My pledge to Warren Buffett and Bill Gates:

Being a first generation American has many rewards. Among them is having the opportunity to succeed in this free country, and then succeeding enough to have the privilege of knowing that “success unshared is failure.”

My mother raised my brother and I in a European immigrant community in downtown Los Angeles. From the time I was two years old, it was just the three of us. We didn’t have very much, not even a TV; however, we always felt we had enough.

One Christmas, when I was six years old, my mother took us to see the holiday displays in the big department stores downtown. It was a big treat for us. We saw puppets that moved and trains that whistled... It was really special and added to the Christmas spirit.

That same year, my mother gave my brother and I a dime. She told the both of us to hold it together and place it inside the bucket near a man who was ringing a bell. We did, and then we asked my mother why we gave him the dime (at the time, a dime could buy you three candy bars or two soda pops). My mother’s reply was, “This is the Salvation Army that helps people who really are in need. Remember boys, no matter how much you have; there is always someone who is more in need than you. Always try to give, even if it is just a little.” Needless to say, that stuck with me in my adult life.

Now my family and I have the privilege to help people and make the world a better place to live. This opportunity will not be passed up. Living is giving. I will not deprive my family of knowing how good it feels to help those in need with some of the basics we already have...food, shelter, care and a promising future.

Whether it is feeding thousands of orphans in third world countries, saving whales, helping the homeless find employment, protecting our waterways, rescuing young girls from prostitution, teaching and supplying families in Appalachia with equipment to grow their own vegetables, or any other act of giving...giving back is a practice and joy I want my family to continue.

I plan to help the world now and in the future—through my trust and my family—with half (if not more) of what I have been blessed with today.

Peace, love & happiness,

John Paul DeJoria

Co-Founder, Paul Mitchell Hair Care
Co-Founder, Patron Tequila & Spirits Company
Co-Founder, John Paul Pet
Co-Founder, ROK Mobile