Katz says, “We have a tradition of local, social, and cultural action.” How does his comment relate to what Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about in *Democracy in America*?

3. **Question:** The social activism montage (set to Patti Smith's song “People Have the Power”) shows examples of protests and civil disobedience. What other forms of social activism can citizens engage in?

4. **Question:** Provide two examples where social activism played a primary role in the change of policy and the establishment of new legislation in the United States. What examples of social activism helped lead to that legislation? Who participated in it?

5. **Question:** If you live elsewhere, have there been examples where social activism played a primary role in the change of policy and the establishment of new legislation in your country? If so, what examples of social activism helped lead to that legislation, and who participated in it? If social activism is not culturally acceptable or applicable in your country, explain why.

6. **Question:** Why are some efforts in social activism more successful than others in achieving goals and objectives? What does it take to be successful?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

16 – Social Activism

7. **Activity:** Dr. William G. Anderson, a key figure in the Civil Rights Movement, worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Pick another key figure who worked in the movement with Dr. King and write a two-page essay on that person and his or her role in and contributions to the movement.

8. **Question:** David Harris and Dr. Anderson serve as great examples of people who exhibited great courage and sacrifice for the causes they fought for. Why is courage so important for engaging in social activism? Why is the very act of engaging in social activism a representation of sacrifice?
9. **Question:** Mike Farrell and David Harris both commented on the power of citizens in relation to engaging in social activism. Mike said, “I think what people don’t realize is that every citizen is a social activist. And by doing nothing, they give over . . . the benefit of that portion of the . . . power they have to somebody else.” David said, “We all make reality by what we do every day and, and . . . what we tolerate and what we won’t tolerate. . . . So there is no such thing as powerlessness. The only powerlessness is self-induced.” What lessons can you learn from these comments? What forces are at work in today’s society to make people feel as if they are powerless or that they can’t make a difference? In the United States, how do we as a society counter the chronic apathy in citizens that leads to low voter turnouts, less activism, and an overall reduced voice in our government?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

17 – Flaws

1. **Question:** Some people feel that philanthropy largely gets a free pass when it comes to being critically analyzed. Do you agree with this view or do you feel there is sufficient critique of philanthropy? Why or why not?

2. **Question:** Do we as a society hold the work of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations to a higher standard than government and business? Why or why not? What are some of the commonalities across all three? What are some of the differences?

3. **Question:** What do you recommend people do to balance their hearts and minds (passions and intellect) when engaging in philanthropy so that good intentions yield good results? Be specific and explicit.

4. **Question:** Seneca, the great Roman philosopher, wrote in his essay On Benefits about the importance of considering the recipient of a gift when engaging in giving. He went as far as saying that only the recipient can truly determine if a gift is beneficial. What can we learn from Seneca about our giving? How would his lessons be applicable to modern philanthropy?

5. **Question:** Robert Lupton’s comment, “Those of us in a giving role are in control,” reminds us of the power imbalance that typically exists in the giver-recipient relationship. What do you suggest be done to try to mitigate this imbalance? In your answer, consider the power of resource dependency.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

17 – Flaws

6. **Question:** Professor Barbara Oakley discusses the concept of pathological altruism. What do you think about this concept and her comments? Have you ever witnessed anyone who might be characterized as any of the three types of pathological altruists? What might drive people to behave this way?

7. **Question:** We learned from Aaron Dorfman of NCRP, that the regulation and oversight of nonprofit organizations in the United States at both the state and federal level is underfunded and understaffed. Should there be more regulation and oversight of this sector, or should the sector be left alone to regulate and police itself? Why or why not?

8. **Question:** For those of you who live outside the United States, who regulates nonprofit organizations, or non-governmental organizations, in your province or country? How is that regulatory operation staffed? Do you think that the regulation is adequately resourced and carried out? Why or why not?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

18 – Poverty

1. **Question:** Only about one third of all philanthropic dollars are targeted to directly help the poor. Why do you think that is? What, if anything, should be done about it?

2. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, what does poverty look like in your country? What do you think are the main causes of it, and what is being done to address it? Does philanthropy play any role in helping to alleviate poverty in our country? What role does the government play?

3. **Question:** Mike Killeen sings a song, “Poverty Is Real,” which accompanies images of poverty. Why do you think he chose those words for the title of his song?

*Children playing in poor neighborhood courtesy of Library of Congress*
 Questions and Activities by Scene Selection

19 – Legitimacy

1. **Question:** What makes philanthropy legitimate in your mind? What makes a nonprofit organization legitimate to you? Be specific and explicit.

2. **Question:** Robert Lupton says, “I feel a much higher level of accountability these days. They’re asking the right questions about outcomes. So the accountability I feel . . . is going up.” Do you agree with him? Why or why not? Regardless of your answer, do you feel there should be more measures to increase accountability in philanthropy?

3. **Question:** Diana Campoamor from Hispanics in Philanthropy reminds us that Latinos are givers. Why do you think she chose to emphasize this when talking about philanthropy? Why is it important to recognize the contributions of Hispanics and Latinos in the United States?

4. **Question:** Professor Lijun He tells us that studying philanthropy can help develop Chinese civil society. What might other countries learn from how philanthropy is practiced in the United States? For those living outside the United States, what might your country learn from American philanthropy? What can the United States learn from how philanthropy works in your country? List things that you think should be adopted, adapted, or avoided.
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SCENE SELECTION

20 – Role in Civil Society

1. **Question:** Define the concept of civil society. What role can and should philanthropy play in it? Do you think philanthropy in the United States has reached its potential in impacting civil society? Why or why not?

2. **Activity:** Dr. Anderson reminds us, “There is something unique that you have to offer. You’re the only one that can make the determination as to when you want to give it, and how you want to give it.” Mike Farrell says, “The only thing that can matter is one person who really cares enough to step up.” Write a two-page essay that answers the following questions:
   - What is it that you have to give? (Think holistically.)
   - How will you give and why will you give?
   - What will you do to contribute to civil society?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SPECIAL FEATURE

1 – Philanthropy’s Impact on People

1. **Question:** This special feature largely focuses on the recipient of philanthropy. We see examples of transformed lives, improved health, advances in education, and so on. When we engage in philanthropy, how much should we focus on the recipient? When focusing on the recipient—whether it be an individual, organization, social group, or our entire society—what questions should we be asking? Think about the balance of altruism and egoism and what Seneca had to say in *On Benefits*. Can we as givers also be recipients as we give? Why or why not?

![Image of people talking]

**USO at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Atlanta, Georgia, USA**

2. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, how important is the focus on the recipient when it comes to giving? What are the influencing factors behind giving and how do these factors help or hinder a focus on the recipient? Are there any social or cultural factors that impact focusing on the recipient?
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BY SPECIAL FEATURE

2 – Fundraising

1. **Question:** We see in this segment people who engage in fundraising, but not all the fundraisers perform the same function or raise funds at the same level. What are some of the roles or areas that fundraisers can work in?

2. **Question:** Regardless of the differences in roles and areas, what are some of the traits, characteristics, values, and personalities that are most conducive to fundraising and why?

3. **Question:** Have you ever raised money for a cause? If so, what was that experience like? If not, do you see yourself ever engaging in fundraising?

4. **Question:** Competition for funds within the nonprofit sector continues to intensify. What is causing this? What implications does this have for fundraisers and what should they do to deal with this intensifying competition?

5. **Question:** For those living outside the United States, what is fundraising like in your country? What are the challenges fundraisers face economically, socially, and culturally? What does it take for fundraisers to be successful?
1. **Question:** Robert Payton’s life included several different careers in different disciplines and areas of focus. He was a jazz musician, president of C.W. Post College and of Hofstra University, and president of the Exxon Education Foundation. He served as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon in West Africa from 1967–1969. This was all before becoming the founding director of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. He was well-read and had a personal library in his basement the size of a small public library. What role do you think these diverse experiences and backgrounds had in his understanding of his concept of giving? Be specific and explicit.

2. **Activity:** Read the book *Understanding Philanthropy* by Robert Payton and Michael Moody. After reading the book and watching this documentary, has your perception of giving changed or stayed the same? Why? What do you think of Payton’s definition of philanthropy: “voluntary action for the public good”? What things stand out most for you in this book? This film?

3. **Question:** Based on the comments from people who knew Robert Payton, what are some similarities and differences regarding the ways that he influenced their lives?
SCREENINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Screening at Grand Valley State University for representative of the Beautiful Foundation from South Korea

Screening at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana

Producer Alaimo with Georgia State University students at Atlanta screening

Grand Rapids, Michigan premiere

Grand Rapids, Michigan premiere

Producer Alaimo interviewed by Jim Madigan at WGBY-Springfield, Massachusetts

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