



USA WEEKEND

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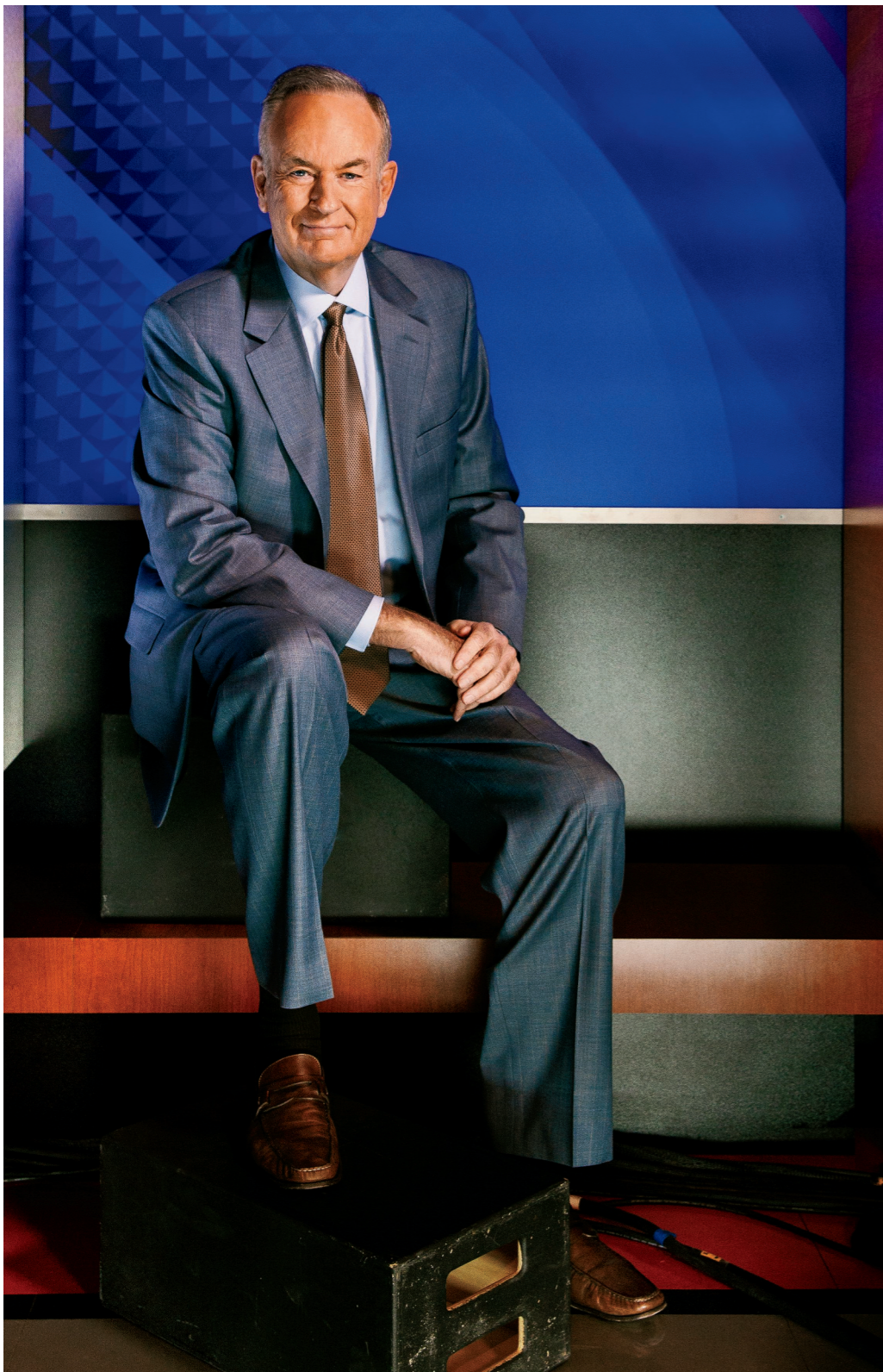
**FOOD
ALLERGY TIPS
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Volunteering isn't
red or blue, declares
pundit Bill O'Reilly.
It's American.

WE NEED YOU!

IN D.C. THIS WEEK,
THE WORLD'S LARGEST
GATHERING OF VOLUNTEER
LEADERS GENERATES IDEAS
AND ACTION.



COMPASSION ISN'T RED OR BLUE

Love him or loathe him, Bill O'Reilly wants to help you help others.

★ BY BILL O'REILLY ★

When it comes to volunteerism, I never ask people about their politics. In one capacity or another, I've connected on causes with Jon Stewart, President Obama and a terrific foundation that is keeping alive the dreams of Bobby Kennedy.

Obviously, I don't see eye-to-eye with these folks on quite a few issues. In fact, I enjoy crushing Jon whenever we mix it up on TV. But if the two of us can combine our very

VOLUNTEERS UNITE!

This week, 5,000 leaders gather in D.C. to learn, unleash help

More than 5,000 class-act volunteer leaders will gather in our nation's capital June 19-22 for the largest gathering of its kind. The goal of

Points of Light's annual Conference on Volunteering and Service: unleashing more Americans to volunteer to help others. "We have big chal-

lenges in our country with financial restraints, and we know we're not going to see huge investments in community and social spending," says Michelle Nunn, CEO of the non-partisan Points of Light and co-founder of HandsOn Network.

distinct audiences to raise awareness — and money — for something good, well, why wouldn't Jon and I do that? Helping others in this nation who are struggling isn't just "the right thing to do." It's the *patriotic* thing to do.

We must take politics out of compassion. When you donate blood, nobody asks you whether you're a liberal or a conservative. Recipients certainly don't care, do they? They're just grateful that someone gave so they could get better.

This truly defines the essence of American values. Time and time again, we've demonstrated that we will respond to people or communities in need. Ben Franklin founded the first volunteer fire company in 1736. Organizations like the American Red Cross and the United Way took hold in the 1800s. Whichever crisis came along in the 20th century, whether a world war or the Great Depression, we did what we had to do to support food banks, scrap drives and civil defense.

We saw the same strength of character emerge in the immediate aftermath of the bombing at the Boston Marathon. Runners took off their shirts to use as tourniquets for victims, and many ran directly from the finish line to Massachusetts General Hospital to donate blood. Instead of fleeing, hundreds



Veterans are his key cause: O'Reilly, whose father served in WWII, has rallied with Wounded Warrior volunteers, below, and frenemy Jon Stewart, below left.



hurried to the scene to aid victims. We've seen this happen with 9/11, Katrina and countless other catastrophes. Tough times bring out the best in America's patriots.

But it's not enough to respond after a disaster. We have to incorporate community service throughout our daily lives.

This Wednesday, June 19, I'm going to speak at Points of Light's National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Washington, D.C. Both I and Points of Light organizers want to emphasize this message: No matter how busy you are, you can find a way to give back.



Addressing nation's needs: Veteran J.R. Martinez (left) and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie

back and helping those in need." Inspirational sessions include New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie talking about Superstorm Sandy relief programs, wounded warrior J.R. Martinez (made

Look, we're all stretched. Between longer work days and family commitments, it's challenging enough to get through the day. But think about all the hours that we — and I mean adults *and* kids — are spending in front of computers. Consider what you could do if you spent a few hours less each week posting status updates on Facebook or watching YouTube videos. If you could take this time and devote it to a cause — *any* good cause — you'll make an impact.

At first, you may feel intimidated. You might conclude that you can't tutor a kid every week or prepare meals in a soup kitchen. Yet all you need to do is call an organization and ask, "How can I help?" Making a difference may simply amount to dropping off books for an after-school program or groceries at a soup kitchen. There is no "one road" here; you can discover your own path.

It's important to tap your own passions and strengths, too. Among other causes, I'm highly involved with the Wounded Warrior Project, which assists men and women from the armed forces who have been injured in Iraq, Afghanistan and other global areas of conflict; and Fisher House Foundation, which donates "comfort homes" to military families who must travel to get specialized medical care. I firmly believe that there is not enough we can do for our veterans.

And I feel strongly about my work with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights. It doesn't bother me at all that Democrats dominate its board. I'm a big admirer of Kennedy's work — how he

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famous on *Dancing With the Stars*) on what he's learned from other veterans, and Fox News host Bill O'Reilly explaining how volunteering is patriotic. The conference is sponsored by Chase; other sponsors include USA WEEKEND and its parent, Gannett.

"Volunteering is already a defining characteristic of what it means to be an American," Nunn says. "To lift a hand for others and to be part of something that's larger than yourself, that's the essence of patriotism."

— McKenna Grant

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emerged as the driving force behind his brother's civil-rights efforts, and later took on poverty. As a U.S. attorney general and a senator, Bobby Kennedy had a fire in his belly to deliver justice to people who felt abandoned. As he was known to say, paraphrasing George Bernard Shaw: "Some men see things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

I've encountered a similar sense of "Let's get it done" from President Obama. He and Michelle are very accessible and receptive to these things. There may be a situation where I'm interviewing him, and I'll ask him to sign a poster for Fisher House so it can be auctioned off. He'll grab my pen and sign without hesitation. This sort of gesture

allows us to raise millions for military families.

All presidents are patriots, after all. All of them understand that public service does not end

A FATHER'S DAY WISH FROM BILL O'REILLY

As Father's Day arrives, I feel that one of the greatest gifts parents can pass on to their children is this: an appreciation for answering the call of volunteerism.

That's what my parents, William (now deceased) and Winifred, instilled in me. They were children of the Depression, when kids grew up understanding that helping unfortunate neighbors was a part of life. When my dad went off to the Pacific during World War II, my mom worked in a kitchen that served local soldiers in training.

While I was growing up in New York and attending Catholic schools there in the 1950s and 1960s, our community leaders and teachers further cultivated a spirit of purposefulness within me and my young peers.

Today, as the father of two, I encourage the same with my children. Like most parents, I find it tough to get them away from their computers and other electronic gadgets. And you have to be careful, too, to not push too hard. Otherwise, they'll feel forced into volunteering, and that's no good for the long haul. Ultimately, it has to come from within.

Which means the surest way to incorporate this is to lead by example: Keep demonstrating to them how you're doing your best, and the difference it makes. Eventually, the notion will take hold — in their minds and their hearts.



Nuclear family: Bill O'Reilly in an undated photo with dad William, mom Winifred and sister Janet.

when they leave office. The same goes for every one of us.

No matter how limited your time, you can find something to do somewhere. All you have to ask

yourself is, "Why not?" ▣

Bill O'Reilly hosts 'The O'Reilly Factor' on the Fox News Channel. He's author of 'A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity' and 'Killing Lincoln.' His next, 'Killing Jesus,' will be published in September.