



The Torch



American Red Cross
Tiffany Circle

FALL 2024 — SPECIAL EDITION

Bonnie McElveen Hunter

A living legacy for Women in Philanthropy with an unwavering commitment to serving the least, the last and the lost.

Honoring Chairman of the American Red Cross Board of Governors and Tiffany Circle Co-Founder for two decades of visionary leadership and service to the humanitarian mission of the American Red Cross.



“I personally pledge to use all of my talent and energy to ensure that the American Red Cross has the direction and resources needed to ease the pain of human suffering and respond to victims at home and abroad — honoring the original vision of Clara Barton.”

Bonnie McElveen Hunter, upon stepping into her role as Chairman of the American Red Cross, 2004



CO-FOUNDER LETTER

Dear Tiffany Circle Sisters,

I know I speak on behalf of the entire global membership of our Tiffany Circle sisterhood when I say that we share a deep sense of gratitude to our dear friend and co-founder of the Tiffany Circle, Bonnie McElveen Hunter. Under her visionary and transformative leadership and steady guidance, the Red Cross and Tiffany Circle have become stronger, more financially stable and better able to deliver their lifesaving mission across the country and around the world.

As Bonnie recently stepped down as Chairman — after two decades of servant leadership — I extend a personal message to Bonnie on behalf of our sisterhood. Together, we celebrate and cherish the extraordinary impact Bonnie has made on the Red Cross — and on our growing women's giving movement that is the Tiffany Circle.

Bonnie, you have been my dear friend, partner, mentor and confidante since we first met in 1997 through our involvements with the United Way. Your big and bold idea to launch a women's movement to educate, empower, engage and ask women to step forward individually to invest in the greatest, most critical needs in their communities, to put it lightly, caught my attention!

In 2007, you asked me to join the National Board of Governors for the American Red Cross as Vice President of Philanthropy. You said “Melanie, let's launch our women's movement now. We cannot underestimate the power of women.” Together, we co-founded the Tiffany Circle Society of Women Leaders through the strategy of our “three T's,” asking women to invest their time, talent and treasure to help fulfill the organization's humanitarian mission. With powerful, results-oriented leadership to build a thriving network across the United States, the Tiffany Circle National Council was created to bring together top leadership and best practices from across the country. Thereafter, the Tiffany Circle International Council, founded by Elaine Lyerly, established quickly with passionate enthusiasm to expand our Tiffany Circle footprint and humanitarian impact around the globe! Today, the Tiffany Circle boasts 1,470 members globally, including 170 individuals from international Tiffany Circles, and has raised and influenced over \$373 million for the Red Cross Movement since its inception in 2007.

Bonnie, your passionate, strategic and enthusiastic influence has been the core of our significant success, year after year! Your legacy will live on forever... and ever. There is no one quite like Bonnie McElveen-Hunter. You have made all of us, and Clara Barton, incredibly proud!

With great love, respect and admiration,



Melanie Sabelhaus
Co-Founder,
Tiffany Circle

Bonnie McElveen Hunter

American Red Cross Chairman 2004–2024

20 Years of Servant Leadership

2004

Appointed as Chairman by President George W. Bush; the first woman since Clara Barton to serve in the role in American Red Cross history.



2005

NASDAQ salutes the American Red Cross in Times Square, New York.



Bonnie and fellow Red Crossers pose in front of a video display in Times Square with former CEO and Chairman of NASDAQ Robert Greifeld.

2006

Initiated the first comprehensive review of Red Cross governance in more than 60 years, resulting in bold and transformational changes that now serve as a model of nonprofit governance reform.



Facilitated the historic recognition of Magen David Adom and the Palestine Red Crescent Society by ICRC and their admission as full members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Engaged in a mission trip to Ethiopia, Darfur and Chad with American Red Cross International Services.



Above: Bonnie greets women and children at the Treguine refugee camp in Chad, where food, shelter, water, education and work training were provided to the more than 14,500 refugees.

2007

Established a world-class fundraising operation, which thrives with corporate partners and programs.

Co-Founded the Tiffany Circle Society of Women Leaders with Melanie Sabelhaus

Held first Tiffany Circle Summit in Washington, D.C.



Left: Bonnie pictured with Tiffany Circle co-founder Melanie Sabelhaus; Right: Tiffany Circle members pictured together at Red Cross National Headquarters during the Inaugural Tiffany Circle Summit in 2007.



2007

Participated in a mission trip to Madagascar for Measles and Rubella Initiative.



Measles Vaccination and Malaria Mosquito Net Distribution, Madagascar 2007. Arriving in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Bonnie and the delegation are greeted by members of the Malagasy Red Cross.

2008

Led an extensive search to hire Gail McGovern as President and CEO.



On April 8, 2008, the American Red Cross announced that Gail McGovern would become president and CEO of the organization, effective June 23, 2008.

Launched the American Red Cross Humanitarian Prize. This year, Dr. Noam Yifrach, Chairman of the Israeli Society, Magen David Adom, and Mr. Younis Al-Khatib, President of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, were honored for their courageous and selfless humanitarian partnership. These leaders demonstrated the potential of the human spirit to heal one of the world's deepest divides.



Bonnie presents American Red Cross Humanitarian Prize to Dr. Noam Yifrach, President of the Board for Magen David Adom.

Former President George W. Bush convenes world leaders in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake in China.



L-R: Mary Elcano, Bonnie McElveen Hunter, Former President George W. Bush, John Castellani, Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

2009

Honored with named Bonnie McElveen Hunter Tiffany Circle giving levels for members pledging \$100,000+ in cumulative giving.

2010

Led donor engagement trip to Haiti following 7.0 magnitude earthquake.



Former President of the United States, Barack Obama, and Former First Lady Michelle Obama tour the American Red Cross Disaster Operation Center in Washington, D.C., following a major earthquake in Haiti.

Closed FY2010 with a break-even budget for the first time in many years.



American Red Cross worker Matt Marek briefs Red Cross leaders and donors about the progress of relief and recovery efforts in Haiti.

2011

Launched the Chairman's Council, recognizing donors who have donated more than \$1 million to the Red Cross, and inducted as one of the inaugural members.

Chairman Bonnie McElveen-Hunter



2015

Helped release the Red Cross from a 22-year consent decree with the FDA following governance and management reforms, resulting in best-in-class compliance operation for Biomedical Services.



2016

Led donor engagement trip to Louisiana following storm and massive flooding, which prompted the largest Red Cross relief operation since Superstorm Sandy.



2017

Celebrated Tiffany Circle's 10-year milestone by unveiling newly named Tiffany Circle Hall naming campaign led by members Barbara Bovender and Anita Zucker.



Melanie Sabelhaus, Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, Gail McGovern, Andrea Muzin, representing her mother Anita Zucker, and Barbara Bovender, perform the ribbon cutting of Tiffany Circle Hall.

2018

Launched *Sound the Alarm*, helping save lives from home fires by installing smoke alarms and providing home fire safety education.

Led donor observation trip to North Carolina in the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, which devastated the Carolinas and Florida.

2021

Supported the launch of the Red Cross Sickle Cell Initiative to increase the number of blood donations in Black communities, as one in three African American blood donors is a match for those living with sickle cell disease.



Bonnie celebrates the Tiffany Circle's collective giving campaign in support of the Sickle Cell Initiative at the 2023 Tiffany Circle Summit.

2020

Surpassed Tiffany Circle's strategic plan goal of 1,000 members in April 2020.

2024

Steps down as Chairman of the Board of Governors.



Bonnie addresses the 2024 Chairman's Council inductees, her last Induction while serving as Chairman of the Board of Governors.

“When you see human tragedy, you ultimately have to make a decision — whether to curse the darkness or to light a candle. We at the Red Cross are committed to lighting candles.”

Bonnie McElveen Hunter

Under Bonnie’s 20-year leadership as Chairman of the Board of Governor’s, the Red Cross has:



Responded to 1.8 million disasters.



Trained 90 million people in first aid and CPR, babysitting and other lifesaving training.



Processed 110 million blood products for people in crisis.



Served 10 million military members, veterans and their families.



Provided disease prevention activities and disaster response to more than 2 billion people around the world.



Immunized over 3 billion children against measles and rubella since 2001.





Members of the Tiffany Circle National Council together at Bonnie McElveen Hunter's Georgetown home before the Tiffany Circle Summit in June 2009.

First row left to right: Erika Millet, Julia Bianchi, Barbara Bovender, Madeline McElveen, Jill Valenti, Cammi Markley, Betsy Wills

Second row left to right: Suzanne Detlefs, Laurie Laidlaw Deacon, Gloria Danovitz, Tomi Youngblood, Lyn McCarthy, Bonnie McElveen Hunter, Melanie Sabelhaus, Carla Paulson, Alice Puente, Terri Badour, Lori Keller Bents, BJ Coffman, Colleen Zarewsky, Elaine Lyerly

Bonnie has always been one to open her home to her American Red Cross community, holding many treasured Tiffany Circle events there. The impression from members and those we serve continues, as Bonnie's personal warmth, wonderful humor, tenacious leadership, kindness and genuine love for the Red Cross mission leave a legacy that will be felt by the organization for generations to come.

Reflections from Bonnie



As my dear friend Tom Tewell once said, “There are two ‘most important’ days of our lives. The day we are born and the day we understand why.” When I was appointed as Chairman of this beloved organization in 2004, I quickly understood that my “why” was the American Red Cross.

Not long after I joined the Red Cross, Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne hit Florida, which at the time was the largest disaster response for the American Red Cross in our history. Little did I know that this was only the beginning. Just 60 days later, a tsunami with the energy of 23,000 Hiroshima bombs hit Southeast Asia, and, of course, we all remember the following year, when hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma devastated the Gulf Coast... and the disasters have continued to be more frequent and more devastating in the years since.

In addition to the difficulties of responding to these large disasters, there were a number of other challenges confronting the organization when I began my service as Chairman, including an unwieldy governance structure that had not changed in 60 years. The Red Cross of today is very different than the organization I joined 20 years ago. Our governance has been reformed and is a model for nonprofits across the country. We have a world-class fundraising operation, which is thriving with dedicated corporate partners and programs—including the Tiffany Circle Society of Women Leading Through Philanthropy and the Chairman’s Council of generous million-dollar donors, both of which I was honored to co-found and which have collectively raised half a billion dollars.

On the international front, one of the personal commitments I made when I joined this organization was to reenergize the American Red Cross international mission and ensure America was a leader in the International Red Cross Movement of 191 countries. It was an honor to participate in one of the greatest humanitarian interventions toward peace in the Middle East by facilitating the historic accomplishment of Magen David Adom (the equivalent of the Israeli Red Cross) and the Palestine Red Crescent Society gaining entrée into the International Federation and now, more than ever, those national societies are providing essential humanitarian support to those in critical need.

But although the Red Cross is very different now than it was when I joined the organization, I’m also proud that the very best of what makes the Red Cross what it is remains unchanged. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization, and when our nation turns to us because of a hurricane, an earthquake, a home fire or a flood, our volunteers are there. When a child cries out in need of a measles vaccine or a blood transfusion, we are there. No matter what the emergency or where it strikes, the American Red Cross is there, delivering hope and comfort to people in their darkest hours. And I have been there... in our shelters as our volunteers knelt beside the cots of victims and treated them with great dignity, care and love... in Haiti, where I found myself lacking the ability to describe or even comprehend the extent of the destruction or the number of people in need... in Ethiopia, as children with distended stomachs received basic health and the gift of clean water from the Red Cross... and beyond.

The American Red Cross is the greatest humanitarian organization in the world, and I will be forever thankful for the opportunity to serve in support of its noble and necessary mission. While I may no longer be with all of you, please remember that the spirit of our mission, the memories we created together and the impact we generated on behalf of the least, the last and the lost will always remain within all of us, and I will proudly carry them in my heart.



It Can Be Done

Inspired by love and led by faith, Bonnie stepped into the role of Chairman of the American Red Cross Board of Governors with her whole heart. Serving on the Board with her changed my life. Rooted in her mother's words, "*It Can Be Done*," Bonnie gave each board member a desk plaque with these simple but powerful words.

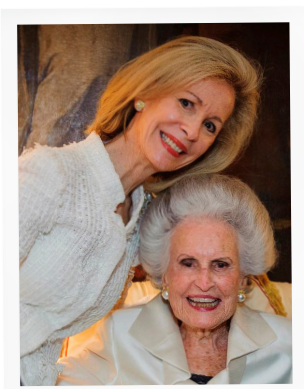
They served as a guidepost as she led the organization with conviction, inspiration and determination through some of its most daunting challenges. Through governance reform, the organization's 50-member board was reduced to 10. Its 500 audits became one, 700 websites morphed into one, 4,000 bank accounts were reduced to one and a \$209 million deficit is now a balanced budget. Lacking a strategy for non-episodic fundraising, Bonnie co-founded the Tiffany Circle, one of the most powerful global initiatives in women's philanthropy today. She successfully led the search for a new CEO, bringing Gail McGovern into the role, and she spearheaded the critical initiative for the admission of Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent into the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Watching Bonnie lead taught me it *can* be done, and miracles happen when we pull together with purpose and passion. Bonnie is grace, dignity, brains and beauty, lifting up all who cross her path in service to others.

[Elaine Lyerly](#)

American Red Cross Tiffany Circle Founding Member & National Co-Chair
 Founder and Co-Chair, Tiffany Circle International Council
 Past Vice Chair, American Red Cross Board of Governors

"My Mother's Pearls of Wisdom"



Bonnie has shared that her "Mother's Pearls of Wisdom" have guided her through her personal and business life. She's shared them with her fellow Tiffany Circle members:

- Time is precious. Use it wisely.
- Mediocrity is the greatest sin.
- Work is the greatest privilege.
- Failure is a comma — never a period.
- And "can't" is a word that does not exist.

"My Mother had my brother, sister and me write the word 'can't' on a piece of paper and put it in a shoebox," shared Bonnie. "She took us to our backyard in Bosier City, Louisiana, where we were given a shovel and instructed to dig a hole and bury the word 'can't' with full burial rites. So, when someone says it can't be done... I think, 'That's buried in Bosier City!'"



Top Ten Reasons Why I Adore Bonnie

10. You are a brilliant businesswoman.

Whether it's accounting, finance, marketing, investments, new business development, customer relations... you're great at all of it. Your instincts and knowledge, combined with your experience, make you one of the best business leaders I've ever met.

9. You are decisive.

Whenever you're faced with a decision, you gather the data (even if there isn't very much data to be gathered) and you make a choice. You don't look back, you don't waiver, you admit it if it was the wrong choice (which rarely ever happens) and you move on. This is such a rare quality. It's a trait I greatly admire and have come to rely upon.

8. You are resilient.

I've seen you deal with so many difficult situations — both personal and professional. When your business had a downturn, when your mom and late husband were ill... each time you rose above it and bravely moved on. Your faith, spirituality and remarkable positive attitude are a shining example for those of us who are fortunate to be in your orbit.

7. You are intellectually curious.

Whether it's opera, neuroscience, the arts, nutrition, economics or geopolitics, you have a voracious appetite to learn and grow. Add that to the fact that you're naturally smart, and the result is that there's almost nothing you can't learn to do.

6. You always do the right thing.

You are guided by a bright moral beacon that ensures that you always step up and do what's right. You can't imagine how often I ask myself, "What would Bonnie do?"

5. You are warm.

Everyone who knows you thinks that they are your best friend. You have a knack of making anyone and everyone feel special. From your limo driver to Heads of State, you take time to be sure that you have a kind word for everyone you meet.

4. You are generous.

You are obviously generous with your money, but you're also generous with your time. The work you do to help others, whether it's with the Red Cross, mentoring women, helping those less fortunate or simply being generous with your praise, touches so many, many lives. You leave an indelible mark on those whom you help.

3. You are an incredible mom, daughter, wife and sister.

You would walk through fire to help any member of your family. You're fiercely protective, caring and kind to each of them. I just love the relationship you have with Tweed. Being close to my own brother, I know how rare and special it is to have a close sibling. The way you cared for your husband and mother is beautiful, and Bynum Jr is so very fortunate to have you for a mom.

2. You are so funny.

I distinctly remember the first time you and I totally lost it over something silly. We were talking about pet CPR, and I told you that, as a kid, I had a parakeet. We started joking about beak-to-beak resuscitation, and we both could *not* stop laughing. It happens now almost whenever we're together, and it's absolutely irreverent, stress-busting, glorious and hilarious.

And... the number one reason why I adore you...

1. You are the best, most loyal friend.

Whether it's supporting me at the Red Cross, getting me through breast cancer, giving me pep talks, gossiping, giggling or noodling through tricky business problems, you are always there for me. I couldn't be more grateful.

I love you.
G

Special Sentiments

“Central to Bonnie’s transformative leadership was her initiative to make women the centerpiece of the Red Cross’s financial development. She co-founded the Tiffany Circle, an extraordinary group of women that has become the largest giving network in the organization’s history. This initiative has galvanized the philanthropic spirit of women nationwide, creating a powerful force for good that underpins the Red Cross’s mission.”

Elizabeth Dole, Former Senator

“You describe the Red Cross so well, an organization admired by all thanks to its devotion to helping the ‘least...last...lost’ on some of the worst days of their lives. No surprise that is where you have applied your manifold strengths, always in support of others.”

General James N. Mattis, USMC (Ret.) and Former Secretary of Defense



Bonnie and Amy Grant at the 2017 Tiffany Circle Summit.

A brilliant, talented and gifted woman can accomplish a great deal, but the woman who understands the power of community can change systems of thought and influence the world.

Bonnie McElveen Hunter is *that* woman.

Graceful, elegant and *always* put together with style, she threads laughter and initiative and adventure together in order to effect positive change and get the job done.

Bonnie’s legacy includes her love of family, her respectful communication skills, her brilliant mind and her ability to see and call forth the best in others.

Said of Bonnie’s mother at her memorial service... Most people simply “read the room” like a thermometer, but Madeline was a thermostat, changing the temperature of the rooms she entered.

In that regard, Bonnie, you are very much like your dear mother.

Thank you for the changes you have inspired in each of us.

Amy Grant, GRAMMY Award-winning singer-songwriter

Posthumously



Bonnie McElveen Hunter, left, and former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, on a fly fishing trip.

“Bonnie McElveen Hunter is one of America’s most remarkable women. She pioneered a highly successful publishing business, served with distinction as the United States Ambassador to Finland, spearheaded an effort to gather together and encourage women in business in Central and Eastern Europe, and led the successful reorganization of the American Red Cross. Any one of these achievements would distinguish Bonnie, but she has done them all and has not yet slowed her pace. Bonnie is beautiful, talented, energetic, successful and an altogether remarkable person.”

Sandra Day O'Connor, Former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States

“If I had to describe Bonnie McElveen Hunter in one word, that word would be ‘extraordinary.’ Whatever she has turned her mind to, whether diplomacy, public service, philanthropy, publishing, politics or organizing conference and seminars to inspire and empower women in business, she has set a standard of ability, leadership and high accomplishment. In Finland, where she served as U.S. Ambassador, she is remembered with lasting respect and affection by the Finnish people and government leaders. As Chairman of the American Red Cross, she has revitalized and strengthened that organization, which was drained and dispirited following its heroic efforts during the devastation of Katrina.

“Lest Bonnie sound like a hard and driven superwoman, all who know her will remember best her warmth, cordiality, empathy, humor, attractiveness and generous spirit. We have been good friends for many years, and I count myself as one of her greatest admirers.”

Henry A. Kissinger, Former U.S. Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize Awardee



Q&A *with Bonnie*

Q: As you reflect on your years of service and leadership, what are you most proud of?

As the first woman since Clara Barton to receive a Presidential appointment to become Chairman of the Board of the American Red Cross, this was truly a humbling moment for me. Our humanitarian journey and work are a sacred covenant among our employees, volunteers and the people in need whom we are privileged to serve. This covenant is not about wealth or power, but about the bonds of belonging and of collective responsibility.

With a heart full of gratitude, I proudly pass the torch of Clara's legacy into a continuing covenant of serving and enriching our global Red Cross family today, tomorrow and for future generations.

Q. You have held various leadership positions, and in 2004, were appointed as the Chairman of the American Red Cross by President George W. Bush. What drew you to the organization?

Two quotes come to mind that encapsulate my personal vision and articulate why I strive to give back, and, more specifically, to the Red Cross.

First, I believe the biblical imperative, *"To whom much is given, much is expected."* In my life, I have been blessed beyond my wildest expectations, and I believe it is my responsibility to pay it forward.

Second, Winston Churchill said, *"What is the use of living ... if not to strive to make this muddled world we live in a better place after we're gone."* I agree with him, but why not make it better now? I have a friend who says there are two "most important" days of your life. The day we are born and the day you understand why. For me, the why is the American Red Cross. Nothing I have

accomplished in this life has been more meaningful than to have been given the opportunity to lead one of the greatest humanitarian organizations in the world—the Red Cross—and to contribute in a small way to its enduring legacy.

Q. In your opinion, if Clara Barton were to address the youth of today, what would she say?

Clara Barton once said *"...what is everybody's business is nobody's business... what is nobody's business is my business."*

I believe that if Clara Barton were to address the youth of today, she would want to stress to them the importance of identifying an unmet need in our society and working to make a positive difference. Clara dedicated her entire life—all of her time, energy and resources—to helping others. I believe she would want to make sure that young people today understand the importance of devoting themselves to a cause and, in turn, helping others.

Q: As you've stepped down from the role as Chairman of the Board of Governor's after two decades of service, what does your next chapter look like?

David Brooks wrote a book about the two mountains in our lives. The first mountain is about admiring and acquiring. The second mountain is about pouring ourselves forth into something else and lavishing the fragrance of giving and going out into the world and finding a way to be a blessing to others.

I look forward to climbing the next mountain and sharing the journey, with God's blessing, lavishing the sweet fragrance of giving on others.

Bonnie McElveen Hunter to be Honored for her Legacy of Leadership at the 2025 International Red Cross Ball



The 64th International Red Cross Ball will make its highly anticipated return as the premier event of the Palm Beach social season on January 10, 2025, at The Breakers Palm Beach. For the third consecutive year, Tiffany Circle member Amanda Schumacher and her husband, Charles, are serving as the event's distinguished chairmen. As is tradition, U.S. Ambassadors, dignitaries and philanthropic leaders from around the world come together for one night in support of the American Red Cross. Bonnie McElveen-Hunter will serve as the keynote speaker for this year's ball, an honored role she has fulfilled before.

We are pleased to share that the Red Cross Palm Beach, Treasure Coast Tiffany Circle and Tiffany Circle members from across the country will also play a significant role in leading the Ball to success this year. The 2025 event will be unique, as we plan to honor Bonnie McElveen Hunter, former U.S.

Ambassador to Finland, Tiffany Circle Co-Founder and the first female National Chair of the American Red Cross Board of Governors, at the Ball. After 20 years of volunteer service to the American Red Cross, she stepped down from that role as of June 30, 2024. We are grateful for this opportunity to honor and thank her for transforming Red Cross philanthropy over the past two decades.

"As the first woman since Clara Barton to receive a Presidential appointment to become Chairman of the Board of the American Red Cross, my heart is full of gratitude," said Bonnie McElveen Hunter. "Our humanitarian journey and work is a sacred covenant among our employees, volunteers and the people in need who we are privileged to serve. This covenant is not about wealth or power, but about the bonds of belonging and of collective responsibility. I am deeply humbled to be recognized at next year's Ball."

We hope you will join us in Palm Beach on January 10. To learn more about our Tiffany Circle Host Committee of supporters or for additional information about the Ball, please contact [Brenda Black](#).



Bonnie and esteemed guests from the 2019 International Red Cross Ball.

Ambassador of Hungary Dr. Laszlo Szabo & Dr. Ivonn Szeverenyi, Ambassador of Jordan Mrs. Dina Kavar, Ambassador of Finland Ms. Kirsti Kauppi, Ambassador of Monaco Ms. Maguy Maccario Doyle, Michele Kang, Ambassador Bonnie McElveen Hunter, General Robert Myers, Mary Jo Myers, Mrs. Ljiljan Vidovic & Ambassador of Slovenia Mr Stanislav Vidovic, Miss Reina Sugiyama and Ambassador of Japan Mr. Shinsuke J. Sugiyama, with Padma & Raj Mantena



“If you can engage others so that the passion of the mission is theirs, you will be a thousand times more successful. What you will find is that it’s not about you. It’s through you that the energy comes and is renewed.”

Bonnie McElveen Hunter
