

# TEN BY TEN

10 EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE \* 10 RANDOM QUESTIONS

The following 10 individuals share a distinct love of humanity and are dedicated in various ways, to increasing the quality of life of people around the globe. These unsung heroes share a core ethic rooted in giving and in this issue we recognize their extraordinary contributions.

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### LILLIAN PRAVDA

#### The Visionary

Eye surgery is certainly not the most pleasant experience, especially for young children who may be frightened of intimidating hospital operating rooms. Lillian Pravda sympathizes with young patients, having had two eye surgeries in her youth as a result of a congenital cataract. They both were successful, but upon learning that not all children are as fortunate to receive quality vision care, she created Vision For and From Children. The charity raises money to pay for pediatric ophthalmologic surgeries, along with specialized equipment and supplies. She is a frequent visitor at The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, distributing toys to young patients (providing a welcome distraction from eye-related challenges) and talking with parents to ease their minds. Last year, through her ingenuity and leadership, she led a fundraising drive at a local New York City school to support a medical mission following the Haitian earthquake. It's refreshing and inspiring to see someone as committed, concerned and proactive as Pravda — especially since she's only 11 years old.

**What is your most cherished possession?**

My most cherished possession is my sister, Maxine. She may not be a "thing," but she is mine and I am hers.

**Which cause do you most identify with?**

I most identify with my charity called Vision For and From Children. I know how fortunate I am to get vision care, and since I have had a few surgeries myself, I also know what the children are going through.

**What is the best advice you've ever received, and who gave it to you?**

The best advice I ever received was about bullies. Bullies have a problem with themselves. If bullies see that they have bothered you, it gives them power, so the best thing to do is to ignore them. My mom gave me this advice, and it has helped me through all of my school years so far.

**What is your favorite ...**

**Flavor:** mint chocolate chip

**Feeling:** the feeling I get when I am with my bubble.

**Woody Allen movie:** I have no idea who that is. Is a Woody Allen movie worth watching?

**Contemporary Artist:** I have had the privilege of meeting Yaacov Agam. I even went to his studio where he creates his masterpieces. His art is never what it appears to be at first. When you look in one direction, you see one thing, but when you look in another you see an entirely different idea. It amazes me how someone can visualize that in their mind and create from it. He is truly brilliant.

**Historical figure:** There are several, including Christopher Columbus and Rosa Parks, but they all had some things in common. They had the drive, courage and determination to do what they believed.

**80's TV show:** Well, I can tell you that my favorite show from the '50s is *I Love Lucy* and my favorite shows from the '60s and '70s are *The Brady Bunch*, *The Partridge Family*, *Bewitched* and *The Girl*. As for the '80s, I haven't seen any of those yet, but my favorite '80s movie is *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. I don't have a television in my home, so I only get to watch shows that are available on DVD.

**What do you consider your most notable personal fault/professional success?**

My most notable personal fault is that whenever someone does something to intentionally upset me or purposely hurt my feelings, I automatically forgive them — even if they never apologize. Since I am only 11 years old, it is difficult to answer a question about professional successes — although I did start my own charity, I considered that a personal goal, not a professional success.

**What is your favorite/least favorite use of modern technology?**

My favorite is "i" anything! I don't have a least favorite. The only modern



technology I am permitted to use is a toaster, and if I am lucky — an occasion — a computer.

**Last three things you cannot live without:**

My family, music and guacamole with chips.

**Which artist (musician, poet, painter, etc.) has had the greatest impact on your life and how? Feel free to name more than one.**

Diana Byer, Artistic Director of New York Theatre Ballet, has had a great impact on me. I have been dancing with the company since I was 5 years old. I have gained so much more than ballet skills. Through the classes, rehearsals and performances, I have gained confidence, self-esteem and discipline. These are qualities that are important in every life situation.

I have always loved to write poetry, but when I read Emily Dickinson's "I'm Nobody! Who are You?" it spoke to me. I sat and analyzed that poem for hours.

**If you could change one thing about our world, what would it be and why?**

There are many things that I would like to change about the world: Cures for all diseases (actually, no more diseases whatsoever), no more hatred, no more war, no more hunger, no more homelessness, no more reasons for people to ask each other what they would change about the world — it would just be perfect!

**How would you like to be remembered?**

I just hope to make a difference in at least one person's life. Even if it is just one person, hopefully it makes a difference to that one.