

# united voices



Julie Andrews entered viewers' hearts as a caring and magical nanny on the silver screen in 1964. Her generous spirit continues today in her work for Operation USA.

PHOTOGRAPHY / DAVID RODGERS

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## Just a Spoonful

Everyone can do a little to make a difference in the world.

WHEN A HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY OCCURS, WE often wonder what one person can possibly do to help. Our effort seems such a drop in the ocean. But over the years, I've learned that you don't have to focus on the ocean. Enough drops in a bucket can fill a bucket. When enough individuals work together, they can affect the plight of many.

My husband, Blake, and I felt overwhelmed at the end of the Vietnam War—seeing so many people in such a difficult situation. We were bemoaning the fact that we felt helpless as we were watching television one morning. On the show was a bright young lawyer named Richard Walden, speaking about a new organization, Operation California. He and his friend were looking for help to buy fuel for an aircraft to deliver humanitarian supplies to Vietnam.

Rather than grieve about what little they could do, they decided to act. They gathered donated goods and got the loan of an aircraft. They were enormously

enterprising young men who inspired Blake and me to get involved on the spot. We were so taken by how their feelings mirrored our own that we called immediately to say we would buy the fuel.

This began our support for what became Operation USA—a little organization that has grown impressively over the years and provided humanitarian relief all over the world, including in the inner cities of the U.S.

Many long-term development programs in Asia, Central America, and Africa were born of disaster-response efforts. Indonesian tsunami relief is a recent example.

By doing such things as collecting overstocked aspirin from major companies to send to ►

**United's Charity Miles program helps organizations such as Operation USA fly doctors and relief workers to the places they are needed, all around the world. Make Charity Miles donations to Operation USA or other nonprofits by calling 800-421-4655.**

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people in need, Operation USA's overhead costs stay very low, so the money coming in is spent where it matters.

Free of governmental affiliation, Operation USA is like a little ship that gets in where the big ships can't. If there is a flood, earthquake, or other emergency, it can move quickly with relief supplies. It also helps re-establish the infrastructure of devastated communities by building libraries, schools, and dental offices.

All of this is possible because of the individuals who each donate a little—money, goods, airline miles, or time—to fill hundreds upon thousands of “buckets” that help those in need. I first understood this effect during my visit to the Thai border camps with Operation USA near the end of the Vietnam War.

I initially felt strange and wondered what right I had to intrude on the refugees' lives, to lift up a tent flap and see humanity suffering the way I saw it. But what I got was the most extraordinary greeting. They appreciated the fact that we had taken an interest in them and traveled such a long way to help. Although we could only provide modest relief under the circumstances, this bit of relief made a tremendous difference to them. I realized then that individual people really can make a difference. And airlines often help.

When I flew United in the '60s while filming in Hawai'i, I traveled between the islands and LA so often I got terribly good at winning the bottle of champagne offered for accurately guessing the trip's mileage. Those were very different times, but United is still part of my life today. It enables customers to support Operation USA by donating Charity Miles, helping us fly doctors and relief workers to the places they are needed. ■

\*\*\* BOARDING PASS / In Print

Andrews' interest in helping others extends to children's literacy and her own publishing company, at [julieandrewscollection.com](http://julieandrewscollection.com). Look for her latest release (cowritten with her daughter, Emma Walton Hamilton), "The Great American Mousical," at a bookseller near you.



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*and it gets there.*

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