

Lulu is the Philanthropartiest!

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Young Entertainment Mag spoke with writer **Lulu Cerone** (a past **Barron Prize** winner) about her new book *Philanthroparties!* a party-planning guide for kids who want to give back. Book comes out today.

1. What can readers find when reading your new book? Readers will find tips and ideas to simply and realistically fit social activism into their social lives. They'll hopefully connect to a cause, find inspiration and helpful tools to support that cause and mostly, I hope they'll have fun. If there's joy in the pursuit to create change, they'll be more likely to make kindness, generosity and advocacy an ongoing part of their lives.

2. What inspired it?

As a kid, I was frustrated at the lack of volunteer opportunities for young people. Most organizations only work with volunteers over 16 years old. I was also frustrated with the lack of time for service projects in my over-scheduled extra-curricular life. So I came up with these PhilanthroParty plans to turn what's already on your calendar into a chance to create change. You don't have to add to your busy life, and you don't have to wait till you grow up. PhilanthroParties are simple, inexpensive, creative ideas that kids can do on their own and create tangible good while laying the groundwork to make generosity and kindness a habit that continues into adulthood.

3. After finishing the book what did you take away from the experience?

I founded LemonAID Warriors, a youth activism organization, when I was ten years old, and PhilanthroParties came out of this experience. They were our most successful events. I had to call in all my LemonAID Warriors volunteers to re-live 36 PhilanthroParties in 4 days to photograph them for the book. That's 8 parties a day! Without hesitation, my entire community jumped in. The moms helped with the food shots and the art direction, and the kids gave up four long, hot 16-hour days of their summer. Coming together for this book made me realize that these PhilanthroParties were a deeply meaningful part of everyone's childhood. Not just mine. Not only were my friends empowered by all the good they accomplished, but they all agree that spending time helping others made us kinder and more compassionate toward each other. It strengthened our bonds and deepened our friendships.

4. What was your favorite Young Adult book growing up and why?

I know it's considered more of a children's book, but *The Little Prince* is probably my favorite book of all time. I loved it when I was younger and rediscovered it in high school. It's full of magic and truth, and it's a true testament to the wonder of childhood.

Favorite Quote and/or DIY from the book:

The last line of the book says:

"No act of kindness is ever wasted. Any action a child takes to address another's need is a worthy action. No matter how small."

My favorite DIY is making bio-seed paper for a Poet-Tree PhilanthroParty in April, which is national Poetry month. You can write a poem on the paper and leave it in public places, since it's biodegradable, to spread beauty and joy. I always write a little note on the back of the bio-seed paper telling whoever finds it to plant it once they're done reading since it contains real seeds! This PhilanthroParty raises money for organizations like GetLit.org that bring literature and poetry programs to youth in underserved communities.

I also love some of the recipes in my book. I have a PhilanthroParty called Ugly Food Feast where you collect juice pulp and perfectly good but cosmetically ugly veggies that supermarkets usually throw out, and you make delicious veggie burgers. It's a dinner-and-a-movie party to bring awareness to food waste in America. I like to screen the documentary *Just Eat It* after dinner. Guests learn to implement changes in how they shop and store food and how to put pressure on our government to change wasteful practices within the food industry.

