

# THEARTS



*The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature, and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up.*

~former U.S. Congresswoman  
Barbara Jordan

## **Art as Witness**

Art marks the comings and goings of ages past and imagines those to come. Humankind has expressed itself in the arts--from the prehistoric cave paintings at Lascaux, the eighteenth century BC poem *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and the many forms of pottery and jewelry found in the remains of ancient cultures throughout the world, to the myriad of art forms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that encompass motion pictures, digital photography, computer art, and experimental novels. Art is an enduring cultural phenomenon.

Art can, with words or wordlessly, through sound or in silence, shout a message, break a heart, invoke a laugh, evoke a tear, motivate, agitate, and elevate. And art can simply exist—a witness to joy and suffering, to hardship and hope, to what it is to be human in a given time and place.

## **Art Communicates and Connects**

At the Charter for Compassion International, we celebrate the arts as expressions of our humanity, and we are interested in how the arts can become a language that can reach across cultures to connect us. The work of artists encourages us to see different realities, to understand, and to empathize with one another. Art—in clay, in paint, in textiles, in film, in words, in photography, in music—invites us to respond from our inner core and sometimes to act on that response.

The creators of art and those who experience the arts in seeing, hearing, thinking, and doing, participate in a collaboration that

can connect us to other human beings at a profound level. We learn of the pain, the dreams, the regrets, and the perceptions of people who have lived before us, people who live in distant parts of the globe, and people who have their own unique languages, customs, religious beliefs, and social values. That knowledge ignites understanding, empathy, and a realization of the common humanity we share. It is that image of our interconnection with all beings who share our beautiful planet that can also move us to compassionate action.

## **Imagine and Act with Us**

Many artists and art organizations bring the depths and heights of the human spirit to us in a myriad of art forms. Art has always had the power to connect us to one another. Now, however, more than any other time in history, we have both greater urgency and greater opportunity to connect people, to work together to imagine and to build a global compassionate world.

Imagine a world where everyone is committed to living by the principle of compassion. What could that mean for the more than seven billion people that now share the planet? Imagine the impact of vast numbers of people bringing compassion to life in their own lives, in their families, in business, in education, in healthcare, in religious and spiritual practices, in the arts, and in an awareness of the environment. That is the vision and the commitment of the Charter for Compassion. We invite you to join us—to weave your compassion with the same heartfelt impulse of both friends and strangers throughout the Earth.

### **A Network of Networks**

The basis for the global compassion movement is contained in the [Charter for Compassion](#), a document that was conceived in February 2008 when the TED prize was awarded to Karen Armstrong for her wish to create, launch, and propagate a global compassion movement based on the Golden Rule. The Charter is an expression of the change we are working to implement, beginning with individuals but encompassing organizations, institutions, and communities (villages, hamlets, towns, cities, and countries)—throughout the globe. Our mission is to serve and support connection among people everywhere. Although The Charter for Compassion is in part supported by those who have committed themselves as Members, there is no fee for an organization to become a [Partner](#). When your organization signs the Charter, it will have the opportunity to communicate with like-minded people and organizations worldwide.

### **Benefits of Becoming a Partner**

The Charter provides regular, open conference calls for each of its sectors (Business, Education, Environment, Healthcare, Peace, Religion/Spirituality, Scientific Research and The Arts), usually with a provocative speaker. A

summary report is published following each of these calls, and all Partners also receive general newsletters and announcements of upcoming events, conferences, and other information that may be of interest. Each Partner organization has a dedicated page within our website so that others can read about what an organization is doing and perhaps form alliances among organizations. An ongoing blog, relevant annotated bibliographies, and an ever-increasing library of resources is also available on our website. The Charter staff take seriously the need and the commitment to facilitate the connection of people who share the hope of making a difference.

### **Spotlight on a Few of Our Partners**

A few Arts Partners who have signed on to the Charter for Compassion are featured here. We encourage you to read more about them and then to join us by becoming a Partner.

**The Compassion Project** is an alliance between Cornwall and Botswana (YO-MAD) and enlists artists and writers, young and old, of all levels and abilities, to define compassion through images, essays, stories and poems that depict kindness, courage, healing, and empathy in human and animal interactions and through environmental stewardship.

**Aberjhani** is an author, poet and art examiner, He is the co-author of *The Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, founder of Creative Thinkers International, Bright Skylark, and author of *Journey through the Power of the Rainbow, Quotations from a Life Made out of Poetry*.

**Aliza Hava** is the recipient of the “Human Spirit Award.” She believes music can be both medicine and message for humanity. Aliza has pledged a portion of her album sales to the Charter.

**Anthem for Compassion** by composer John Schimminger. Sacred music and the spirituality of compassion, social and economic justice, reconciliation and peace are John’s forte.

**Art of Ceremony** has evolved out of interest in the celebratory, healing and the growth potential of creativity. In a world where “busyness” and materialism have become the norm, working creatively offers an opportunity to reconnect to heart and soul; to add meaning to and make sense of our lives.

**Cupola Gallery** offers artworks in glass, painting, printmaking, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, textiles and photography in Sheffield, UK.

**One Wordsmith** founded by Barbara Kaufmann Barbara Kaufmann makes and tells “story” with words, art and film. She is the steward of [Words and Violence](#), an open project about bullying in all its forms and antidotes at Voices Compassion Education

**Susan Salidor** is an award-winning children’s music composer and performer and with the heart of a teacher. Susan’s first recording, [Little Voices In My Head](#) (1995), received an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Award and was named “One of the year’s five best children’s recordings” by Sesame Street Parent Magazine.

**TEALabor Stories** is a project by artist Jennifer Wilhoit compassionately supports people as they discover and convey their deepest stories via nature-based creative writing that explores the inner and outer human landscape of life transitions from birth to the dying process.



Charter for **Compassion**

[www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org)