



# Young People Who Make a Difference

If you haven't yet enlisted teens for your cause, this book may inspire you to do so.

By Terrence Fernsler

## Teens with the Courage to Give: Young People Who Triumphed Over Tragedy and Volunteered to Make a Difference

By Jackie Walman. 218 pages. Softcover. Berkeley: Conari Press, [www.conari.com](http://www.conari.com).

The teen years are often a challenging, sometimes isolating time of life, but young people are finding that service to others brings resilience and the ability to work through difficulties. *Teens with the Courage to Give* presents the inspiring stories of 30 youth who learned that giving back to the community could help them overcome personal setbacks. Support for the teenagers featured in this book often comes from adults, as it should, but a surprising amount of support is also coming from peers. Today's youth are learning to accept community service as part of their life experience.

Looking courageously past their

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own problems, the young people in this book understand there is something bigger than themselves, and they learn how to become a part of it. They realize that, despite their perceived shortcomings, they can make a difference. They look to the future because they are it. The kids profiled in this book compel us to listen to that future.

These stories speak of overcoming AIDS, cancer, physical disabilities, chemical dependencies, and abuse. They tell of teens forming support groups, teaching lessons based on their experience, mentoring, and raising money for nonprofit causes. Perhaps most important, they show us that these young people's activities for the

community don't make them exceptional. We all have it in us.

It is inspiring and instructive for those of us working in nonprofits to see how people overcome their difficulties, especially when those people are our future leaders. Jackie Walman reminds us that volunteering by young people is increasing, both in terms of the percent of youth volunteering and the number of hours they average. *Teens with the Courage to Give* shows us that many teenagers are willing to make a difference and are, in fact, suffused with the desire to help the community. It reminds us to encourage them. It teaches us the benefits of spending time with them and tapping the resources they have to offer. ■

Terrence Fernsler is development director for Columbia-Pacific Resource Conservation and Economic Development District in Montesano, Washington.



## Going against the Odds

"You can get straight A's in marketing and still flunk ordinary life." According to Paul Newman, that's what he told Lee Iacocca after Iacocca's Pinto caught fire.

And that's just one of many insights into entrepreneurial thinking to be gleaned from Newman's wise, funny book, *Shameless Exploitation in Pursuit of the Common Good* (published by Nan A. Talese, [www.nanatalese.com](http://www.nanatalese.com)), in which he and his business partner, A. E. Hotchner, describe how a zany idea to market Newman's salad dressing resulted in earnings of over \$150 million, which they've given to countless charities. They attribute their phenomenal success mainly to luck, but it's clear that doggedness, dedication to quality, refusal to compromise, and a complete dismissal of conventional thinking also played large roles.

Newman writes that he has always been perverse about complacency. "A movie guy and his writer buddy going hard against the odds. Like Butch and Sundance jumping off a cliff into a business and marketing canyon — the fall will get us if the sharks in the supermarkets don't. It was a lunatic thing, like a bumblebee or a helicopter. There's no reason for it to fly, but then again, there were the Wright brothers." ■