

Philanthropy Essay

By: Julia Lofaro

Martin Luther King Jr. once said “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is ‘what are you doing for others?’” Philanthropists take the time to see the world through the eyes of others. That person will feel strong compassion for people in need, and go out of their way to do help out in the world around them. A philanthropist is a person that gives their voice, time and money to causes they feel passionate about. The philanthropist that I know and personally admire the most is Mark Sheppard, because instead of asking himself if he was already helping others, he tried to find out *how* to do things for others. The community projects Mark has been a part of have made an immense difference on the world around him and have made hope a reality to the people he has met.

Mark started a small non-profit that funded natural disaster relief when he was attending UC Berkeley college in California. Ever since his first years of college in 2008, Mark has worked in political advocacy and, soon after, he started expanding his non-profit work. Mark bases his non-profit organizations on the countries in which have high levels of poverty. He believes that poverty is really dynamic, and we don’t think about in a broader perspective other than simply the lack of money. Poverty can be the limited access to clean water, medical help, and many more subjects. Mark travels to Haiti for a lot of his projects, which has higher levels of poverty than almost any other country. Haiti’s economy is in need of so much help, it is inexpensive to make a big impact. Mark focuses his work on making the biggest impact with limited resources. But that is not the only project he has contributed to. He funds disaster relief in Japan, Latin America, Africa and even the United States.

Mark has many inspirations, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Robert Reich. One of the major inspirations is his favorite photographer, Sebastio Salgado. Sebastio Salgado went to school to study economy, but soon quit his job as an economist to photograph people working from all around the world. Mark is currently using his inspiration to apply to a PhD program. Mark believes that the best way to make a change is through policy, and academics may be the best road to the best effect on policy.