

FAQs for Media

If you're writing a news story, a book or an article—if you're a producer, an editor or a program director — *Welcome*.

You've found a mother lode of exciting, inspiring stories of the real heroes we call “Giraffes” because they're sticking their necks out for the common good. To start, we suggest you check out this month's [Featured Giraffe](#) . Then go to [Find a Hero](#) , our database of Giraffes. When questions form up in your mind, see if the answers are here ~

Who are you guys?

The Giraffe Heroes Project has been working with the press since the '80s, placing Giraffe stories (and calling ourselves Free Flacks for Heroes, since we don't charge Giraffes for our work. The Project is a national nonprofit organization, registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3), incorporated in New York, with a staff of six in offices on an island north of Seattle, and trainers located across the US.

Why are you doing this?

To spread Giraffe heroes' stories as a way of inspiring more people to become active citizens, thereby fostering the health of our democracy. We believe that—

“Nothing is so contagious as an example.

We never do great good or great evil

without bringing about more of the same

on the part of others.” —La Rochefoucauld

A delightful fallout of the process is finding how inspired the Giraffes themselves often are, telling us that being acknowledged has given them the boost they need to keep going.

What's the quick description of Giraffe Heroes?

People who stick their necks out for the common good. They're young and old, near and far, rich and poor, and every skin color there is. And they're working on every issue under the sun.

Going a little longer—Giraffes tend to be involved in long-term efforts they've initiated. We send the stories of in-the-moment physical heroism to the Carnegie Heroes Commission, which specializes in such stories.

The “sticking their necks out” factor means there's an ongoing edge to what Giraffes do—something's at risk for them. We send the stories of wonderful volunteers and caregivers to the Points of Light Foundation.

People who are fulfilling their job descriptions don't make it through the Giraffe choosing process—the person has to be going above and beyond. People who are just famous, talented

or gorgeous don't make the cut either.

Who decides on all this and when?

A volunteer jury of friends of the Project that meets three times a year.

How many Giraffes are chosen?

As many as meet the [Criteria of Giraffedom](#) . If all the nominees qualify, all are commended; if none do, none are chosen. There are no quotas involved and each nominee is considered in relation to the criteria, not to each other. This is not a competition—there are no bigger or best Giraffes. You just are one or you aren't.

What do they get?

If you mean money, nothing—we don't have any. We send each new Giraffe a commendation and a lifetime membership in the Project, and we ask permission to tell their story in our work with media and in the schools. Being written up in newspapers, magazines and books, and featured on radio and television, or talked about in classrooms has brought many Giraffes support from people who discover them.

We've also nominated Giraffes for cash awards from groups that do have money. Giraffes have received almost a million bucks this way—not the Project—the money went directly to individual Giraffes.

Giraffes consistently tell us that a main benefit of being named a Giraffe is what it does for their spirits. Many of them have never been praised for what they do; some have even been vilified. It's heartening to be told you're a hero when you've been hearing you're a fool, a villain or a crazy.

How many Giraffes are there?

The easiest answer is "hundreds." Because commendations have gone to groups, naming each member a Giraffe, we can't give you a precise head count. Some Giraffes have died since being commended and every once in a while we lose touch with one, so our active files are fewer than the number of commendations that have gone out. All that said, we passed the thousand mark in 2005.

Where are they?

In every US state and in 27 countries.

How long has this been going on?

The Project was recognized by the IRS in 1984 so we take that as our birth year. But in the three years prior to that, Giraffe Heroes were found and commended, while the Project was sheltered by another nonprofit.

How do the nominations come in?

Supporters of the Giraffe Project are constantly encouraged to keep an eye peeled for potential Giraffes, and everyone who thinks they may have sighted one—including you—is welcome to make a [nomination](#) . The flow of nominations matches the amount of press the

Project has gotten. When we get a page in Parade or a feature on Good Morning America, lots of people realize they may know a Giraffe and send in nominations.

How are you funded?

By private philanthropists, foundation grants, memberships, and earned income from products and services which include speeches, books, workshops, and a kindergarten-through-high-school curriculum called The Giraffe Heroes Program. There's financial info at Guidestar and in [About Us](#) , here on this site.

We also pick up a few bucks from “ [Giraffenalia](#) ”—T-shirts, mugs, buttons, bumper stickers—the usual array of stuff but cool, because there are these red giraffes on everything.

How can you assist me in doing stories about Giraffes or the Giraffe Heroes Project?

As a small and “lightly” funded nonprofit, we don't have major resources at your disposal. Please get all you can from the material that's here on our website. If you still have questions, need other stories, or want to interview a Giraffe Hero, call 360-221-7989 and we'll see what we can do to help you.

Which leads us to your part in all this—

If you do stories from material we give you, mention that the people have been commended as Giraffe Heroes for sticking their necks out, and tell your audience/reader how to reach us. Best info to give: www.giraffe.org and/or office@giraffe.org.

And please note: the capital G is essential when you write about a Giraffe we've commended.