

My pledge to Warren Buffett and Bill Gates:

Being a first generation American has many rewards. Among them is having the opportunity to succeed in this free country, and then succeeding enough to have the privilege of knowing that “success unshared is failure.”

My mother raised my brother and me in a European immigrant community in downtown Los Angeles. From the time I was two years old, it was just the three of us. We didn’t have very much, not even a TV; however, we did not realize that.

One Christmas, when I was six years old, my mother took us to see the window displays and decorations in the big department stores in downtown Los Angeles. It was a big treat for us. We saw puppets that moved and trains that circled... It was really special and added to the Christmas spirit, but it didn’t cost anything.

That same year, my mother gave my brother and me a dime. She told both of us to hold half of it and put it in the bucket near a man who was ringing a bell. We did, and then we asked my mother why we gave him the dime (at the time, a dime could buy you three candy bars or two soda pops). My mom’s reply was, “This is the Salvation Army that helps people who are really in need. Remember boys, no matter how much you have, there is always someone who is more in need than you. Always try to give, even if it is a little.” Needless to say, that stuck with me in my adult life.

Now my family and I have the privilege to help people and make the world a better place to live. This opportunity will not be passed up. Living is giving. I won’t deprive my family of knowing how good it feels to help those in need with some of the basics we already have...food, shelter, care and a future.

Whether it’s feeding thousands of orphans in third world countries, saving whales, helping the homeless find employment, protecting our waterways, rescuing young girls from prostitution, teaching and supplying families in Appalachia with equipment to grow their own vegetables, or any other worthwhile endeavor...giving back is a practice and joy I want my family to continue.

I plan to help the world now and in the future—through my trust and my family—with half (if not more) of what I have been blessed with today.

Peace, love and happiness:

John Paul DeJoria
Co-Founder John Paul Mitchell Systems
Co-Founder Patron Spirits Company
Co-Founder John Paul Pet
Co-Founder ROK