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Stan Brock

Recipient, 2010 Inamori Ethics Prize

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Stan Brock
Recipient of the 2010 Inamori Ethics Prize

Mr. Stan Brock has led an amazing and inspiring life. In 1936, he was born in Lancashire, England, to parents who dedicated themselves to global humanitarianism while working as civil servants. Brock's parents regarded service to others as their calling and a profound moral responsibility. Growing up primarily in South Wales and along England's coast, Brock obtained a scholarship to the Canford School, but dropped out at age sixteen to join his parents in Guyana, South America, where they were working to improve local living conditions.

Over the next fifteen years, Brock lived in the Central Amazon Basin with the Wapishana Indians at the Rupununi Development Company's Dadanawa Ranch. At one point he was badly injured. Brock learned the nearest doctor was twenty-six days away and only reachable on foot. After recovering from his brush with death, Brock stayed on at the ranch as a manager. Although not medically certified, he attempted to provide basic health care to the people who lived on and near the ranch. He became fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, and Wapishana, which helped him communicate with locals in need. Eventually, Brock became a pioneering Amazon bush pilot, helping to cut the travel time to the nearest village down to two hours.

While living in the Amazon basin, Brock survived malaria, dengue fever, numerous wild animal attacks, and various encounters with longhorns and mustangs—all without the help of a doctor. Brock was fortunate and survived, but he saw many others who were not so lucky. Brock recognized that while isolation was part of the reason some had no access to medical care, the cost of such care was often a barrier. This sparked his idea to found an all-volunteer health care program for remote places.

Stan Brock is a passionate conservationist with a deep knowledge of and respect for the animals he has encountered in his far-ranging travels. As a result of his extensive knowledge of the Amazon Basin, Brock became a Research Associate at the Royal Ontario Museum. In this capacity, he discovered a new species of bat now known to science as *Vampyressa brockii*. As he reflected on the need for health care for humans, Brock recognized that there also is a dearth of care in many parts of the world for sick or injured animals. He decided that the health care program he was creating must include veterinary care as well.

To promote a better understanding of the less-populated corners of the world, Stan Brock began a public career in the 1960s as co-star of the NBC television show *Wild Kingdom*. Later, Brock became a director, writer, and narrator of another television show, *Stan Brock's Expedition Danger*. Brock also starred in several motion pictures including *Forgotten Wilderness*, *Galyon*, *The Indestructible Man*, and *Escape from Angola*. In addition, Brock published works in a variety of genres, including five books and numerous articles.

Mr. Brock leveraged his higher public profile to reach out to the medical community for help forming the non-profit organization Remote Area Medical (RAM). In 1985, after several years in the development stage, RAM was launched. An all-volunteer health care program that travels around the world, RAM provides free health care services to those without access to health care. From the greeters to the doctors, everyone involved in RAM provides their services free of charge, based solely upon their desire to help their fellow human beings. RAM provides free services from general practitioners, dentists, ophthalmologists, optometrists, veterinarians, and medical technicians to care for patients with a wide range of common health problems and concerns. RAM is dedicated to helping treat patients around the world, as long as there are people who otherwise cannot get the care they so urgently require.

RAM has staged hundreds of clinics and at each clinic thousands of patients show up to receive free care. To date, RAM health care providers have served nearly half a million people and over seventy thousand animals. In 1992, recognizing a critical need, RAM began staging free clinics in poverty-stricken or disaster-afflicted communities in the United States. RAM conducts its medical missions wherever they are needed, regardless of danger or difficult conditions, from conflict-torn East Africa to post-Katrina New Orleans.

RAM's operations are supported solely by donations. An incredibly lean organization, 90 percent of the unrestricted contributions go to program services and 100 percent of designated gifts are used as directed by the donors. RAM projects include the Guyana Air Ambulance service, the Guyana Cervical Cancer Project, and the Rural America Program.

Nicknamed "Saint Stan," Brock himself takes no salary and lives in an abandoned schoolhouse in Tennessee with no luxuries of any kind. He has no family and no other pursuits, working tirelessly day after day to bring health care and hope to desperate people from the hills of Appalachia to the mountains of Nepal. It is impossible to know how many people owe their lives to this modest and humble man. In early 2010, Mr. Brock led a mission

to Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake. RAM volunteers brought in more than a ton of vital medical relief supplies and equipment, ferried supplies and personnel between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and established a free clinic to assist earthquake victims. After that mission was complete, Brock and his team returned to the United States—not to rest and regroup, but to stage another free clinic in Tennessee. To people who wonder if they could ever do what the RAM volunteers do, Stan Brock’s message is, “Yes, we fly airplanes that are probably older than you are and sometimes we parachute out of them. [But] don’t be deterred. Most of our work is done with two feet on solid ground and you don’t have to be an athlete to participate. You just need to be willing and compassionate. I look forward to seeing you.”