

## **Rediscovering Community Titans**

### **Nonprofit celebrates the extraordinary achievements of ordinary people**

For over 63 years, Mutual of America has served the employee benefit needs of the nonprofit community. During that time, we have developed great respect for those who have dedicated their lives to helping those in need.

In 2006, a group of individuals united to form the Human Spirit Initiative, inspired by the example and impact of American trailblazers who shaped our nation's health and human services in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its founder and chairman is Kathleen J. Horsch, whose volunteer experience in state, national and international nonprofit leadership spans 40 years.

The mission of the Human Spirit Initiative, according to Horsch, is “to record and share the history of civil society in the United States in a manner that will inspire people today to build a community that is healthy, diverse and inclusive.”

To that end, the Human Spirit Initiative has produced three monographs that celebrate the extraordinary achievements of ordinary people who dedicated their lives to found or shape human services organizations: Jane Addams, who founded Hull House and is credited with beginning the social welfare movement in the U.S.; Clifford Beers, founder of the modern mental health movement; and Maud and Ballington Booth, co-founders of Volunteers of America.

Subsequent monographs will spotlight William Edwin Hall, founder of Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Robert Smith and William Wilson, co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous; Eunice Shriver, who founded the Special Olympics; and Millard and Linda Fuller, co-founders of Habitat for Humanity. Each of these individuals has been memorialized in the Extra Mile – Points of Light Volunteer Pathway that was unveiled in Washington, D.C., in 2005.

The monographs weave the honorees' biographies with an overview of the social problems that prompted their leadership, the experiences of contemporaries who were inspired by their actions, and the present day challenges that call for involvement on our part. Collectively, they progress through the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“By recording and building respect for their achievements,” says Horsch, “the Human Spirit Initiative hopes to build a greater understanding of and commitment to civil society.”

Visit the *Human Spirit Initiative* [**INTERNAL NOTE: URL = <http://www.human-spirit-initiative.org/sharingthestories.html>**] to download PDFs of their monographs. We invite you to learn more about Mutual of America's *Community Building* [**INTERNAL NOTE: URL = <http://www.mutualofamerica.com/MOAFrame.asp?Main=about/Description.asp&ButHit=about>**] strategies, including our *Community Partnership Award*.