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Transcript of Full Eddie Bergman Interview

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Eddie Bergman, 27, graduated from Northport High and founded Miracle Corners of the World, a nonprofit group that does development projects in Africa.

Q: What inspired you to become an activist?

Bergman: At Northport High School two teachers, Peter White and Anthony Asplin, inspired me to do two different things -- to go to Nicaragua in 11th grade to do volunteer work, then to start a DJ company. I realized that anything is possible, that the world is larger than Northport itself and there are opportunities to get involved. In 12th grade, I made a presentation to a United Nations committee and received a grant to build cafeterias in schools in Nicaragua. I learned I could combine my interests in business and social projects.

Q: How did you develop your program?

Bergman: At NYU, I thought about how many problems there are in the world, and I wondered if I could do more. I co-founded Miracle Corners of the World to bring young people together, to do good works with an entrepreneurial focus. I wanted to go to Africa, and I sent out 40 letters to different contacts there, offering to help small businesses. I got one response, from a nun in Tanzania. I went over there and helped open a garage where mechanics could train and work. I go out and inspire others to join our vision to get active, to create local change through global exchange ... Later on, I partnered with the government in Sierra Leone, which had 10,000 peacekeepers, to find ways to engage the troops in giving back in development projects. Now we're building a community center in Rwanda.

Q: What makes you proudest?

Bergman: With Miracle Corners, if I was to no longer be around, I think all the programs would continue. It's no longer the 'Eddie organization,' with me as executive director. In all, we've raised more than \$2 million in cash and in-kind contributions. We've constructed three community centers in Sierra Leone, and

have built a health clinic in Tanzania, and gotten more than 40 American dentists and doctors to volunteer. We're active in the United States, too. We have a youth leadership training program with over 400 alumni, including Israelis and Palestinians who came to work together. We've run this for 10 years.

Q: Who would you consider models among older people, including activists?

Bergman: My grandparents escaped Nazi Germany and my parents left apartheid South Africa. I feel a calling, an urgency to harness energy from young people from different backgrounds. Martin Luther King was a visionary, and I've met Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Q: Do you have any fears about your activism?

Bergman: I could fear being young, being the wrong color, having the wrong religion, or focusing internationally when there are so many problems locally. At the end of the day you can let fear eat you up or you can do your best to make a difference.