June 1, 2016

We believe that in order for our communities to thrive, it’s imperative that all children have access to world-class healthcare and education systems. This belief is why we’ve focused our personal philanthropic efforts on advancing children’s healthcare in the Bay Area—giving $250 million to build UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospitals in both San Francisco and Oakland. It’s also why at Salesforce, we’ve focused our corporate philanthropy programs on public schools, giving $14 million to San Francisco Unified School District over the last three school years to advance STEM education for Bay Area students.

Our country is experiencing growing income inequality—disproportionately affecting the outcomes of our nation’s youth. In the United States, families now comprise more than 30% of the overall homeless population, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and more than 1.5 million American children live in poverty. In the San Francisco Bay Area, we are facing a homelessness epidemic—through our work with SFUSD, we’ve learned that 1 in 26 children in our public schools are homeless or marginally housed students.

We also know through our work with UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospitals that if children do not have the appropriate healthcare and education opportunities by age 5, they will remain at a disadvantage for the rest of their lives. UCSF’s California Preterm Birth Initiative, which we launched in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently found that a child’s socioeconomic status at birth can be a life-changing factor—it is three times more likely for a mother to give birth to a preterm baby if she lives in the low-income Bayview neighborhood of San Francisco than in the higher-income Presidio neighborhood. These are the issues that motivate us to fund high-impact projects that help advance the health and education of our nation’s children.

By joining the Giving Pledge, we reaffirm our commitment to the health and education of our children, pledging to dedicate the majority of our wealth to philanthropy. Over the last six years, we’ve been thrilled to see the impact of the Giving Pledge through the leadership of Bill & Melinda Gates. The pledge has encouraged a rise in personal philanthropic leadership in the United States, and by joining, we hope to continue to encourage others to create an impact in the communities where they live and work.

Marc & Lynne Benioff