

Meera Teresa Gandhi

The Giving Back Foundation is the Vehicle that Mrs Gandhi heads up with offices in Hong Kong, NYC, Mumbai and London.

1. Committed Humanitarian and Business Woman:

CEO of **The Giving Back Foundation**, Mrs. Gandhi is a well known international community leader, committed humanitarian and philanthropist dedicated to solutions to human suffering and deprivation around the globe. In February of 2010, she has completed the film "**Giving Back**" that shows how many people are giving back to humanity in different ways. The film set in four continents is a global journey that begins in the words of Former US first lady **Eleanor Roosevelt**, *When we cease to give, we begin to die.* The film is scheduled for **September 2010** global release.

Meera is also bringing out a coffee Table book called "**The Giving Back**" book that illustrates the works of many charities and people that Ms Gandhi has been involved with over the last 25 years. Meera works with several key **women and children's** causes around the world and will use the launch of her upcoming fragrance and Body and Bath line of products called "GIVING BACK" , to support these causes.

Meera's current work, a film called "**Giving Back**" **The Film**: features Celebrity and global rights activist, **Singer Bono**, human rights activist and lawyer and daughter of Robert and Ethel Kennedy, **Kerry Kennedy**, **Cherie Blair**, Lawyer and advocate of women's advancement through education and wife of former Prime Minister of the UK, **Tony Blair**, Bollywood Producer **Viveck Vaswani**, **Clodagh**, **Homayra Sellier**, **Charles and Randy Fisher**, **Vikram Gandhi**, **David Harilela**, **Hillary Clinton** through the **Eleanor Roosevelt Val Kill photo journey** and a host of well known faces from around the world. *The key messages of her productions are uplifting and basically an extension of her deep beliefs in life for humanity and the idea of each human giving back something to another human.*

Noted for her motto. Meera says "*We are to the universe only as much as we can give back to it.*"

These values have won her many friends and admirers alike who are always happy to be aligned with any cause or project that Meera Gandhi is currently associated with.

2. Leadership and Values

In 1997, Meera Gandhi and her husband moved to India for three years and then returned to NY in 2000, where the Gandhi's bought their celebrated townhouse in NY on Park Avenue that was the former residence of First Lady Eleanor

Roosevelt. Meera Gandhi then threw herself wholeheartedly behind various causes successfully raising money for a number of noted charities, in the US, and India. Among the many, most newly added is her February 2010 appointment **as an RNID Royal Centenary Councillor for The Royal National Institute for Deaf People** (Patron HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh), appointed by **Philip Bonn**.

Meera has been on the boards of **FERI** (The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute) , **ERVK**, (The Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill), **Safety Net** (for battered women), **Pratham** (education for street children of India), **Children's Hope** (underprivileged children in NY), and was also **Co-Chairman of the US Committee for UWC** with HRH Pavlos and (HRH Queen Noor of Jordan who is the patron of the organization).

While hosting many charitable events at her New York residence, Meera has opened her home to a long list of world leaders that include the **Hon. Hillary Clinton, The Hon. Cherie Blair, Rahul Gandhi , Kerry Kennedy, Robert Kennedy Jr., Kathleen Kennedy, Anna Roosevelt (granddaughter of Eleanor Roosevelt)** and numerous literary, academic and entertainment personalities like **Gabriel Byrne, Phylicia Rashad, Glen Close, Judith Light, Janet League Katzen, Dev Anand, Singer Asha Bhosale, Zakir Hussein, Mira Nair, Waheeda Rehman, the late Ismail Merchant, Ruth Westheimer, CNN's Anderson Cooper, Mike Wallace, historian Arthur Schlesinger and the Galbraith Family to name a few.**

3. Early Life and Career Background

Meera Teresa Gandhi was born in Mumbai, India. She has studied at the **Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai and the Lester B. Pearson, UWC College in Canada**. In 1985 Meera Gandhi graduated from The Jesus and Mary College, **University of Delhi** and then obtained an **MBA from Boston University, USA** in 1989. Ms. Gandhi has also completed the **Executive Education program from the Harvard Business School, Boston, USA** in Dec 2007.

Ms. Gandhi has worked for **Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP) and Credit Suisse in Mumbai, India, 1986-87**. After Business school, Meera moved from Banking to Fashion and worked as a buyer for **Macy's Chain of Department stores, NY and Lord and Taylor** in Women's couture before starting her own business in 1993, *Meera Collections Inc.* and more recently **The Giving Back Foundation in 2009**.

4. Family and Personal Details

Meera has been married for the last 24 years to her high school sweetheart **Vikram Gandhi** (a successful investment Banker, Global Head of FIG at Credit Suisse Bank). They have three children **Kiran 21, Kanika 17, and Kabir 13**.

Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi live between New York, Hong Kong and London and she is loving her Tri-continental life and vital commitment to humanity on many levels through both her charitable work and her Product Businesses.

Her hobbies and leisure activity include *Yoga, Meditation, Jogging and Studying History* especially the writing of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. "History teaches one many lessons".

Meera Teresa Gandhi

Humanitarian, Businesswoman, Diplomat and Mother

1. BORN: MUMBAI, INDIA

Meera Teresa Gandhi was born on January 28th, to an Irish mother **Ellen Mary McCarthy** and an Indian father **Admiral Perbodh Nath Agarwal**. "Teresa" is Meera's Baptism name and the name of her Irish Grandmother **Teresa McCarthy**.

Ms. Gandhi was raised mostly in India in the cities of **Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi**. She also spent childhood years in **London, UK, Dublin, Ireland**. She spent two years of her youth in **Canada** and then came to the **United States** after she was married, to do her MBA at Boston University.

2. Academics:

Meera Gandhi has an **MBA** from **Boston University** (1987-89) where she graduated in the **top 5%** her MBA class with **Beta Gamma Sigma honors**. In December of 2007, Meera completed an Executive education program from **Harvard Business School**, in the USA. She has a **Bachelor's degree** in Economics from the **University of Delhi** (1982-85) where Meera was **Student Body President** in her final year 1984-85 and **Vice President** the year before at the **Jesus and Mary College**. She is a graduate of the **Lester B. Pearson, United World College** (1982), Canada. There she obtained the **International Baccalaureate** diploma with honors.

In 1980, Meera Gandhi completed her HSC exam (High School Certificate) from the **Cathedral and John Connon School** in Mumbai, India with **distinction**. "Meera was **Head Girl** of school and **House Prefect**. Meera Gandhi was an office Bearer of the Inteact Club (a subsidiary of the Rotary Club) and acted as Director of Community Services. In that capacity, she has visited and worked every weekend at '**Asha Dan**' (**Mother Teresa's home for the orphaned**), **The Blind Home** and the **Lepers Home**. Meera was awarded the PTA Medal for **Leadership (girls)** and '**The Jardine Shield**' for Head - Girl of the year 1979-80 from **The Cathedral and John Connon school, Mumbai**.

3. Work:

- CEO, The **Giving Back Foundation, 2010**
- **Directed and Produced a Film "Giving Back" for September 2010 global release.**

"Giving Back : The Film" : with Eye Cup Films and Libby Spears, starring Bono, Kerry Kennedy, Cherie Blair, The Eleanor Roosevelt center at Val-kill, Viveck Vaswani, Clodagh, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, through the pictorial archives of ERVK, Charles and Randy Fisher , Homayra Sellier...

The story is about a journey that begins in Mumbai and spans four continents. The journey begins in the words of Former US first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, "When we cease to give, we begin to die." and then through fast paced interviews and music chronicles how people are giving back to the universe. Uplifting and compelling at the same time, it makes for a facinating 22 minutes of viewing. The film is schedule for September 2010 global release.

- Author of "**The Giving Back Coffee Table book**",
ready for April 2010 global distribution. Published by **Print Plus Publishing House**, HK, Shengen, Shanghai, London and NY.
- **To follow is Meera Gandhi's Fragrance " Giving" and Bath and Body Product line as well as the "Giving Back", uplifting music CD series to follow in September 2010.**
- **Former Goodwill Ambassador**, CSRI, United Nations 2006-2007
- Co Chairman of the **New York City Ballet** Annual Luncheon February 2006
- Appointed Co Chairman of the US Committee for the **United World Colleges** based in NY USA. (HRH Prince Pavlos of Greece is the Co Chairman and HRH Queen Noor of Jordan is current patron of the UWC movement.) April 2005-2006
- Renovated historical landmark home - former home of **First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt** in Manhattan 2000-2002
- Owner and founder of the **International Playschool of Mumbai** 1997-2000
- **Meera Collections Inc** NY - President and Owner 1994-1997
- **Lord and Taylor Chain USA** Couture Fashion Buyer 1991-1994
- **Macy's Department Store Chain**, NY- Buyer Men's Sportswear 1989-1991
- **Macy's** Executive Training Program and internship, Summer 1988
- **Banque Indo Suez**, Investment Banking Division Mumbai 1986
- **Banque Nationale De Paris** Foreign Exchange Department in Delhi 1985

4. **Other Interests:**

In 2000 **Meera Gandhi** moved back to NY where she and her husband bought **Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's last home in Manhattan**. She spent two years restoring the home with the help of Harvard Architect **Pedro Castillo** and Interior Decorator **Kenneth Alpert**.

Spiritual books, Yoga Meditation and Philosophy. Enjoys collecting **India Art** and is an avid supporter of the **Performing Arts**.

Loves to travel and has visited South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, The UK, France, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, Russia, Czechoslovakia, China, Hong Kong, Mexico, The Bahamas,, Bermuda, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic, Singapore, Germany, Denmark, Canada, Morocco and Ireland.

5. **Goal in life:**

To be great mother to her three children **Kiran (19) Kanika (15) and Kabir (11)** and to serve humanity. "We are to the Universe only as much as we give to it..." is the meditation she lives her life by.

6. **Admires:**

Her Father **Perbodh Nath Agarwal**, her Mother **Ellen Mary Agarwal**, Mother **Teresa**, her husband **Vikram**, her daughters **Kiran and Kanika Gandhi**, son **Kabir Gandhi**, **Manatma Gandhi**, **Indira Gandhi**, **Hillary Clinton**, **Sonia Gandhi** and women leaders in general.

7. **Adores:**

Her loving husband **Vikrm** and her three children **Kiran, Kanika and Kabir**. Her siblings, brother **Rajiv John Agarwal** and sister **Sunita Frances Rana** and their respective spouses. And all her nieces and nephews.

8. **Boards and Organizations:**

Meera Gandhi is currently on the board of several organizations that serve humanitarian needs.

- o **RNID**, appointed as Centennial Councillor for the Royal National Institute for the deaf, UK , in february of **2010** under the Royal Patronage of His Highness Prince Phillip , www.rnid.org.uk
- o Association with the **Cherie Blair Foundation** for advancement of women. Moderated "Giving Back "Panel at Global conference in Mumbai, December **2009**

- Global Advisory Board of the **Loomba Trust, for widows, 2010** joined in 2008. Associations, **Raj Loomba** , Founder and **Peter Raj**, US loomba foundation president.
- Association with the **AUW**- Asian University for Women in Bangladesh. Hosted notable event for founder **Kamal Ahmed** at Hong Kong home in **2009**. (featured in tatler Magazine August issue, HK)
- Association with **CRY** and **Pratham**, 2007
- Board of **The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute** at Hyde Park, NY, 2002-2007
- Board of **ERVK - Eleanor Roosevelt Val Kill at Hyde Park, NY January 2005-2007**.
- **Trustee of the United World College US Board** since 2000
- **The United World Colleges Pearson College Board** - Canada, 2003
- Board of **Safety Net** since 2003, and organization that reaches out to battered women in 10 countries of the world. India, Morocco, Philippines included.
- **Digital Partners/ Grameen** Board since 2000. Seattle based organization that looks to close the digital divide between the developed and underdeveloped countries through entrepreneurial projects in India and various countries of the world.
- Trustee of the board of **I-Create**, a non profit organization that creates jobs for Women in 22 villages of India 2003
- Has worked closely with **Mother Teresa's Asha Dan** since High School **1978** and has been associated with **The Happy Home and School for the Blind** in Mumbai, India, since 1997.

9. **Other:**

- **Fulbright Humanitarian Award** June 2007
- **FuHumanitarian Award in Morocco, 2007 from King Muhammed VI presented by Dr. F Siddiqui**.
- Hosted a Satsang at her residence for **Swami Parthasathy** 2006.
- Recipient of the SASA (South Asian Students Alliance) **Humanitarian Award** in Los Angeles in 2005.
- Speaks on a number of Panels that deal with Women and Children's issues or education. For example in 2004, Meera Gandhi spoke at the **Fourth Annual Media, IT and Latin American Tele Conference in NY at New York University** on "Broad band: Leave no child behind".
- Co Chair **for Asia Society NY's** Asia in my Mind event. 40 dinners that raised over a quarter million dollars in June 2004.
- Recipient of a **Humanitarian Award** from the Craft Center of Washington at Lord and Taylor, New York's "Into India" Week, in 2003.
- Has hosted a fund raiser to help the **Craft Center of Washington**. (This organization ensures the livelihood of artisans and crafts from developing countries, especially India) 2003
- Hosted fundraiser **ERVK Girls Leadership with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton** 2003.
- Has supported **Boston University's Alumni office efforts in the greater NY area** 2000 - Present.

- o Admissions Team of **the Chapin School in Manhattan**, NY 2000-2004

10. Early Childhood:

Meera Teresa (Agarwal) Gandhi grew up in a closely knit strong family unit and even today speaks to her siblings and parents almost every day Meera's parents **Ellen** and **Perbodh Agarwal** describe Meera: "As a child she was unusually contemplative and drawn to most spiritual things. she was the same time gregarious and fun loving. Meera enjoyed spending time in her primary school Chapel and with the nuns who greatly influence her life".

A Happy child that excelled when she wanted to; She was always a **leader**. Meera was **Head Girl of two schools**. in the 10th grade she was Head Girl of St. Anne's High School, Convent of Jesus and Mary in Mombay and then in the 12th standard Head Girl of Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai. At University, Meera was **President** as well as **Vice President of the University of Delhi**. At the **Lester B. Pearson College in Canada**, again a natural leader amongst her peers, **Meera was Social Service Leader of the School**.

Meera has always loved Dramatics and played the lead in the high School Production **Joan of Arc**. Many still remember Meera as Joan of Arc!

in 1984 85 went on to do some modeling for Pan Ketchup, Hero Bicycles and Blue Lagoon Jeans and a few fashion shows in 1984 85.

In 1986, Meera Teresa Agarwal married her high school sweetheart Vikram Gandhi who she met in high school in 1978.

After she was married in 1986, Meera and her husband Vikram came to the USA to do their MBA's together. They have three children Kiran 19, Kanika 15 and Kabir 11 and Meera continues her international work.

For more information on Meera Gandhi please go WWW.MeeraGandhi.com

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