

Interview with the director of the Steven Mueller Foundation (November 2012):

Interviewer: Please tell us a little bit about the Steven Mueller Foundation.

Steven Mueller: The foundation which bears my name is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing relief for disadvantaged, ill, and impoverished people not only in the United States but also throughout the world. At the moment it's a relatively small organization which is still in its infancy, but we have big plans for the future.

I: What made you decide to incorporate your name into the name of the organization?

SM: Funny you should ask that because it was originally the furthest thing from my mind. It actually came about as a sort of 'last resort' type of thing. I originally planned to name it 'Compassion International' or 'Humanity International,' however as I later learned both names were already taken. It was a rather frustrating process because whatever name I came up with usually turned out to be already taken by another organization, so I finally and somewhat reluctantly agreed to incorporate my name into the name of the organization. I'm actually quite proud of the work the foundation does, so I'm proud to have my name associated with it, but it's certainly not about me, it's about making a positive difference in the lives of people around the world.

I: Is there a specific group of people that the foundation is looking to help?

SM: There are so many people in need of compassion and assistance in this world, both domestically as well as internationally. There are many organizations that specifically target children, and things like that, but ours is a bit different. While that type of assistance is great and is to be commended, we don't believe that a human life ceases to have value simply because a person has grown out of childhood, nor that people suddenly cease to need assistance when they reach a certain age. There are also many adults, as well as middle-aged and elderly people in dire need of a helping hand. So, while we of course provide assistance for children, we also provide assistance for people of all age groups.

I: What is your personal background and what made you decide to create the foundation?

SM: For years I worked in the entertainment industry as a publicist. I had the opportunity to get to know many celebrities personally, and I'm hoping that these relationships will benefit the foundation by hopefully getting some of them to lend their support to our efforts.

I: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

SM: Aside from spending time with my wife and family, my passions include working on my books – I've written 5 books, not counting my autobiography – and adventure travel to far-off and exotic lands. I've also developed a sort of side-career, I guess you could say, as a part-time author and historian. Learning about and writing about history has always been a lifelong passion of mine. For example, earlier this year my wife and I went on an amazing journey to Egypt. I love traveling abroad and, again, I hope that my world travels can be an asset when it comes to organizing the foundation.

I: Have your travels influenced your desire to help the less fortunate?

SM: Absolutely. I've been to some 3rd world countries where I've seen people living in appalling poverty and unbelievable conditions. It really makes you realize how blessed you are. In addition to that my wife and I have both been through a lot of health-related issues over the years, and it makes you realize what's truly important in life. No matter how bad you have it, there are millions of people that are infinitely worse off than you are. Helping others makes me happy and it's good for the soul. When you can bring a smile to the face of someone who just five minutes earlier was absolutely miserable and filled with hopelessness, it's really an incredible feeling.

I: You mentioned the word "blessed." Would you consider yourself religious?

SM: Well, yes, in the sense that I believe in God and I believe that it's everyone's duty to help their fellow man. But, I want to stress that our foundation is not a religious-based organization. There are many organizations which are religious-based and they do terrific work. However, I don't believe that you need to incorporate a religious element in order to do good work or be a decent person. You don't necessarily need to attend church on a regular basis, you just need to have a heart and some compassion for others.

I: How can people contribute?

SM: People can contribute anytime by going to our website or by writing to us at our office. Any contribution, no matter what size, is deeply appreciated and will help make a difference in the life of someone special. I just want to say: thank you so much to everyone who has supported our efforts to this point and we hope that even bigger and better things are ahead!