



Dear Reader,

The "American Dream" by definition takes the ideals of equality, freedom and opportunity and brings them out of the shadows of hope and into the reality of one's life. For me, making that dream a reality drove me to always push forward, always try harder and always stay positive. While for some, that dream equalates to little more than personal success, for me, the "American Dream" was about achieving a success that would allow me the means to change the lives of others.

"Driven by Desperation," is much more than an autobiography. True, it does highlight my journey, my peaks and valleys, my triumphs and tragedies, but more than that, it is a challenge for the reader to think deeply about their own path. It is a challenge to reach farther than one's own dreams and ask the question, "What have I done to change the world?"

You may think the idea of changing the world is an impossible task; you're merely one person, what could *YOU* possibly do to make a change? The truth is, you've already taken a step in the right direction, and directly impacted the lives and futures of many. How? By purchasing this book. You see, for every book sold, 35% of the proceeds will go directly to the Melbourne and Michael Folkes Foundation. This foundation is a means to help people create their own pathway to success by embracing their opportunities. You see, for many of today's youth, particularly the ones at Mount Waddy Primary School in my hometown of Friendship, Jamaica, it is difficult to see opportunity. There, a child's opportunity for greatness is often clouded by poverty, hunger and sickness. The idea of becoming educated and building a life for one's self often feels like an illusion. However, through the efforts of the foundation, finding opportunities and grasping them tightly with both hands, is quickly becoming a reality.

The Melbourne and Michael Folkes Foundation is an all-encompassing beacon of hope. For starters, we provide education to children who, under other circumstances, might not have the opportunity to attend school. In addition to giving them the tools

needed to build great minds, we also equip them with the tools needed to build great character. "Mighty in Character" is the motto we teach and encourage the children to live by. The idea of being Mighty in Character is the possession and execution of seven simple, but very important elements:

Kindness: The ability and desire to show kindness to others. To offer a smile when one is sad, a compliment when one feels low, and an idea of direction when one feels lost. To go above and beyond the norm of human-to-human contact, and truly make a connection with those around you.

Gratitude: The ability and desire to recognize when one has received kindness. To express thanks for that kindness by more than just words, but through the action of paying it forward and continuing to extend kindness onto others.

Truth: The ability and desire to stand tall and be honest, regardless of circumstances. Expressing the knowledge that being truthful is always the right thing to do.

Faith: The ability and desire to hold strong to one's beliefs. Yes, we do teach the power of God, but recognize that faith is more than just religion. It is that voice inside of all of us that offers comfort in difficult times, and strength in times of weakness.

Courage: The ability and desire to push forward in times of fear and doubt, to achieve what was once thought of as impossible, to stand by others who are too weak to stand alone, to be a better person today than you were yesterday.

Humility: The ability to remain humble and modest, the absence of arrogance, the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people.

Courtesy: The ability to behave in a polite manner that shows respect for other people.

We are very proud to say that in addition to providing education and character building skills, we have also been able to broaden the dream for four students for the past two years, by sponsoring their education as they take that next step into junior high school.

Even with all that we have done, there is still so much to do. Making a difference and changing the world is an endless road, full of opportunities to improve; to turn one idea into another, to create a true synergy. Starting in 2015 and over the course of the following years, we intend to bring even more to the children of Friendship, Jamaica.

Multi-Purpose Auditorium: There, children can engage in physical education every day, an advantage they seldom have due to the severity of Jamaica's outdoor elements. The auditorium will also be used for health fairs, giving students an opportunity to visit and be treated by doctors. It will host the student graduations, serving as a place of inspiration,

celebration and achievement for both students, parents and the community. Finally, the auditorium will serve as a creative space for children to share, demonstrate and celebrate art, theatre, music and dance.

Medical Care Initiative: This initiative will unfold in several phases. The Foundation's first phase intends utilizing the auditorium at Mount Waddy Primary School as the perfect environment for bringing Health Fairs to the school. Initially, medical professionals from the USA will be attending the fairs providing information and health care for the school's students and the community at large. However, it is the foundation's hope that the Health Fairs will provide a model for local health care professionals to continue in the future and that they will utilize local skills and knowledge, improving provision for students to ensure lack of health is not a barrier to learning and achievement.

Tuition Assistance Program: This program will enable students to meet their financial obligations throughout their educational pursuit from elementary through college, thus removing financial barriers to achievement. Teachers at the school will also benefit, as the Foundation provides educational resources to include books, computers, printers etc. so that teachers can enhance their teaching and the students have a competitive platform from which they are technologically up to date in their quest for knowledge.

Children's Book: In order to ensure that the students continue to live 'Mighty in Character', we also have plans to release a series of children's books that will teach life lessons while promoting the idea of leadership and living life by the five elements.

Sustenance Farm - Additionally, there are plans for a sustenance farm. This initiative will provide local produce for colleges, hotels and restaurants. By Involving local people and students, this initiative will be a community-wide project. With the foundation's support, it is intended that with greater scale, equipment and organization the Farming Initiative will extend to international exports. The proceeds from this program will fund the educational and humanitarian long-term efforts, thereby creating self-sustainability instead of relying on financial donations.

We intend to initiate a student cultural exchange program between Jamaica and the United States. We feel this program would provide a world of knowledge and understanding; and for many, a once in a lifetime opportunity to see and live in another part of the world.

Finally, there is our MIC Heroes initiative. This initiative will provide a salary to those teachers, who currently are working every single day, completely pro bono. In fact, we are excited to announce that we have already made plans to finance one special teacher, who for the past two years, has worked diligently, improving the lives of young

ones, all without a single dollar of pay. How were we able to manage this? It all ties back to my "American Dream".

When I began to build the M.A. Folkes Co. Inc, in the U.S., I knew that it could be more than just a means of financial security. It could mark the beginning of my quest to help change the world. I also wanted a way to show gratitude for the opportunities I was given in the United States, to pay kindness forward to others.

Second Chance Employer: This program allows us to hire individuals with minor criminal backgrounds, to give them a true shot at a second chance in life. These employees are then asked to pay their gratitude forward by passing along their life lessons to children in the community who have chosen a similar path, and to help redirect these children toward a brighter and more successful future.

Youth Program: In addition, the M.A. Folkes Co. Inc, also has plans to donate 15,000 square feet of our Hamilton, OH facility to youth programs. There, we will host fundays for troubled youth. These events will be two fold; one, serving as a time and place for the children to be mentored by others who have been where they are, and can advise a course correction, and two, a place for them to have fun, enjoy food, beverages and games, while having the opportunity to exhale all of life's burdens and simply be a kid for a few hours.

Green Initiative Program: The M.A. Folkes Co. Inc, is also giving back to the environment through our green initiative program, a program that benefits our customers and helps to preserve the world we live in. At this point, you might be wondering how all of this ties back to the Melbourne and Michael Folkes Foundation, and what does it have to do with MIC Heroes and the teacher we discussed earlier. You see, through a combination of our green initiative program and our diversity spend, we have been able to save the M.A. Folkes company enough money this year to make a special donation to the foundation. Thanks to the success of these initiatives, we will finally be able to finance half of that special teacher's salary.

So what does all of this mean for you? ***In short, it means that I challenge you.*** I challenge you to once again ask yourself, "What have I done to change the world?" I then challenge you to stand up and make a difference for the future. I challenge you to remember that while the adults of today are certainly of great importance, it is the children who will shape and build tomorrow. The future of the world we live in is full of possibilities and greatness; however, caring for the future leaders falls on our shoulders

and is not a responsibility that we can shy away from. It is our responsibility to nurture them, both with food and with knowledge. It is our responsibility to care for them, both physically and emotionally. It is our responsibility to guide them through the forest of doubt, leading them to a path lit with possibilities, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are never left behind.

At this time, I ask you to join us in shaping these future leaders. Join us in nurturing them, educating them and caring for them. Change the world today, by helping to ensure our tomorrow. We will accept anything that you can afford to donate and there are many ways to do so. You can donate by cash, check or credit card or you can donate in kind through supplies. **80% of all donations will fund the foundation, with only 20%** to support the foundation's overhead. We thank you in advance for your support, and look forward to being witness to the amazing changes these future leaders will make!

Thank you,

Michael A. Folkes

Sample Donation Form

Name:

Company Name:

Company Website:

Email:

Address:

I would like to donate:

- Funding (through cash, check, credit card)
- In kind (through supplies, equipment)

I would like to set up my donation as:

- General (to be distributed as need)
- In memory of (list individual's name)
- As a company funded grant/scholarship

To donate, please either include your cash or check and return with this form to P. O. Box 425, Hamilton, OH 45012. You can also donate directly from our website <http://www.mandmfoundation.org/about-us/donations.html>.

Thank you. The Melbourne and Michael Folkes Foundation is a 501C3 Company.

LETTER ABOUT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

If you would like to know where you can see Michael A. Folkes speak, please inquire to media@mafolkes.com. To have Mr. Folkes speak at your engagement, company or private club, please email us at media@mafolkes.com.