

NEW BOOKS

How Philanthropists Helped Needy Children Through a Hands-On Approach to Giving

*Promising Futures: The Unexpected Rewards of Engaged Philanthropy*  
by Margot Welch

In 1981, Eugene Lang, a successful businessman and well-known philanthropist, promised 61 sixth graders at a Harlem public school that if and when they graduated from high school, he would pay for their college education. This led to the creation of the I Have a Dream program, in which philanthropists commit to supporting a group of needy children (known as "dreamers") for at least six years, providing constant educational, personal, and social support.

Margot Welch studies the I Have a Dream program as an example of "engaged philanthropy": a much more hands-on and long-term method of giving than conventional philanthropy.

She interviewed people who have taken on the costs and responsibilities of this program, a group that includes a former priest, the owner of a construction business, and the chief executive officer of a major motion-picture and communications business.

Though the work is challenging, "after years of devoted efforts with children they come to love, the determination of most sponsors to make a difference just grows more intense," she writes.

This book explores what types of people get involved in this time-consuming, emotionally intense experience, what motivates those people, and how the I Have a Dream program has contributed to the lives of both the children and their supporters.

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— By Anne W. Howard