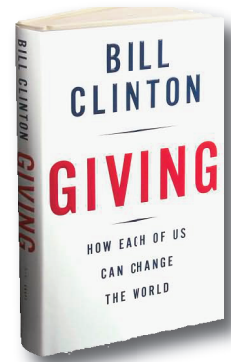


Bill Clinton on



Chess -in-the- Schools



"My next example is not young in years, but his enthusiasm and imagination would do credit to someone half his age.

Lewis Cullman, eighty-eight, pioneered the leveraged buyout more than forty years ago. As one of America's first venture capitalists, he amassed a sizable fortune, much of which he and his wife, Dorothy, decided to give away during their lifetime. So far they have given more than \$200 million to causes they care about. Many are established initiatives that can always use more money, like the New York Public Library, the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Modern Art, the Neuroscience Institute, Human Rights Watch, the Enterprise Foundation (for low-income housing), and his alma mater, Yale. But one of his causes, Chess-in-the-Schools, is a classic example of a very good idea with no chance of becoming a reality without private support.

In 1986, a couple of fellow chess enthusiasts started Chess-in-the-Schools, believing that the game's complex rules and requirements of

strategy and imagination could stimulate intellectual growth in students in low-performing schools. The program was first introduced into a few New York City schools. When the Chess-in-the-Schools kids were tested on national standardized exams, they showed significant gains in reading, outperforming not only the average scores in their school districts but the national average as well. The participating students were

not selected for aptitude. If the program is introduced into the second grade of a school, all second graders are taught chess.

Playing chess helps students develop thinking and analyzing skills, concentration, greater self-control, and self-confidence. The

program costs about \$100 a student per year. Today, Chess-in-the-Schools involves about 27,000 elementary and junior high school students in 109 schools in New York City neighborhoods with incomes low enough to qualify for the federal school lunch program. It also operates after-school programs in more than 110 schools, and sponsors weekend and holiday tournaments and four citywide tournaments with up to one thousand participants. There is an alumni program that helps high school students prepare for and gain admission to college.

We have hard evidence that Chess-in-the-Schools works, for \$100 a student.

Early on, Lewis gave the program \$1 million. Now he helps raise money for it from corporations, foundations, and individuals, and convinces people like me to attend events to increase its visibility. Despite the growth of Chess-in-the-Schools, there are almost one hundred schools on a waiting list. Every year, results of national reading tests show poor students behind their more well-off contemporaries, without the reading skills necessary to succeed in an information technology economy. We have hard evidence that Chess-in-the-Schools works, for \$100 a student. Our kids need more Lewis Cullmans, or a lot more people who will give \$100.

The \$100 option brings me to the last, and potentially most important, giver in this chapter: you. The vast majority of you who read this book can't give anywhere near the amounts the Hohns, the Stamos brothers, and the Cullmans do. But if all of you searched your heart for the causes you really care about and gave what you could to them, the aggregate amount and its effect would be significant. Many people work for businesses that match their employees' contributions. It's a great way to double the impact of your gift. ”

- Excerpted from *Giving*.

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Published by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.