

Making the World -- A Better Place with Stone Soup

By Nancy Cacioppo

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Richard Deats tells the story of **Vedran Smailovic**, the principal cellist of the Sarajevo Opera, who played Albinoni's sorrowful "Adagio" in a Sarajevo bread line every day for 22 days in memory of the 22 people who were killed in a 1992 bombing in the besieged city.

In his story, Deats writes that Smailovic's cello "held more power than bombs and guns and all the ugly instruments of terror combined. With his music, the cellist of Sarajevo had defied the power of death itself, inspiring many to resist despair by celebrating love, life, and that spark of human spirit that can never be destroyed."

"*Adagio in Sarajevo*" is one of 100 inspirational stories in "*Stone Soup for the World*" (Conari Press, \$15.95).

Deats, executive director of the **Fellowship of Reconciliation** in Upper Nyack, will help launch National Volunteer Week, which is April 19 to 25. He will lead a reading and signing of the book at 7 p.m. Friday at the Pickwick Book Shop, 8 S. Broadway, Nyack. For information, call 358-9126.

"*Stone Soup for the World*" is billed as "a magical collection of stories that celebrate unforgettable deeds, tap our imaginations and rekindle the spirit of giving."

The book, written in vignettes, tells about the simple efforts of individuals who have

an impact on mankind. Among them are stories of **Mother Teresa, Jimmy Carter, Nelson Mandela, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Steven Spielberg, Wynton Marsalis, and actor Edward James Olmos.**

"Stone Soup" also has stories about lesser-known people. Among them is 12-year-old **Isis Johnson**, who at the age of four began a food drive in New Orleans and now has a foundation of her own that helps people.

There is nine-year-old **Bess Lynn Sarinino** of Virginia Beach, Va., who threw a "forgiveness party" for teen-agers who had robbed and vandalized her home.

Another story is about a 27-year-old businessman, whose efforts to raise scholarship money for the children of the victims of the **Oklahoma City** bombing eventually totaled more than \$3.5 million.

Another is about the people of Billings, Montana, who came together to fight anti-semitism.

Then there is **David Levitt**, who at 11 convinced his Tampa Bay, Fla., school board to donate leftover cafeteria food for local soup kitchens. Now 15, he is working to pass legislation that would make such a program possible throughout Florida schools.

Stone Soup for the World also includes a resource guide to link readers with an extensive array of community building organizations around the world.

Packwick is one of 35 bookstores across the country that is hosting readings and signings of the book on Friday, hoping to motivate volunteers in their own communities.

Janet Anderson is executive director of the **Volunteer Action Center of Rockland County**, which represents the county's nonprofit organizations.

The Volunteer Action Center matches

volunteers skills and interests with crime prevention, the environment, literacy and education, health care and housing needs. For more, call 364-2114.

soup for supper and learning what can be accomplished when all pitch in."

Anderson realizes how difficult it is these days to recruit volunteers. That's why, she said, "the book's life-changing stories of kindness and courageous acts of service" are the perfect inspiration behind volunteerism.

"The launching of "*Stone Soup for the World*" is a direct tie-in with **National Volunteer Week**," Anderson said. "Our role is to honor all volunteers and to encourage the idea of volunteerism."

Proceeds from the book will help support the non-profit **Stone Soup Leadership Institute** and its educational curricula of caring and action. For further information, call (508)696-8514; fax: (508) 696-9460; or write the **Stone Soup Leadership Institute**, P.O. Box 4301, Vineyard Haven, Mass. 02568.

For more than 20 years, community strategist and volunteer Marianne Larned, the book's editor, has been helping corporate government, civic and community leaders develop public/private partnerships to build healthier communities.

Deats and Larned worked together in the Philippines in the late 1980's. Three years ago, Deats said, Larned started searching worldwide to find real-life, inspirational stories of ordinary/extraordinary people whose actions help heal the world.

About a dozen students from **Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin**, will attend Friday's reading and book signing, Deats said. During their East Coast visit, they will participate in three days of nonviolence training at F.O.R and visit the United Nations.

And, putting principle into practice, Deats added, "the students will be making stone