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By **Karl Zinsmeister**

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2019

DEC 6, 2019

Humanitarian Habits of Religious People

6 min

America's extraordinary generosity and historic faith are closely linked.

OCT 17, 2019

American Giving Viewed from Abroad

14 min

A recent speaking trip to Australia reminds us how unusual U.S. philanthropy is

JUL 18, 2019

Backlash Against School Reform

Played

Enemies of innovation have got the upper hand right now. Here's a Throwback Thursday reminder of why that's not good—and won't last.

JUN 6, 2019

Meet the World's Largest Musical Instrument

12 min

Voluntary givers created it, restored it, and are saving it for the future

2018

DEC 3, 2018

A Walk Through Some Nation-changing Churches

8 min

Giving thanks for Boston's charitable houses of worship.

SEP 12, 2018

Some Common Criticisms of Philanthropy — Part 3

8 min

...and a few quick answers. Part 3 of three podcasts.

AUG 16, 2018	Some Common Criticisms of Philanthropy — Part 2	8 min
	Some common criticisms of philanthropy...and a few quick answers. Part 2 of three podcasts.	
JUL 12, 2018	Some Common Criticisms of Philanthropy	7 min
	...and a few quick answers. Part 1 of three podcasts.	
JUN 14, 2018	Radical School for a Red-hot Problem	7 min
	A new charter boarding school in DC educates kids facing stiff odds	
MAY 24, 2018	Donors Not Angels	7 min
	Philanthropy gets good out of even not-so-good people	
MAY 2, 2018	George Eastman Makes Movies an Art	6 min
	And fuels modern dance in the process	
APR 5, 2018	Gem of a Donation	6 min
	A great natural wonder and object of beauty is preserved by a generous couple.	
MAR 14, 2018	Private Schools for the Poor?	8 min
	In the world's most destitute neighborhoods, it's a real thing.	
FEB 13, 2018	Medical Progress and Private Money	2 min left
	Wherever the health sciences are progressing fastest today, it's often donated money that is pushing the frontier.	
JAN 17, 2018	Secret Codes & Philanthropy	7 min
	America's world-leading expertise in code-making and code-breaking grows out of a charitable project, believe it or not.	
2017		
DEC 18, 2017	Reinventing Public Universities	7 min
	Philanthropy can have a leading role in pulling state-run colleges away from bureaucracy and low standards.	
NOV 27, 2017	A Joint Venture in Goodness	6 min
	Evangelical Christians and faithful Jews team up to help the neediest.	
OCT 23, 2017	Benjamin Rush, Hall of Fame Philanthropist	7 min
	Meet a top doctor, turned political founder, turned charity pioneer	
OCT 10, 2017	Arts Philanthropy in the North Woods Part II	7 min
	Is giving money to art elitist, even irresponsible, in a world with many pressing needs? (Part TWO of two podcasts)	
SEP 26, 2017	Arts Philanthropy in the North Woods Part I	5 min
	Is giving money to art elitist, even irresponsible, in a world with many pressing needs? (Part ONE of two podcasts)	

AUG 31, 2017	Magical Fountains	6 min
	When Pierre DuPont created one of the great public gardens in America, he—and then, later, his philanthropic successors—installed the most magical fountains of the age.	
JUL 31, 2017	Eastman Shares His Musical Addiction	7 min
	The founder of Kodak was one of America's greatest arts philanthropists.	
JUL 13, 2017	Questions About Overseas Giving	7 min
	Part Two from a recent Carnegie Corporation forum—answering questions about donations to foreign lands.	
JUN 29, 2017	Big Questions in Philanthropy and Politics	12 min
	A recent forum of the Carnegie Corporation asked about philanthropy and politics. Here are some responses.	
JUN 14, 2017	Donors Anonymous	6 min
	There are efforts afoot to end unnamed giving. That would crimp charity and damage personal freedom.photo credit: Hello Von	
MAY 22, 2017	Land Trusts Preserve Nature by Nurturing Owners	8 min
	Using respect and cooperation instead of confrontation has made nonprofit conservancies the fastest growing part of the conservation movement.	
MAY 10, 2017	School Success Even for the Most Disadvantaged	7 min
	Philanthropically sparked charter schools have become lifelines for drowning families.	
APR 26, 2017	Sweet Charity: Inventing a New Kind of City	6 min
	Henry Segerstrom used a high mix of philanthropy and business to turn lima-bean fields into an urban village.	
APR 18, 2017	The SPLC Calls Names	9 min
	The Southern Poverty Law Center hasn't contributed anything to law or poverty for a generation. Instead it's become a political attack group and fundraising scam.	
MAR 30, 2017	Our Parks Bloom	7 min
	We're in the midst of a huge renaissance of urban parks--which is in turn feeding the return to city life. Thank philanthropic invention.Photo: Kevin McFall	
MAR 21, 2017	The Getty Museums	8 min
	Even flawed donors can make brilliant gifts. Here's a magnificent example.Photo: alice_mercer	
MAR 7, 2017	Making Americans	8 min
	Immigrants to this country acculturate best when they have help.image (of Ellis Island): Karl Zinsmeister	
FEB 23, 2017	Animating Character	8 min
	Sometimes a gift takes you to an unexpected place. Even into a cartoon world.photo: BYU Animation	
FEB 10, 2017	Cottage Industry	8 min
	Without any public money, a group of donors took it upon themselves to revive a crucial site of American history—the cottage where Abraham Lincoln lived and labored for a quarter of his Presidency.image: Rob Shenk	

FEB 3, 2017

Presidential Homes

Mount Vernon, Montpelier, Monticello. Completely apart from the fact that they were homes of Presidents, these three historic properties have one crucial thing in common. Come find out what it is. image: Adam Fagen

8 min

JAN 25, 2017

Private Donors

Why many givers choose to be anonymous. photo: Qin YongJun

10 min

JAN 9, 2017

Lifting The Kidney Death Sentence

It was a grocery-store fortune that brought dialysis and kidney transplants to the public. For the 700,000 Americans currently alive despite kidney failure, that was a very big gift. photo: Hey Paul Studios

9 min

2016

DEC 19, 2016

To Create a Mockingbird

A true-life Christmas story about how some very personal philanthropy gave America one of its most beloved books. photo: bansheed

7 min

DEC 12, 2016

The Dinosaur Discoverer

The iconoclastic paleontologist Jack Horner has a perfect partnership with the independent-minded donors who have made his freewheeling discoveries possible. photo: maggie schreiter

8 min

DEC 5, 2016

Franklin Olin College of Engineering

An industrialist's fortune was used to invent a remarkably different kind of school that is helping revive U.S. industry. Its addition of strong creative, communicating, and business flavors to previous recipes for training engineers is influencing hundreds of other American colleges. Photo credit: Joe Chavez

7 min left

NOV 22, 2016

ArtPrize

If I told you that the art exhibition receiving the highest attendance—and most fervent popular response—in the world takes place every year in America's 123rd largest city, what would you say? You ought to ask "Who's the clever philanthropist?" Photo credit: darius novilas

10 min

NOV 15, 2016

Tiffany Treasures

Guess where the greatest trove of stained glass and other masterpieces created by America's superb craftsman Louis Comfort Tiffany is located? No, it's not his hometown of New York. And there's a reason for that.

8 min

NOV 7, 2016

Albert Lexie and the Power of Small Givers

What can a shoeshiner teach us about philanthropy? Lots. Including that little gifts accumulate into big effects.

6 min

NOV 1, 2016

Donation of Philmont Scout Ranch

One of the pioneers of our oil and gas industry loved the mountain wilderness so much he gave away a big chunk of it so young American Boy Scouts could test themselves at high altitudes.

8 min

OCT 26, 2016

Great Telescopes

We all learned in school about famous astronomical telescopes like Mount Wilson and Mount Palomar, and the powerful discoveries they have produced on how our universe works. What you may not have learned is that it was philanthropy that filled almost all of these great instruments with light. And the nex...

5 min

OCT 18, 2016

Founding Funders

Sometimes donors create something bigger than a program or new institution. On the occasion you're about to hear described, they helped create a new nation.

7 min

OCT 11, 2016

Science in the Living Room

Two eminent scientists got so disgusted with the bureaucracy, timidity, and herd mentality of publicly funded science they decided to go completely off the grid. That path led straight to Stockholm. Listen to how private funders are making science more flexible and productive.

9 min

OCT 5, 2016

Don't Cripple Vets With "Help"

We all know you can do more harm than good by handing things to people. You may not realize, though, that one group seriously at risk in this area today is veterans. Hear some shocking figures, and an encouraging philanthropic response, in this episode.

7 min

SEP 26, 2016

Anti-Slavery Philanthropists Got Bullied, But Persevered

Within hours of founding a national charity to battle American slavery, the major donors became targets of a huge riot. They refused to back down.

Played

SEP 12, 2016

Millions Go Back to College

A large army of donors have made colleges and universities America's second-favorite charitable cause. Alumni are only a minor part.

Played

AUG 30, 2016

Giving Helps the Giver

We all know charity helps recipients. Did you know it also helps the donor?

Played

AUG 24, 2016

Books for the Blind

For most of history, the enormous repository of human knowledge represented by books was out of reach for the blind. But a pair of donors changed this forever.

Played

AUG 16, 2016

The Self-Improving Holiday

Even on vacation, Americans are self-improvers. Here's a reason why.

Played

AUG 9, 2016

Taking on America's Drinking Problem

The temperance crusade against alcohol abuse is commonly viewed as a giant puritanical failure. The common view is wrong. Learn why.

Played

AUG 2, 2016

Anyone Can Be a Philanthropist

Oseola McCarty's life had a raw beginning, but this humble washerwoman knew how to work and how to save, and had a generous heart that taught all Americans that anyone can give.

Played

AUG 1, 2016

Saving the Whooping Crane

By transporting eggs, breeding new generations, and teaching birds how to migrate, philanthropists are bringing America's largest birds back from the brink of extinction.

Played

JUL 25, 2016

Don't Discount the Ice Bucket Challenge

Did the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge actually accomplish anything? A prominent researcher decided to set the record straight—on the same day he announced a major breakthrough in understanding the disease, and clinical trials for new treatments. Listen to find out more!

Played

JUL 19, 2016

Lifting Robert Goddard Into Space

Robert Goddard was one of the geniuses of the twentieth century, and the man who more than anyone is responsible for the U.S. being today's leader in aeronautics and space. But he almost got lost to history. You'll be surprised to learn which philanthropists allowed his high-altitude dreams to come true.

Played

JUL 19, 2016

Saving Negro Spirituals

Edward "Ned" McIlhenny, who ran the Louisiana Tabasco-sauce company founded by his father, racked up some major accomplishments as a preserver of rare birds and plants. A man of very wide interests and a willingness to study and devote resources to causes that interested him, McIlhenny also helped sa...

Played