

Celebrity Couples Who've Made the World a Better Place



By Erika Mionis

Celebrity. For some, the word implies arrogance, narcissism, and superficiality. For others, it implies kindness, charisma, and power. While it's true that both definitions have their part in celebrity culture, more and more celebrity couples are trying to change those stereotypes by turning their focus towards charity and humanitarian efforts. Here are some of the main culprits:

1. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: It's no secret that longtime partners Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt like to give back, especially when it comes to adopting children from impoverished countries. Jolie, a Goodwill Ambassador for the

UN since 2001, has traveled to over 20 countries in attempts to raise refugee awareness. Brad Pitt, though relatively new to charity work, impressed many by starting *The Make It Right Foundation* after seeing the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. The Foundation has built over 50 “green” houses, and has brought more than 200 people back to the Lower Ninth Ward, a devastated neighborhood in New Orleans. More recently, the Jolie-Pitts made headline news when they donated \$500,000 dollars to the Joplin Tornado Relief Services in Missouri. Also newsworthy are the Jolie-Pitts tax returns, which according to Britain’s *The Independent*, show that Jolie and Pitt donated almost 5 million dollars to various charities in 2009.

2. Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith: Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith’s charity work has been somewhat of a recent development. Since 2007, the Smiths have made several large donations of over 1 million dollars each, usually to religious causes. In addition to their religious donations, Smith and Pinkett Smith started the New Village Leadership Academy, a private school that offers both a challenging curriculum and generous financial aid to students. Recently, the longtime couple decided to “donate their birthdays” to the *charity Water*, an organization dedicated to providing clean water for developing countries in Africa. Will Smith asked fans to send \$42 to the charity in honor of his 42nd birthday, while Jada Pinkett Smith simply asked for fans to “send what they can.”

3. David and Victoria Beckham: U.K power couple David and Victoria Beckham actively participate in humanitarian work. In late 2009, Victoria visited Clay County, Kentucky, with the charity *Save The Children* in order to learn more about the children in the poverty-stricken area. The former Spice Girl rewarded the children with book bags and advice. Her husband, soccer star David Beckham has been a Goodwill Ambassador since January 2005 and is also a spokesperson for Malaria No More, a New York City-based nonprofit dedicated to treating Malaria in

Africa. David is often seen on ESPN and other sports channels in short clips for *MLS WORKS*, the Major League Soccer's charity project. Recently, the couple made news when they donated many of the gifts sent to their newborn daughter, Harper Seven, to charities in Los Angeles.

Is there a celebrity couple you feel belongs on this list? Feel free to leave a comment below, and keep your eyes peeled for more celebrity humanitarian efforts.