



# News Release

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## **CNN Announces 2011 Top 10 ‘CNN Heroes’**

### **World News Leader Honors Everyday People Changing the World**

CNN, the worldwide leader in news, today announced the Top 10 CNN Heroes for 2011, recognizing everyday people who are changing the world. The network also announced that online voting for the “CNN Hero of the Year” opened Thursday, September 22, 2011, at 8:00 AM ET, and will run through Wednesday, December 7, 2011, at Midnight PT.

*CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute* will air LIVE on CNN at 8:00 PM ET, on Sunday, December 11, 2011. Hosted by Anderson Cooper at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, *CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute* will honor individuals who are making extraordinary contributions to help improve the lives of others. Since its inception, “CNN Heroes” has received over 40,000 submissions from more than 100 countries and profiled over 150 heroes.

Each of the Top 10 CNN Heroes will receive a \$50,000 grant and one of the honorees, as voted by fans across the globe, will be named the “CNN Hero of the Year”, receiving an additional \$250,000 grant to further aid their cause. During the live broadcast, the Top 10 CNN Heroes will each have their story told by a celebrity.

The honorees for 2011, whose profiles are available to view at [www.cnnheroes.com](http://www.cnnheroes.com), are:

- **Amy Stokes** (Yonkers, NY) In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 15 million children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. New York resident Amy Stokes decided to bring the effect of caring adults living elsewhere into the lives of South African children. She started **Infinite Family** in 2006, using the internet to connect hundreds of teen ‘Net Buddies’ with adult mentor volunteers from around the world. Pairs meet face-to-face via the internet, and the children learn survival, language and computer skills that help prepare them for their future in a global marketplace.
- **Bruno Serato** (Anaheim, CA) For two decades, Bruno Serato has been doing what he loves: feeding customers at his restaurant in Anaheim, California. But six years ago, he realized that many of the children at his local Boys and Girls Club often go to bed hungry. They are “motel kids” – children whose families stay one step ahead of

homelessness by living week-to-week in cheap motels. Serato's "**Caterina's Club**" started serving them pasta dinners, and now he feeds nearly 200 children seven nights a week.

- **Derreck Kayongo** (Atlanta, GA (birthplace: Uganda)) Millions of bars of soap left behind at hotels are simply thrown away. Since 2009, Kayongo and his **Global Soap Project** have collected 100 tons of partially used hotel soap and reprocessed it into more than 100,000 bars for communities in nine countries, including Haiti, Kenya and Uganda – for free. The Atlanta-area resident and Ugandan war refugee considers the soap he provides for poverty-stricken children as “a first line of defense” to help fight disease. The need is real: an estimated 2 million children die annually due to sanitation issues.
- **Diane Latiker** (Roseland (Chicago), IL) Youth gun violence runs especially rampant on Chicago's South Side. Instead of hiding from it, Diane Latiker opened her doors to area kids in 2003 and started a community center in her living room. Today, the mother of eight has turned the building next door into a haven for youngsters. Latiker's "**Kids Off the Block**" program offers tutoring, mentoring, job training and other activities to keep young people off the streets, out of gangs and focused on their futures.
- **Eddie Canales** (Schertz, TX) In 2001, Canales watched as his son Chris, a high school senior, made a tackle during a football game that left him paralyzed. Just over a year later, he and Chris watched from the stands as another high school player went down with a spinal cord injury. That moment pushed Eddie Canales to start "**Gridiron Heroes**", which provides emotional and financial support to high school football athletes who've sustained spinal cord injuries. It's a fraternity that includes 19 injured players in the state of Texas.
- **Elena Durón Miranda** (Bariloche, Argentina) Elena Durón Miranda traveled to Argentina in 2001 to research impoverished communities. She witnessed children collecting food and other items in the Bariloche trash dump to eat and sell. She decided to stay in the country and in 2002, she founded "**P.E.T.I.S.O.S.**" (Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor) to get children out of the garbage dump and into school. Today P.E.T.I.S.O.S. provides free after school programs and access to education, counseling and medical care to about 200 children.
- **Patrice Millet** (Port-au-Prince, Haiti) After Patrice Millet was diagnosed with cancer, he dedicated his life to helping needy kids in his native Haiti. In 2007, he sold his business and started the "**FONDAPS**" youth soccer program, which has provided free equipment, coaching and food to hundreds of children from the slums of Port-au-Prince. But Millet's program mainly aims to help teach participants to become responsible citizens. Many children in the program lost relatives in the 2010 earthquake and now live in tent cities.

Millet believes his work is even more important now to give “his kids” a shot at a better life.

- **Robin Lim** (Ubud, Bali, Indonesia (Birthplace: Arizona)) In Indonesia, women are 300 times more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications than women in developed countries. After her youngest sister died from pregnancy complications, Lim became a professional midwife and dedicated her life to offering free prenatal and birthing services to low-income Indonesian women. Since 2003, Lim’s “**Yayasan Bumi Sehat**” (Healthy Mother Earth Clinic) has provided medical assistance to thousands of women in Bali and Aceh, Indonesia.
- **Sal Dimicelli** (Lake Geneva, WI) Raised in poverty, Sal Dimicelli vowed when he was 12 years old that he’d always help people in need, and he’s spent nearly all of his adult life making good on that promise. Through a local newspaper column, Sal invites people who’ve fallen on hard times to write him letters, describing their situation. His nonprofit, “**The Time Is Now To Help**”, assists about 500 people a year with food, rent, utilities and other necessities.
- **Taryn Davis** (Buda, TX) Taryn Davis’ husband died in Iraq when she was 21. She felt alone with her pain while others moved on with their lives and encouraged her to do the same. Unable to find a community that could honor her husband’s memory and spirit in a way she could relate to, Taryn created one. Since 2007, her **American Widow Project** has connected 900 young military widows in a sisterhood that helps them honor their husbands while celebrating life.

Previous CNN Heroes have gained global recognition and earned increased support, allowing them to make an even greater difference. For example, last year’s “Hero of the Year”, Anuradha Koirala, was honored by actress Demi Moore. Moore’s organization, the DNA Foundation, later partnered with the CNN Freedom Project for a documentary on Koirala’s project “Maiti Nepal”, which details her efforts to end human trafficking. The DNA Foundation will also fund future Maiti Nepal prevention efforts. CNN’s 2009 “Hero of the Year”, Efren Peñaflorida, saw his pushcart classroom model replicated more than 50 times by different organizations and institutions across the Philippines. He can also be seen hosting his own search for heroes on the Philippine television show “Ako Mismo” (“I Myself”), which features people working in the Philippines to better the lives of others.

“Over the past five years, the CNN Heroes Initiative has profiled more than 150 heroes and honored 50 everyday men and women from around the world for their tireless efforts to improve the lives of others,” said Jim Walton, President of CNN Worldwide. “We hope to empower these selfless individuals to persevere in their humanitarian efforts to create progress, and are proud to share the stories of this year’s Top 10 Heroes.”

Those interested in learning more about the 2011 honorees and casting their vote for “Hero of the Year” can visit [www.cnnheroes.com](http://www.cnnheroes.com) online or on their mobile device. For the latest updates, fans can follow CNN Heroes on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Kelly Flynn is the Senior Executive Producer for the “CNN Heroes” initiative and *CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute*. This year’s show will be produced by Ian Stewart and Hamish Hamilton.

CNN Worldwide, a division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., a Time Warner Company, is the most trusted source for news and information. Its reach extends to nine cable and satellite television networks; one private place-based network; two radio networks; mobile applications and websites around the world; CNN Digital Network, the No. 1 network of news Web sites in the United States; CNN Newsource, the world’s most extensively syndicated news service; and strategic international partnerships within both television and the digital media.

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