

Media Kit

20 Women Changemakers *Taking Action Around the World*

Biographies, Edited by Pamela Burke and Patricia Caso
The Women's Eye • July 10, 2017 • \$16.00
ISBN: 978-0-9977054-5-4

The Women's Eye Spotlights

20 WOMEN CHANGEMAKERS



TAKING ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

"I came away with a renewed sense of wanting to do and be more."
New York Times Bestselling Author Lisa See

EDITED BY PAMELA BURKE AND PATRICIA CASO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2017

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***"These intrepid women demonstrate how one person can make an indelible mark."
—Stacey Reiss, Producer of award-winning documentary *The Eagle Huntress****

20 Women Who Are Changing the World

The Women's Eye Publishes New Book About Women Taking Action Around the World

The Women's Eye has just published *20 Women Changemakers* (The Women's Eye / July 10, 2017 / \$16.00), a collection of interviews co-edited by veteran broadcast producers and journalists Pamela Burke and Patricia Caso, that spotlights dynamic women taking action to make the world a better place. This anthology has been culled from *The Women's Eye* website and Radio Show which features undaunted women who initiate life-altering solutions to some of the most pressing personal, local and global issues.

Living in cities big and small in the US, Middle East, Africa, Asia and beyond, their work is wide-ranging. They have built schools where there were none, promoted global women's equality issues in treacherous places and implemented innovative ways to feed the hungry, rescue children and more. Some have received recognition, but most labor in their missions without much acclaim. All share a commitment to positively change the status quo and create a better quality of life.

- In Florida, Estella Pyfrom renovated an old school bus to bring technology to more than 31,000 children in underserved neighborhoods.
- In a freezing Beirut kitchen, Barbara Massaad prepares the simplest meal—soup—for refugees, saving them from starvation in Lebanon.
- Photographer Paola Gianturco, a grandmother herself, travels the world to document activist grandmothers who are creating a powerful force as they take on global issues in more than 15 countries.
- From her experience living in Kenya's slums after college, Jessica Posner developed a healthcare clinic and a groundbreaking school for girls who have no opportunity for an education.

20 Women Changemakers is a moving anthology of interviews with women who seek to make a positive impact—one act, one person at a time. These collective stories convey the global force that women embody as they step up to create change and make the world a better place to live.

Advanced Praise for 20 Women Changemakers

"Pamela Burke of The Women's Eye has compiled **the best of her wonderful and inspiring interviews of women who are changing the world**—from Jessica Posner, who built the first free school in Kenya for girls, to Jenny Bowen, who is providing better lives for abandoned girls in China; from women working to support the homeless to those helping others through grief. I came away with a renewed sense of wanting to do and be more."

—Lisa See, *New York Times* #1 Bestselling Author of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*

"There are the people who talk about change and the people who make change happen. Read these pages and feel these **remarkable women calling you to ACTION, endless possibility and the world of yes!**"

—Laura Munson, *New York Times* Bestselling Author of *This is Not the Story You Think It Is*

"Each contributor to **this book allows the reader a glimpse into worlds—and small solutions—they may not know existed**, but which suggest why and how individuals make a difference, creating change as they go."

—Pamela Stewart, Ph.D. Senior Lecturer, History, Arizona State University

About the Editors:



Pamela Burke has been a member of the broadcasting industry and print media for more than 30 years as a television executive, bureau chief, producer and reporter. During that time, she produced several female-oriented television programs including *Attitudes*, *Working Mother* and *The Working Women's Survival Hour*. As the founder of *The Women's Eye Radio Show* and website, she is dedicated to shining the light on people around the globe who are creating a more positive universe.



Patricia Caso was a successful television executive producer and producer for 15 years. She then free-lanced and volunteered while raising two young men with her husband, Laurence. Her interests include history, writing, interviewing, social services and sports. Since 2012, Patricia has had the wonderful opportunity to interview and write for *The Women's Eye*.

About The Women's Eye (TWE) Radio Program and Website

TWE features all types of women who are in the news or who are making their own headlines as they follow their passions and interests to improve their lives and the lives of others.

They come from many walks of life to initiate solutions to diverse issues and complex situations. Their visions, actions and outreach are examples of what can be accomplished with drive and determination.

TWE is a destination to find newsworthy articles about women, and is a communication forum for opinion and shared information.

20 Women Changemakers is available from independent bookstores and online at IndieBound.org, BN.com and [Amazon](http://Amazon.com).

Find and follow The Women's Eye online at:

<http://www.thewomenseye.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheWomensEye/>

<https://twitter.com/thewomenseye>

20 Women Changemakers, Taking Action Around the World

Book Club Discussion Questions

- 1.** Which women's stories in this book inspire you and why?
- 2.** What advice do you take from them that would help you achieve your goals or vision?
- 3.** What qualities do these women have that make it possible for them to be changemakers?
- 4.** How do you see yourself making a difference?
- 5.** Is there a particular cause that you want to become a champion for?
- 6.** Would you make that cause your life's work?
- 7.** Are there any roadblocks that would keep you from taking on a big challenge?
- 8.** What kind of a reward would you hope to receive after taking on a cause of your choice?
- 9.** How would it change your life to take on a cause you are passionate about?
- 10.** Has this book inspired you to take any action? If so, what would it be?

20 WOMEN CHANGEMAKERS

Taking Action Around the World

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Doniece Sandoval's Lava Mae Brings Showers and Dignity to the Homeless By Patricia Caso

Homelessness is a complex issue and a major concern in a growing number of cities around the world. Like many, I have donated clothes and given money to agencies and organizations. San Francisco's Doniece Sandoval went much further and came up with a way to bring dignity to the homeless, "one shower at a time."

"I thought, If you can put gourmet food on wheels and take it anywhere, why not showers and toilets? So the idea for Lava Mae was born!" —Doniece Sandoval

She's done it by retrofitting a bus and naming it Lava Mae, a twist on the Spanish words for "wash me." Doniece does not purport to end homelessness, but rather to make a small but significant difference in the lives of the overlooked.

After speaking with Doniece, I was inspired to find out more about her motivation and how Lava Mae came to be. I think you will be inspired, too! ...

EYE: How did this innovative idea come to you?

DONIECE: We moved from New York to San Francisco in 2002. With my adopted three-month-old daughter, I would stroll the neighborhood and got to know many people. After the downturn, our neighborhood became trendy; gentrification set in. Too many of our neighbors moved from their homes, to their cars, to the streets.

It's been heartbreaking. We felt powerless to help, and I wanted to figure out some way to make a difference. I could not put my head around how you end homelessness. It just seemed so complex. One day I was walking in another neighborhood and I passed a young woman sitting on the sidewalk. She was crying, filthy and muttering to herself that she would never be clean.

EYE: Was she the reason you decided to take action?

DONIECE: Yes! I knew she meant a lot of things by those words that I would never understand. I wondered what her chances were of getting physically clean. That evening I did some research. There are more than 7,000 homeless in the city. About half of those people live on the streets near shelters that don't have showers.

So, upwards of 3,500 people on the streets have to make do with the seven drop-in centers that have showers. That's 14 shower stalls for 3,500 people! I thought that was utterly criminal.

At the same time the whole mobile food craze was going strong. I thought, *If you can put gourmet food on wheels and take it anywhere, why not showers and toilets?* So the idea for Lava Mae was born!

EYE: Who was your first call?

DONIECE: I called Jennifer Friedenbach, who is with the Coalition on Homelessness in San Francisco. It's one of the oldest and most venerable advocacy groups for the homeless in the city. She would be my litmus test.

I heard she's tough, and she's smart. I was pretty terrified. I thought her attitude might be "Who are you? You've never worked with the homeless." Not that at all.

She started pulling out information for me, information on public health, the impact of not having access to showers, the number of bug bite visits to San Francisco General Hospital, etc. She said, "Yes, if you can do this, GO! This is awesome!"

EYE: I understand that you went without a shower for a full week so that you could experience what many homeless go through?

DONIECE: My friends were teasing me that I was doing a publicity stunt because my background is in marketing and public relations. When you are in the middle of a crowdfunding campaign, you have to do things that capture people's attention.

But the lion's share of that was the idea of stepping into people's shoes and struggling to stay clean for a week. Of course I had a completely illusory sense of homelessness, coming home every night and sleeping in my warm comfortable bed.

I am a bit of a clean freak, so it was a challenge for me not to take a bath, step in a shower and fully wipe the day's grime off. I tried to pop into the bathroom in my office or use the wipes in the bathroom in the local grocery store to clean myself off.

But it left me with the impression of just spreading the grime around, rather than actually cleaning myself up. I was certainly not feeling good about myself.

EYE: Were there any surprises from this experience?

DONIECE: I think one of the things that surprised me about the people who knew what I was doing was that they would say, "Oh yeah, you're not showering! How's that going? You look great! You don't look dirty at all. You look perfectly clean."

What hit me was that we have a really strong perception that stems from the superficial about what people are doing, or what state they are in, based on how they look. It's not always accurate. But on day six, I walked into the kitchen and my six-year-old daughter said, "What smells?" I knew it must be me.

When I finally got to shower, about a minute into the water hitting me, I started to cry. I realized that part of me had disconnected and shut down. Being in a shower felt warm, protective and restorative. It was a very emotional experience.

EYE: This is a complex project, two years in development. Were you prepared to navigate all the issues?

DONIECE: The only experience I had with the homeless was volunteering with different organizations throughout the years. I don't think I quite knew what I was undertaking. It's like that saying, *What you don't know might be better for you. If you know everything, you might not do it.*

I started by knocking on doors of nonprofits to find out if this was even a reasonable idea. I thought they would say one of two things: that this is crazy and I should just go away, or that this is so brilliant; we want to do this! I don't think I expected that I would be the person executing it as well.

What I did find was nonprofits who said: *You are crazy and we want you to do this and we'll help however we can.* So I knew if it were going to happen, then it had to be up to me.

EYE: How do people sign up and what can they expect?

DONIECE: Our partner nonprofit drop-in centers get the word out and people sign up for Lava Mae at their site. That way people don't clog up the sidewalk or waste their own time waiting in line.

We get them when it's their shower time, orient them, and get their towels and toiletries for a 20-minute appointment and 10 minutes of hot water for their showers. So far everyone has been very respectful and we tweak the time when someone is disabled, taking extra time getting on and off the bus and in and out of the shower.

We are starting slowly to do things really well. Thirty showers a day is realistic in a five-hour period.

EYE: Have you found any resistance in the neighborhoods?

DONIECE: Sadly, a little bit. However, the majority of the people in the Mission District are very supportive. They see the benefits for all the people involved and are happy to see us there.

EYE: I read that each bus cost \$75,000 to fit Lava Mae's needs. How did you come up with the money? Can you sustain this with all the maintenance, etc.?

DONIECE: We launched our effort for Lava Mae on a crowdfunding site, Indiegogo, raising \$58,000. The rest came through our website, all from just regular people who thought this was a really great idea.

EYE: What have you learned from your initial participants?

DONIECE: We showered 20 people in our test run. Silas was our first. He is from the South, a charmer; he loves to have his picture taken. He almost kissed our feet because he had this opportunity.

In getting to know him, one learns that he meanders around the city because he was cited by police for sleeping on a bench. Silas is always looking for a soup kitchen for lunch. He relates this without pity or bitterness.

Silas is working to stay clean and loves the opera, even managing to get tickets. You have got to love him. There are no words for what it means to connect with a human being in this way and feel you are just a small part of making his and others' lives a little bit better.

EYE: What are some of the challenging issues you've had to face?

DONIECE: One of the scariest times was finding the company that would retrofit the bus. To no avail, I called companies all around the country who do promotional tours, work with rock stars, etc. Ultimately, we found Airco, a local company that basically builds the guts for skyscrapers, who were more than thrilled to accept the challenge.

Another was to include the wheelchair radius in the bathroom floor plan, which is completely ADA-compliant. We need to serve the disabled, who are 46% of the homeless population.

EYE: How do you reflect on this whole project so far?

DONIECE: I am driven to be creative and productive. Until Lava Mae, I was like Lucy in the *Peanuts* strip. I'd love to have a pop-up booth like she did, and have people pay me to just come up with good ideas, because I am good at that.

In my time here in Silicon Valley where creativity abounds, I've learned that ideas are cheap. A lot of people have great ideas. Executing them is what really matters.

It's hard. It's a lot of work. On a broader level, we need to change nonprofits. There needs to be some blending of the private sector mentality—the startup engine kind of mentality—with nonprofits so that nonprofits can be better, stronger and more resilient.

EYE: How have you gotten through the tough challenges without walking away?

DONIECE: Until I started to get a staff, it was my husband who supported this project since day one. He believed in me and in my ability to pull people together to make this happen.

Second, I may have had the idea and gotten the ball rolling, but so many people have come together. I really feel like we've built a village to make Lava Mae happen. It didn't happen just because of me. That has sustained me over and over again.

EYE: We hope that Lava Mae continues to grow and expands to many cities. As you believe, access to showers and toilets should not be a luxury; it's a basic human right. Thank you, Doniece!