



# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **CHARLES R. BRONFMAN SIGNS THE GIVING PLEDGE**

### ***Joins List of Top Philanthropists Committed to Giving Majority of Wealth to Charity***

*New York – Sept. 18, 2012* – Charles R. Bronfman, a longtime and prominent philanthropist and Chairman of the [Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies](#) (ACBP), has committed to giving the majority of his wealth to charity by signing the [Giving Pledge](#), ACBP announced today.

Initiated by Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates in June 2010, the Giving Pledge is a long-term initiative to increase charitable giving in the United States and to advance and promote philanthropy. The wealthiest American individuals and families pledge to give more than half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes during or after their lifetimes.

“Philanthropy is in the DNA of my family,” said Bronfman. “Doing what we can to repair the world was instilled in me from an early age. I will never forget my siblings and me knitting squares for blankets to be sent to the troops during World War Two. This was an inspiration from my mother. It’s no surprise then, that each of us has tried to contribute to society in our own way.

“I congratulate the Gates’ and Warren Buffett on a brilliant initiative that serves to elevate philanthropy in the national consciousness, and inspire others - whatever their means - to address social issues through charitable contributions. I am more than pleased to join with those who have or will become part of the Giving Pledge.”

He is among 92 other philanthropists - including his brother, Edgar - who have committed to the Giving Pledge to date; the organization made public the names of 11 new signatories today.

Bronfman has spent much of his life as an active businessman, including 50 years at The Seagram Company, Ltd., a family-owned enterprise. For 22 years, he was Chairman and principal owner of Major League Baseball’s Montreal Expos.

Since 1986, he has been Chairman of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, a group of charitable foundations operating in the United States, Canada and Israel, and committed to encouraging young people to strengthen their knowledge and appreciation of their history, heritage and cultural identity.



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Over the last 26 years, ACBP has disbursed nearly \$323 million to approximately 1,700 grantees and operating programs.

One of these, [The Historica-Dominion Institute](#), has grown into a major public philanthropy in Canada – supported by individuals, corporations, foundations and the Canadian government – and plays a significant role in engaging Canadians in their history, shared citizenship, and democratic institutions and values.

And in Israel, ACBP has driven the [Karev Program for Educational Involvement](#), a nationwide educational initiative reaching over 250,000 youngsters in kindergartens and elementary schools. The project ensures longer school hours and exposure to informal and supplementary educational programming - such as music and theater - that would not exist otherwise.

Committed to the continuity and strength of the Jewish people, Bronfman is a major funder and serves as co-chairman of [Birthright Israel](#), a groundbreaking program strengthening bonds between young Jews in North America and the Jewish homeland through free trips to Israel. Since its establishment 13 years ago, more than 330,000 young adults have participated in the program.

In an [open letter](#) to the philanthropic community last year, Bronfman announced his intention to spend down ACBP assets by 2016 in order to give his children the latitude to pursue philanthropic interests through their own existing foundations. He will, however, continue with his personal philanthropy outside of ACBP.

He is also the namesake of [The Charles Bronfman Prize](#), established by his children in 2004 to celebrate the vision and accomplishment of an individual or team, under the age of 50, whose humanitarian work, driven by Jewish values, has had a significant impact on the world's most pressing challenges and is an inspiration to next generations.

The Giving Pledge announcement comes one week before publication of [The Art of Doing Good](#) (Jossey Bass, 2012), by Bronfman and ACBP President Jeffrey Solomon. In it, they focus on 18 social entrepreneurs and draw lessons from each as to what it takes for an individual to transform a vision for a better world into reality.

In 2010, Bronfman and Solomon joined to write [The Art of Giving](#) (Jossey Bass), demonstrating how charitable donors and potential donors can become strategic and effective philanthropists.

“Philanthropy at any level is an integral part of our society,” Bronfman said. “There’s no doubt that if the people of this great continent only lived for themselves, and not for the betterment of all, then we as a people would be seriously diminished.”

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The Andrea & Charles Bronfman Philanthropies

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The Giving Pledge encourages open conversation about – and the advancement of– philanthropy. There are no requirements to support particular causes or organizations, and pledge signatories convene throughout the year to discuss challenges, successes and philanthropic strategies.

“We’ve said from the beginning that this is a long-term effort, so it’s exciting to see continued progress over the last two years,” said Bill Gates, Giving Pledge co-founder and co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. “This new group brings extensive business and philanthropic experience that will enrich the conversation about how to make philanthropy as impactful as possible. Their thoughtfulness and deep commitment to philanthropy are an inspiration to me, and I’m sure to many others as well.”

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