

# Presidents Giving Back

(February 2012)

President's Day is a time to honor all American presidents, but particularly George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The holiday is well accepted and widely celebrated. Some communities hold reenactments and pageants around important historical events in both Washington's and Lincoln's honor. The National Park Service also has a number of historic sites and memorials commemorating the lives of these two presidents and other presidents as well. And rightly so! Presidents aren't just our fearless leaders. In many cases, they're also great philanthropists who are dedicated to making the world a better place. Many recent presidents, like Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, have dedicated their time and resources to helping people and causes.

During his presidency from 1977-1981, President Jimmy Carter championed global peace and philanthropy. Since then, he has done the same through the Carter Center, a non-profit organization he began with his wife Rosalyn in 1982. The Carter Center strives to advance human rights and end suffering. President Carter has used his position as a former president to help resolve conflicts and to shine a spotlight on homelessness and treatable diseases like malaria. Each year, he leads a week-long homebuilding project for Habitat for Humanity. For all his efforts, President Carter received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

“We can choose to alleviate suffering,” says President Carter. “We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes—and we must.”

President Bill Clinton is doing his part for humanity as well. He established the William J. Clinton Foundation with the mission to improve global health, strengthen world economies, promote healthy childhoods, and protect the environment. Because of his efforts, 14,000 American schools are serving healthy food choices; 10,500 African farmers have improved their crops; 47 world cities are implementing energy efficiency projects; and more than 4 million people have benefitted from lifesaving HIV/AIDS medications.

President George W. Bush has also been busy helping other people and causes. He formed the Bush Institute in 2009 to address some of the world’s problems. The Bush Institute’s main goals are to improve America’s public schools, foster democracy and freedom, develop global health programs, and promote free markets and independent growth. President Bush and his wife Laura have also donated their resources and hard work to The Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Operation Smile, the American Red Cross, and countless other causes.

Our presidents are an inspiration to all people. So on President’s Day, it’s only fitting that we take a moment to honor all the great presidents of our past.

## Teacher Resources – Vocabulary

*Words for Quick Discussion: These words may need to be discussed with students as they are encountered, to help with comprehension of the passage. It is best to do this with a quick discussion while reading the text, in student-friendly language.*

**pageants** (*n*) an elaborate colorful parade or display portraying scenes from history

**philanthropists** (*n*) a person who practices philanthropy

**reenactments** (*n*) the acting out or repetition of a past event or situation

*Words for Further Study: These words not only help with comprehension of the passage, they also appear more frequently in a wide spectrum of reading, especially in academic text. Therefore, further study of the meaning of these words may be beneficial. The words on this list can be incorporated into subsequent lessons.*

**alleviate** (*v*) to make (pain, sorrow, etc.) easier to bear; lessen; relieve

**champion** (*v*) to support; defend

**democracy** (*n*) government by the people or their elected representatives

**humanity** (*n*) the human race

**implementing** (*v*) carrying out; putting into action; performing

**non-profit** (*n*) an organization not established for the purpose of making a profit; not entered into for money

### Further Reading:

To learn more about The Carter Center, visit

<http://www.cartercenter.org/index.html>.

To visit the William J. Clinton Foundations, visit

<http://www.clintonfoundation.org/>.

For a closer look at the George W. Bush Institute, visit

<http://www.bushcenter.com/>.

### Definition Source:

*Collins CoBuild Learner's Dictionary*, Concise Ed. Vol. 2. HarperCollins Publishers, Great Britain, 2003.

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