

NEXT GENERATION OF GENEROSITY

BY BROOKE KELLY MURRAY

Quest's annual roundup of young philanthropists.

GEORGINA BLOOMBERG

The Humane Society & Equus Foundation

A PROFESSIONAL SHOW JUMPER, it's no surprise that Georgina Bloomberg—daughter of Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg—is an avid animal rights activist. In addition to her successful equestrian career, she is most well known for her philanthropic efforts, particularly for her extensive animal welfare work and for founding The Rider's Closet, a program that ensures riding apparel is accessible to those in need.

Brooke Murray: How do you approach the world of philanthropy?

Georgina Bloomberg: I think that everyone has to do what they can and recognize that it will mean different things for different people. There are people who only want to write checks to help, which for many organizations is not only what they want but also the biggest help they can receive. Others may not be able to write a check but can help in other ways, such as volunteering at an animal shelter or collecting items for a food pantry. I am fortunate that for many of the organizations I care about I can do both: financially make a difference for them and also help in other ways. I like to be hands-on and see the work and the difference that is being made as much as I can, and for me philanthropy will never be about just writing a check. That is not only my sincere desire, but also the example I want to set for my son. When I started my program The Rider's Closet, being hands-on was the only thing that I could do and that mattered. I needed to go out there and ask people to donate their clothing, and then figure out how to get it to the people who needed it most. Shipping was my only cost and I have always and still do pay for that myself so that there are no costs for those who receive items from us.

BM: What are your specific causes?

GB: I have worked with many different large animal

organizations such as the ASPCA, The Humane Society, and the Equus Foundation, that are making a meaningful difference for animals all over. I also make sure to work with and help smaller animal shelters that may not be able to do things like change the rules of how factory farming animals are kept or whether horse slaughter becomes legal in the U.S., but are doing everything they can to help animals and save lives. For a long time I only cared about animal causes and had very little compassion for people. As I got older and became a mother, that started to change for me and I became more aware of not only how fortunate I had been by being raised in a family that could provide everything I needed in life, but also how fortunate I was to be able to provide those things for my son, and wanted to help those who could not. I began supporting organizations such as Good+ and programs that help the homeless and try to involve my son as much as I can with doing things like collecting toys and clothes for kids who are not as lucky as he is. I make sure that he is very aware of why we do that and the position he is in. I don't sugarcoat things with him. I make sure he knows he is incredibly lucky, and he has a duty to help other kids.

BM: What inspires you?

GB: Every time I am able to find a dog a home or transport them up to a rescue where they were able to get adopted, or hear a story that a kid was able to feel better about themselves because they could finally ride with the proper apparel or a parent writes me a letter to say how much it meant to them to be able to afford to let their child get on a horse, it inspires me to do more and keep going. If you can't see the difference that you are making or hear from those you are helping, it is easy to become discouraged or feel like you aren't making a difference. Especially in the animal shelter system, it's easy to feel like you can't really make a difference or fix the problem, but I try to focus on each life I am able to save, not the ones I may not be able to.

Georgina Bloomberg holding a rescue puppy.



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