



## Just Another Do-Gooder Story - CARE, Merkley, The Mountain Fund and Spider Man

I wrote an introductory email this week to [Senator Merkley](#), telling him I'm going to be his new best friend, as Oregon's state and district chair for [CARE](#). Merkley is already a big supporter of the type of work CARE does. He's spent time in developing countries and gets why it's important to help our global neighbors out of poverty. He was an exchange student in Ghana while in college, then went on to study international relations at Stanford and then worked in India and Mexico on projects like building and operating an environmental camp for Mexican children.

It won't be a hard sell talking to him about women's issues and poverty alleviation. We're already players on the same team. Plus, his wife used to work at [Providence Hospital](#) (my ex-employer) with my friend, Kelly who says both he and Mary are super nice. That's such a bonus. I know CARE supporters in other states are fighting an uphill battle when they have meetings with their Senators and Congressmen. My job will be breeze

So, maybe you're asking, why IS it important to help our global neighbors out of poverty? That's not such a lame question considering how tough things are here at home. Simple story - Because we can. The US is the biggest political power in the world. We have the power to seriously improve the lives of people who live on less than a dollar a day. We should help them because we can. If that's not enough of a reason, then here are a few more:

Because it's better to make friends than enemies.

Because the health of the world is every country's responsibility.

Because we're the ones causing a whole lot of climate change problems but it's the folks in developing countries that live with the fallout.

Because, we can learn so much about what's truly important in life from other cultures.

Because Americans are unfailingly generous, creative and excellent at helping out in crises (Katrina? Haiti?) and if we put more into helping developing countries build infrastructure, they'd be better equipped to survive the next crisis.

Because nothing feels better than truly helping someone out.

And last but not least - quoting Peter Parker (Spiderman) here: "Those who have great power, have great responsibility." C'mon guys...Spidey says.

Advocating for people less fortunate than we are is easy and doesn't cost a penny. Last month, I met with staff members in Merkley's Portland office to ask for his support in passing the [International Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2009](#)

(S.987/H.R. 2103). I sat around a table with State Director, Jeanne Atkins, CARE staffers Ellen Carmichael and Belen Cordovez a few other CARE supporters (among them Michelle Smith, owner of [Piccolo Mondo Toy](#) in Beaverton) and we talked about it. That's all. We explained what it was, asked for his support and a few days later...he signed on and pledged his support to pass this thing. It was as simple as that. All it took was us asking him to help prevent little girls around the world from having to get married too young. He said, OK - I'll do it. Politics in action. Easy-peasy

Besides CARE - I want to spotlight a really inspiring non-profit organization that's looking for volunteers. They won't be offended by donations either. [The Mountain Fund](#), run by Scott MacClennan (who's this year's winner of the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal) sets up childcare centers, health clinics, schools and more in Nepal and Peru and, here's their really cool project...trek-clinics. That's right. Scott regularly organizes volunteers from all over the world to trek with him to remote mountain villages and provide health care. You don't have to be a healthcare professional to help. He'll take anyone and find a use for their skills. I went and saw a slide show this week that Scott's touring her in the US. Log on to his website and find out when he's coming to your neck of the woods. Then, buy your hiking boots and start breaking them in. You won't want to get blisters while you're saving the world.