

**From:** Mark Suzman, Gates Foundation  
<theoptimist@communications.gatesfoundation.org>  
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BILL & ME

## The Optimist

Relentless pursuit of an equitable world

2024 Gates Foundation  
Annual Letter

Will philanthropy rise  
to this extraordinary  
moment?

Read Mark's annual letter →



Hello,

I want to tell you about a person I admire. His name was Chuck Feeney, and he lived an unassuming life, with a \$10 watch on his wrist. He died not owning a house or a car. [Chuck was also a billionaire.](#)

There were many remarkable things about Feeney, but this is what most inspires me: He gave away virtually *all* of his wealth while he was alive. He prioritized people living furthest from opportunity, supporting HIV clinics in South Africa and

grassroots efforts to expand health care coverage, to name a few.

Feeney's giving made an immense and measurable impact. Today, philanthropists also have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reduce inequities on a massive scale. [In my 2024 annual letter, I shine a light on what's possible if more philanthropists focus their resources on areas where need is greatest.](#)

Read Mark's annual letter

The story of wild poliovirus is one powerful example of how philanthropy can catalyze progress. At one point, 7,000 children were paralyzed from wild poliovirus every week. Philanthropists, like Rotarians—who are able to take risks and dedicate resources that others could not—organized efforts to support eradication solutions, government efforts in polio-affected countries, and frontline heroes to reach children in even the most remote parts of the world. As a result of these global efforts, in 2023, the number of people infected by wild poliovirus dropped to 12 for the entire year.

In the case of polio, philanthropy helped make the seemingly impossible possible. Many more of the greatest challenges that face our world today already have solutions—existing and emerging—that can save lives. [As I share in my letter](#), philanthropy now has a chance to step forward and turn those solutions into real impact for people.

There's already so much generosity in the world, and together, we can tap into it and make certain everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy and productive life. [Find out what we can achieve in my 2024 annual letter.](#)



Mark Suzman  
CEO  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

P.S. We'll have the chance to talk about the letter and the foundation's outlook for 2024 during our upcoming *Optimist* subscriber call on February 2 at 8:30 am PT / 11:30 am ET / 6:30 pm CAT. [RSVP and submit questions in advance here.](#) I look forward to answering your questions, so I hope you'll join us.

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PO Box 23350, Seattle, WA 98102, U.S.A.