

# BELLA

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# Celebrating Black Philanthropy Month

By Yolanda F. Johnson

For roughly the past decade or so, different cultural groups have begun to shift their thinking regarding the true meaning of philanthropy. For most of its existence, American philanthropy has been defined as the very wealthy giving to certain charities and naming programs, buildings, and playgrounds after themselves and their families. However, the philanthropic landscape is undergoing a seismic, redefining shift and is being deconstructed and rebuilt as something more beautiful and inclusive.

Simply put: The face of philanthropy is changing, and people of varying backgrounds are beginning to understand that community, family support, tithing, and church support, as well as the giving of time, talent, truth, and treasure count equally as philanthropy. This is why it is so exciting to celebrate Black Philanthropy Month (BPM) each August.

Black Philanthropy Month, today a program of The WISE Fund - Women Invested to Save Earth culminating in a multinational summit every August, is a global celebration to elevate African-descent giving and funding equity. Incubated in 2001 by its founder, Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland, with the support of Reunity (formerly the Pan-African Women's Philanthropy Network), BPM launched its first official global summit in 2011 to commemorate the United Nations Year and Decade of People of African Descent.

Each year, Black Philanthropy Month has a given theme. For 2023, it is "Love in Action." The beauty of this giving-back celebration is that it's not just about one particular group of people who identify as Black, it's about everyone who is of African descent all over the world—all those whose ancestry stems from the diaspora. It is a unifying way to see things differently and recognize the contributions that Black philanthropists, from affluent and notable celebrities to your local schoolteacher who is changing the lives of young people every day by using their own money to purchase materials to supplement his or her educational plans.

Stay tuned to the official launch of Black Philanthropy Month on August 1st, which kicks off year-round initiatives, such as the Global Black Funding Equity. (See [bit.ly/BPMpledge](http://bit.ly/BPMpledge) to sign the equity pledge and <http://bit.ly/3xBitdy> to take the funding equity survey and nominate an exemplary equitable funder for your country or continent.) Or start your own activity, event, or project as we encourage you to find your own unique way of participating and sharing with the broader BPM community.