



Beyond the spotlight: Celebrities who do good

by ROCHELLE PANGILINAN
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It cannot be denied that most celebrities make the general impression on the public that they are all about fame and fortune. After all, once you are a celebrity, you're bound to receive some, if not all, the perks which go along with the territory, and one would have to be crazy not to enjoy them. Celebrities get to have their own posse and fan clubs, they get to travel for free, they have instant passes to the hottest clubs, they have access to the much buzzed about events, they get designer clothes without opening their wallets, they get to have the latest and most expensive gadgets delivered right onto their doorsteps, and they get to go to grand vacation spots without them having to break the bank. However, there are a handful of celebrities who are not all about fame and fortune and instead are intent on making a difference for their community and their fellowmen.

Claudine Barretto

Aga Muhlach



Angel Locsin

Claudine Barretto and Raymart Santiago

Claudine Barretto, who has made a name in showbiz since she burst into the small screen in the now-defunct Ang TV (which also served as a launchpad for today's most popular stars), is one celebrity who makes use of her fame and fortune to help the less unfortunate. Together with her husband Raymart Santiago, Claudine supports Bantay Bata, ABS-CBN's social welfare program which is dedicated to saving and supporting abused kids.

Claudine recently told abs-cbnnews.com when asked what prompted her to get involved in charitable work, "I think I've always had it in me. When you try to look for *kung ano 'yung real mission mo* in real life aside from being an actor, *kung 'yun lang ba 'yun*. And then you find out there's something deeper *pa*. There's a purpose *pa* behind the accolades and the awards."

Claudine is also determined to work with her church in Marikina to establish a foster house for the needy and abused kids in Marikina.

Angel Locsin

Angel Locsin catapulted to fame via the *fantaserye Mulawin* and later proved it was no fluke when she followed it up with the equally popular TV adaptation of the Mars Ravelo comics *Darna*; both shows for GMA-7. Now, with ABS-CBN, Angel is busy as ever but still finds the time to do her part for charity.

During her birthdays, Angel makes time to do good for her fellowmen. In April 23, 2007, Angel celebrated her birthday with Gabriela foundation, a political-sector partylist which aims to support women and less fortunate children. The following year, Angel spent time in Payatas, Quezon City where she gave food, clothing and other basic needs to the less fortunate kids in the area.

Judy Ann Santos

Judy Ann Santos became a household name in the early 1990s in the afternoon soap opera *Mara Clara* and wasted no time even back then to get involved in civic projects and charity works.

"Elsie Gaches Village was my first advocacy. During my birthday every year, I would go there to cheer them up and have a little *salò-salò* with them. *Maliit lang na bagay* but it makes them happy *kaya masaya na rin ako*," she said in a previous interview.

Together with friends including Joyce Bernal, Judy Ann established a foundation in 2002 which grants scholarships to the deserving.

"My fans are helping me with all my charity endeavors. *Sila pa ang nagpapaalala sa akin kung minsan sa aking mga schedules* for civic work. *Malaking tulong sila sa akin*," she says.



Carmina Villaroel



Zoren Legaspi

Carmina Villaroel and Zoren Legaspi

One of the busiest couples in showbiz today, Carmina Villaroel and Zoren Legaspi, still find time to do good in their community.

In a previous episode in *SIS* in which she celebrated her birthday, Carmina announced that she and Zoren recently became staunch supporters of the Philippine Society for Orphan Disorder or PSOD, an organization which aims to bring awareness for orphan diseases, which are diseases too rare to warrant enough attention.

PSOD was founded by Cynthia Magdaraog, whose own son Dickoy was born with Pompe Disease, a rare disease which affect the motor skills and the lungs of those afflicted with it. Carmina immediately agreed when she was asked to support the organization.

"*Gusto nilang i-full blast na yung awareness ng mga tao*. So they were looking for an *artista* as their spokesperson. *Sabi ko, ay, gusto ko yan, wala nang bayad! So sobrang happy sila, kasi gusto nila* with posters and everything. *Sabi ko sobrang willing ako* to do it for free. *So na-touch sila. Sabi ko imbis na ibabayad niyo sa akin, gamitin niyo na lang* for posters, leaflets, whatever," she says.

Ruffa Gutierrez

Ruffa Gutierrez proves that beauty queens can go beyond being pretty and do something good for the world, while at the same time instilling a terrific fashion sense into the public. With the help of Roof-A-Child Foundation and Iced Out Productions, Ruffa established the very successful RRRampa For A Cause for the benefit of Make-a-Wish Foundation and World Vision. RRRampa For A Cause has become an annual event, which a lot of people in the showbiz circle look forward to.

RRRampa For A Cause includes a celebrity bazaar, where Ruffa's celebrity friends get to sell clothing items for much lesser costs, and a fashion show where Ruffa's celebrity friends are the models wearing creations by the country's top designers are featured. This event has been supported by who's who in showbiz—Regine Velasquez, Ogie Alcasid, Rufa Mae Quinto, Gretchen Barretto, Lucy Torres-Gomez, Miriam Quiambao, Marj Rivera, Dingdong Dantes, Piolo Pascual, Richard Gomez, Gary Valenciano, Dawn Zulueta, Donita Rose, Angel Locsin, Giselle Sanchez, and Tessa Prieto-Valdes, as well as the Gutierrez clan (Eddie, Annabelle Rama, Ruffa, Richard, Raymond, Rocky, Elvis, Richard, and Ritchie Paul). Among the designers who's lent a hand to this event are Paul Cabral, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Randy Ortiz, Kate Torralba and Inno Sotto.

Lucy Torres-Gomez

Lucy Torres-Gomez may have lived a privileged life since birth, but this does not mean she is not aware of the plight of the less fortunate. As a matter of fact, she has been a supporter for friends who have established charity foundations and always make sure to do her part to help.

She supports the Philippine National Red Cross. As a recent contestant at the game show *You and Me Against the World* hosted by Gretchen Barretto, Lucy managed to win a large amount of money which she donated to the PNRC.

Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo

Dawn quickly gained instant fame when she caught the moviegoer's attention in the 1986 Sharon Cuneta blockbuster *Nakagapos Na Puso*. Since then, Dawn has become one of the most lauded actresses of local showbiz. Dawn recently made a big comeback to showbiz where she was warmly welcomed back.

A self-proclaimed bookworm, Dawn recently joined the charity program T.A.S.K. (Tulong Aral sa Kabataan), which provides educational textbooks for needy children.

Aga Muhlach

Perhaps the most active celebrity doing charity work is Aga Muhlach. Aga has been a part of Jollibee's campaign during Christmastime, MaAga ang Pasko, which is committed to bring cheers and happiness to underprivileged children. With its 15th year this 2009, the campaign has been the biggest and longest-running toy and book drive in the country. MaAga ang Pasko sa Jollibee is in partnership with the STI Foundation and campaigns for people to drop off toys and books at specially marked boxes in Jollibee stores all over the country. The toys and books go to boys and girls under the care of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DWDW) many accredited institutions. Jollibee and Aga hold a special celebration before Christmas where the toys and books will be distributed among the kids. MaAga ang Pasko is said to have distributed more than 1.5 million toys and books and has encouraged many companies to form similar programs.

"To see a young boy's or girl's face light up with a smile upon receiving a toy or a book, even a used one, never fails to tug at my heart," said Aga in an interview last year. "Children have a way of showing their appreciation. I guess getting a book or a toy from Jollibee makes them happy, knowing that there are people who remember them at Christmas."

Arnold Clavio

His work for GMA-7's top-rated news broadcast shows definitely made Arnold Clavio more conscious of the state which the country's less fortunate are in. This may be the reason why he got involved in charity work.

Arnold established Igan Foundation, a foundation which donates food to the less fortunate.

Chris Tiu

One of the charmers in the court at last year's University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) season, Chris Tiu, is also a charmer when it comes to doing good for his community.

A Barangay Kagawad in Urdaneta Village, Makati City (he also served as a Sangguniang Kabataan chairman for five years), Chris Tiu is no stranger to helping out. As he prepares to pursue MBA studies abroad and start his own restaurant business, Chris Tiu is working on a foundation together with Ateneo's Center for Education Development to provide scholarships and help schools set up their curriculum.

All of these celebrities mentioned, as well as others who weren't but are also involved in charity works, have achieved so much in terms of their careers. But Henry David Thoreau did say, "Not only must we be good, but we must also be good for something." And with them doing their part to make a difference in the world, that is definitely the case. ☐



Ruffa Gutierrez

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Lucy Torres-Gomez