

2018 Via Bona Philanthropy Awards Finalists

Personal Engagement Category

Ludmila Böhmová

Helping to educate young people in the Central African Republic to support their future economic independence

In 2006 Ludmila, her husband Karol and four other volunteers founded SIRIRI, a non-profit organization that helps specific people and towns in the Central African Republic (CAR), one of the poorest countries in the world, through interventions in education, health and agriculture. At that time, Ludmila realized that the only way future economic independence and emancipation could become a reality was to develop greater self-sufficiency among local residents with a focus on young people.

SIRIRI's first project was construction of a day center for orphans in the city of Bozoum. In 2011, Ludmila and her husband made their first trip to the CAR, where they helped build a high school in Bozoum followed by dormitories for the students. SIRIRI provides long-term support for operation of the school. In 2015, Ludmila initiated development of an education program, "School is Fun", in the CAR. To date 399 local teachers have been trained in this approach and an illustrated primer – the first in the local language, Sango – was created for schools.

The project has been hugely successful. Children in the CAR used to learn to read and write in French, a language which is not their own, and the percentage who mastered reading and writing upon completion of grammar school was roughly one-third. In contrast, more than 80% of first graders had learned to read and write after a one-year "School is Fun" pilot project.

Giving back can be passed on from generation to generation: Ludmila and Karol raised six children, all of whom have also volunteered in Africa. And today, the couple has 18 grandchildren...

Nominated by: Tomáš Gago

Maxim Čambor

Founder of the civic association "One to One" which helps blind athletes reach their goals

In 2008, the Leontinka Foundation asked Maxim to accompany a visually impaired client on the "Jizerska 50" cross-country skiing race. Maxim, a former competitive swimmer and enthusiastic athlete, agreed without hesitation and led his first blind skier to the finish line as a guide. Since then he has continuously helped both amateur and experienced visually impaired athletes: as a guide for blind athletes, volunteer, provider of moral support, navigator, transportation unit, repairman and crisis interventionist. Thanks to his help, vision impaired clients are able to participate in domestic and international events such as the

Jizerska 50, VltavaRun, Dragon Boat, Ridderrennet, Engadin Ski Marathon and La Transjurassienne.

Aware that that disabled athletes have very limited opportunities to take part in sports, Maxim founded the civic association “One to One”, which aims to provide quality sports opportunities for visually impaired athletes with the help of sighted guides. Maxim teaches blind people cross-country skiing, acts as a swim coach and guides during cross-country ski races, para biathlons and triathlons. He also fundraises for races and to help make his clients’ dreams in sports come true. He also wants to help blind people take part in cycling, horsebackriding and golf. One to One is the only association in the Czech Republic with a certified sound optic shooting system for blind biathlons and is currently raising funds to buy additional shooting systems.

Nominated by: Barbara Hucková, Leontinka Foundation

Olga Štrejbarová

Creator of the Santa’s Grandchildren project, which helps fulfill abandoned senior citizens’ wishes

While working on a story in autumn 2016, radio reporter Olga Štrejbarová realized that there are many abandoned senior citizens in retirement homes who haven’t received a gift for years. She sent out an offer to help to all retirement homes. The first to respond was in the city of Třebíč, then Ždírec, and when others saw the success of the project, they joined in and compile lists of their clients’ wishes.

She then set up a Santa’s Grandchildren Facebook group, where people can reserve a specific wish (either a tangible gift or an experience), reserve it and fulfill it for “their” senior citizen. All the wishes on the first list were taken within two hours and the pace accelerated with subsequent lists. Olga began getting requests from people from all across the country. Retirement homes wrote, as well as people who hadn’t been quick enough to reserve a gift to give. Some of these would-be donors began seeking out senior citizens in their own communities to help. In some cases, it went further than one gift, with a visit to the senior citizen and development of a relationship between the “grandchild” and the senior citizen. During the first year, some 600 wishes were fulfilled. Now, thanks in part to the patronship of Czech Radio, the number has reached almost 14,000.

In addition to Santa’s Grandchildren, Olga has another charity project: Love in the City. She collects photos of hearts from all over the world and has them printed on fabric. The fabric is sewn into “love dresses” and the proceeds from sales goes to support other good causes such as special beds for a hospice in Třebíč.

Nominated by: Lenka Čtvrtečková, a Santa’a Grandchild

Young Philanthropist Category (up to age 26)

Alžběta Vachelová

Recruits students to the Czech National Bone Marrow Donor Registry to help save human lives

When Alžběta's friend died of leukemia, she realized little separates health and illness. She first signed up for the Czech National Bone Marrow Donor Registry herself, but she knew that the number of potential donors on the registry was too low. She decided to expand the pool. She and her friend Aneta Nyčová began by asking their friends to join, and then they came up with the idea of encouraging other university students to join the registry.

In December 2015, she organized the first event, called "Sign up for Someone's Life", at her alma mater – the engineering faculty at the Czech Technical University. This initial event was so successful that she followed with a second in spring 2016. The response was even higher and even more positive, which led Alžběta to begin reaching out to students at other Czech universities. They began gradually taking over some of the organizational work.

By sharing her expertise and meeting face-to-face with students and representatives of student organizations, Alžběta Vachelová has recruited 1,750 new potential donors to the Czech National Bone Marrow Donor Registry to date. Statistics show that every 110th registered potential donor actually becomes a suitable donor – which means that Alžběta has already saved 16 human lives.

Nominated by: Vladimíra Štěpánková, Czech National Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

Peter Chalupianský

Helping disabled people by designing and implementing unconventional projects

In 2014, Peter combined a Christmas floorball tournament with help for the disabled for the first time. The tournament became an annual tradition, which has raised almost \$12,000 (CZK 250,000) towards purchase of floorball wheelchairs for the Prague Wheelchair Sports Club.

As he prepared for a semester abroad in South Korea in 2016, he came up with the notion of incorporating charity into his study abroad. Under the patronage of the Barriers Account, he launched a project called "Where is Pete?" and began selling and sending handwritten postcards from Korea to recipients in the Czech Republic. He raised roughly \$9,100 (CZK 190,000) through the project for the Barriers Account. After his return, he held 52 slide shows about his travels and donated the voluntary admission fee to a good cause, raising over \$5,800 (CZK 120,000) to cover the annual costs of special physical therapy for a young boy.

But he didn't stop there. He decided to expand his project beyond the borders of the Czech Republic and began sending postcards around the world. This project, called "Czech Buddy", aims to raise funds for specific disabled individuals, mainly children. He has raised over \$9,600 (CZK 200,000) to date and has sent over 1,000 handwritten postcards.

Currently Peter is founding the Club of Heartfully Engaged – a community of people who want to do good deeds. His enthusiasm and projects have raised over \$36,200 (CZK 750,000) so far.

Nominated by: Eva Horucková, ČSOB; Bohuslav Hůlka, Prague Wheelchair Sports Club;
Božena Jirků, Barriers Account

Petra Soukupová

Founded the youth orchestra, which aids the Broumov region

In 2010, then 15-year-old Petra and her brother Jakub decided to found a big orchestra with their friends that would be completely different than any other orchestra. Even then, Petra was able to persuade adults in the community that if they helped in the beginning, young people would help in the future. Today, the POLICE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA counts 65 members and has held 60 large concerts in the CR and abroad.

In 2014, in collaboration with the local municipal government, Petra held her first benefit concert for the region. In her efforts, she wove together revitalization of unusual places, youth, a charitable goal and a crisp musical performance.

The young musicians' support targets the Broumov Hospital Endowment Fund. It provides health equipment for older or chronically ill patients. Petra, however, also motivated a young blind trumpet player named Mark. The orchestra raised money to buy him notes in Braille – and Mark played with the orchestra. Together, they have raised and donated almost \$24,100 (CZK 500,000).

Petra puts her heart into all of her activities. “Her” orchestra has become a springboard for many of her peers. Some go on to study music, others actively engage in atypical charity events. They are becoming quite a phenomenon and the orchestra's reputation has long since grown beyond its home region.

Nominated by: Lucie Peterková

Good Company Category

Lokál restaurant chain

Thanks to the project Lunch for Someone Else, you can buy lunch for homeless people at the Lokál restaurant chain

The idea behind the project was conceived in 2016. It was initiated by Anna Šprynarová, who was then the marketing manager of the Ambient chain. The aim was to develop a project with real social impact, create something above and beyond typical corporate funding and bring humanity and solidarity into the public's view of people in crisis.

At any one of Lokál's five Prague and one Brno restaurants, anyone can spend \$4 (CZK 90) to buy lunch for a homeless person who is trying to work and integrate him- or herself into society but spends all of his/her earnings on lodgings. “Lunch for Someone Else” is listed on the menu as a separate item. When a customer buys one, Lokál gives a voucher to one of the non-profit organizations collaborating on the project: Novy prostor, Pragulicu or Like Home (Jako doma). These organizations give the vouchers to their homeless employees who

deserve a hot lunch, homemade lemonade and a place at a table with other guests. This bold project has not only survived – it has grown. The Prague 1 parish charity and the Brno-based APLA organization, which helps people with autism, have both joined the effort. The stories of the homeless individuals involved in the project are written up in *Novy prostor* magazine. Customers have bought over 2,200 “Lunch for Someone Else” vouchers to date.

Nominated by: Tereza Jurečková, Pragulic

Mjölki architekti

An architectural practice whose work revitalizes culture in Liberec

The depressed economy in Liberec has brought the city’s culture scene to a standstill. A group of people decided to do something about it. Mjölki is a collection of young people who are interested in their community. The Scandinavian concept of simplicity, material authenticity and youthful exuberance are their hallmarks.

For the past five years, they have organized the KI-NO Liberec film festival, which brings the main street in Liberec to life every autumn. The festival features local businesses, artists and designers and breathes a fresh spark into the otherwise stagnant downtown. Mjölki reopened a former pub to provide a venue for concerts, lectures and film screenings that has since grown its own community.

Mjölki also organizes the “Divočina” series of races, which are small running races that take place in unusual locations or monuments several times a year. Mjölki architekti are also known for their non-commercial architectural projects, e.g. building a sauna at the Harcov reservoir in the heart of the city to draw attention to the neglected public space around reservoirs. After they were forced to remove the sauna from the reservoir, they moved it to a site near a small outdoor swimming pool where it is now open to the public free of charge.

Nominated by: Kateřina Rosendorf

Rodan Hojgr, Naturfyt - BIO

Through his company, the owner of Naturfyt - BIO are improving the quality of life in their hometown of Jeseník

Jeseník native and owner of Naturfyt – BIO Rodan Hojgr supports the local community and young motivated people revitalizing the community in a host of ways. He also supports landscape improvements in the area, local businesses and environmental work.

For instance he helped the Arnika civic association with a program to protect and renew trees and allees, giving funding and his own time to plant trees. Through the civic association Sudetikus, he supported local events such as farmers’ markets, cultural and educational events, street food festivals and community discussions on local issues. He has also

supported a local forest nursery, forest camps for children and the Tančírna community cultural center.

Rodan Hojgr also helps specific young people in the area. He engaged a young local landscape architect fresh out of school to design the garden at the company's new offices, giving her a chance to build experience through an interesting project. Local residents appreciate his humble approach and enthusiasm for community projects.

Nominated by: Zdeňka Morávková, Tančírna community cultural center

Patron Category

Libor Malý

Helping Czechs in debt and promoting a new "giving economy"

After Libor Malý sold his successful business, which operated the job search websites Jobs.cz and Práce.cz, he devoted some time to his own spiritual development. When he was ready to reengage in society, he began implementing and supporting non-profit projects and organizations that are striving for global, society-wide positive change.

Libor Malý was nominated for his years of support of People in Need Foundation. In 2010 he supported the SOS Tibet fundraising drive and later funded help for victims of the Myanmar conflict. After meeting a girl who had racked up debts to pay for cancer treatment that put her on the brink of property seizure, he began fighting against the debt industry. Since 2014, his funding has enabled People in Need to fight a number of unethical laws and save Czech households over \$483 million (CZK 10 billion) per year. He is currently advocating for an amendment to the law on child debtors and is helping found a helpline.

The organization Adato Paradigma nominated Libor Malý for his support of the Hearth.net social network, which is based on the concept that a giving economy is one of the pillars of sustainable development. Libor Malý firmly believes that a generous and kind approach to life and to other people will improve our shared quality of life, making him a huge inspiration to those around him. Nearly 38,000 gifts have been exchanged by 17,300 people through Hearth.net. He also gives over \$966,600 (CZK 20 million) annually to other charitable causes.

Nominated by: Tomáš Vyhnálek, Lenka Melicharová

Tomáš Drnek

Helps people with disabilities, their families, senior citizens and foster families financially and his time

Tomáš Drnka's philanthropic approach to life has evolved since his youth. As a volunteer with the YMCA in Jindřichov Hradec, he and other young people renewed the organization's work in the region. He led children's summer camps and sports groups before turning his energy to university and his own family and family firm. Now as a lawyer and economist, he uses these sectors in his work with the non-profit organization Open WINDOWS (Otevřená OKNA), which supports disabled people and senior citizens. His work with Open WINDOWS grew out of his family's long-term friendship with the family which founded the organization and the foundation of trust they share.

Tomáš Drnek supports Open WINDOWS financially, through provision of pro bono services and through personal assistance. He also provides legal and accounting advice free of charge and helps with tenders for the sheltered workshops the organization runs.

Tomáš' help has enabled Open WINDOWS to buy a large amount of equipment for sheltered and socially therapeutic workshops and housing and make needed repairs on the building that the organization received as a gift. In late 2014-early 2015 he guided the organization in safely transitioning from civic association legal status to a different legal status as required by the civil code. In the 14 years since Open WINDOWS' founding, he has provided a total of \$39,600 (CZK 820,000) in funding and his personal help has been – and continues to be – priceless.

Nominated by: Drahomíra Blažková, Otevřená OKNA

Karel Janeček

He reinvests some of his profits back into society to help it move forward

Karel Janeček is a mathematician, social reformer and a successful businessman who reinvests part of his profits back to society. He has been a philanthropist since 2010 with a broad scope of support across various societal issues.

He began supporting talented scientists in different fields through the Neuron Endowment Fund. His Help Endowment Fund focuses on supporting people who find themselves in crisis through no fault of their own, e.g. due to a fraud or excessive bureaucracy. Through this fund, Karel Janeček has helped hundreds of individuals and families move beyond crisis. The fund also uses crowdsourcing to snowball public support as well. Through the Anti-corruption Endowment Fund, Karel Janeček plays a long-term role in supporting investigation into and disclosure of cases of corruption in public administration. Many of the corruption cases have faced court proceedings and gained visibility in the media and with the public. He has also been instrumental in promoting democratic presidential elections and raise public interest in current events through his Institute for Democracy 21 and the President 21 project. The Karel Janeček Foundation has also supported numerous young

social innovators and their projects. He also provides funding to many other organizations and projects.

Karel Janeček considers helping others to be completely natural and motivates those around him to do the same. His goal is to move society forward as a whole – towards maturity, tolerance and greater self-confidence.

Nominated by: Dominik Jandl

Legacy Category

Ivanka Kellnerová (*In memoriam*)

She spent her life helping others and wanted to leave her assets to help the needy

Ivanka Kellnerová graduated with several university degrees. She loved the theater. She shared this passion with her mother; both were regulars at various Prague theaters. She later cared devotedly for her mother, even when the elderly lady's health took a turn for the worse. Although it was difficult to care for her, Ivanka wanted to do everything she could to enable her mother to live out her life at home, in her own apartment. After her mother's death, her family became the Vinohrady Divadlo, where she worked as a lighting assistant and porter.

When writing her will, she decided to divide most of her assets among non-profit organizations that help the needy and lonely people. She bequeathed part of her property to Life90 (Život90), which helps senior citizens live in their homes as long as possible and helps their families combine care with work and other activities. She also bequeathed assets to People in Need Foundation and Doctors without Borders. These were not random choices. She left her assets to organizations that strive to enable all people to live full lives and also support solidarity and connect individuals, families and the broader community in a multi-generational way.

Life90, which nominated Ivanka Kellnerová, admired her strong will, endurance and the indefatigable support she gave to those around her. Although illness placed considerable constraints on her in the final stages of life, she remained active and helped others.

Nominated by: Hana Končelová, Život90

Michal Wagner

Living life with the conviction that people should give back to nature

As a natural scientist, Michal Wagner has felt a strong tie to nature his entire life. He has volunteered to care for the environment for many years. He lived abroad and upon his return to his native country after the Velvet Revolution, he began volunteering in the Šárka Valley in Prague. In 2010, he spend time at a curative spa in the south Bohemian town of

Třebon, where he was captivated by the extensive spa park. Since then he has spent time at the curative spa in Třebon each year. His fondness of the park has led him to volunteer there during his spa visits to improve the park with a focus on increasing the biodiversity of the herb layer of alluvial and forest ecosystems. In 2013, he bought seeds for sowing with a value of \$1,900 (CZK 40,000) and donated them to the park. He also took part in the development of the Aurora Spa Park Maintenance Plan and gives free lectures in Třebon about the spa park and other parks around the world.

The park now boasts new flowering meadows, largely thanks to his work. This landscape element is markedly scarce in Europe. Michal Wagner continues to play an active role in meadow development. Recognizing that individual donors in environmental stewardship are still few and far between in the Czech Republic, he wants to serve as a positive example. To ensure that the park can continue to develop after his death, he has bequeathed \$24,100 (CZK 500,000) to this end.

Nominated by: Jaroslav Fliegel, Town of Třeboň

Marcela Mejstříková

She bequeathed her assets to cancer treatment

This active octogenarian experienced breast cancer years ago. She survived and began a new period in her life. In 1999, she, Jana Drexlerová and their doctor, Dr. Václav Pecha, founded a civic association called Mamma HELP, which continues to help women with breast cancer today.

Since Marcela has already lost her family, she considers Mamma HELP as her family. She worked as a therapist, offering strength and support to help women overcome the illness and also helped establish centers in other cities. She was also very active in art and handicrafts over the course of her life, even in retirement. She still sews and makes products for benefit events; her sewn cats, for example, are regular bestsellers. The proceeds go to help fund operational costs at Mamma HELP centers.

At 83, Marcela lives life optimistically and to the fullest. She doesn't dwell on the past, she lives in the present as well as the future. She knows that she can help women with breast cancer even after she passes away. In 2014, she decided to bequeath her entire estate to Mamma HELP. The assets will help bridge potential difficult periods in the existing centers or help fund establishment of new centers.

Nominated by: Simona Kolářová, Mamma HELP