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Cousteau pushes Wall Street to a higher calling

Philippe Cousteau Jr. puts his name behind a new brand of impact investing, using sustainable stocks to finance solutions to global issues.

By Clint Williams

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Photo courtesy of CNN

They say money can't buy happiness, but it sure can solve a lot of problems.

It takes money to finance businesses in the developing world. It takes money to improve the plight of women and children in impoverished nations. Even conservation – protecting habitat and the creatures that live there – is helped by money.

Many times, more money means more solutions, not more problems.

Philippe Cousteau Jr. – the 32-year-old grandson of Jacques Yves Cousteau, the French conservationist and filmmaker who helped develop the Aqua-Lung – is confident he has developed one way to raise money to help others.



A young Philippe Cousteau with his grandfather, Jacques Yves Cousteau. (Photo: Philippe Cousteau)

"Even though Americans are the most generous people in the world, philanthropy alone is not capable of solving all the issues we face," says Cousteau, noting that charitable giving in the United States has been fairly stable at around \$300 billion for years.

So, last year Cousteau announced a partnership with AdvisorShares Investments to leverage the might of Wall Street to finance solutions of global problems by launching the Global Echo Fund on the New York Stock Exchange. The exchange traded fund (ETF) – with the ticker symbol [GIVE](#) – focuses on sustainable and impact investment opportunities.

Impact investing directs money to companies, organizations and funds with the intention to generate measurable social and environmental good – as well as a decent financial return.

Part of the ETF's management fee – 0.40 percent – goes to the [GlobalECHO Foundation](#), a charitable organization focusing on sustainability, micro-enterprise and improving the lives of women and children. The foundation last year committed to fund solar panels for the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Panzi Hospital is world-renowned for its work on reproductive health and its assistance to survivors of sexual violence. The GlobalECHO Foundation will collaborate with Suntech Power Holdings to supply the solar panels and provide the support necessary to integrate the new energy system into Panzi Hospital's facilities.

Impact investing, Cousteau says, is a way to "grow the pie" and develop new sources of funding for charitable work.

"Anyone can buy a share of GIVE," Cousteau says. "You can make money and change the world."

Cousteau is also a special correspondent for CNN International, reporting regularly on [environmental](#)



stories from around the world.

Cousteau is also the coauthor, with Cathryn Berger Kaye, of "Going Blue, A Teen Guide to Saving Our Oceans, Lakes, Rivers, & Wetlands" (Free Spirit Publishing), which was released in the summer of 2010 and has been awarded Learning Magazine's 2011 Teachers' Choice Award for the Family and a Gold Nautilus Award.

The success of that book led to the 2012 release of a book aimed at younger children.



In "Make a Splash! A Kid's Guide to Protecting Our Oceans, Lakes, Rivers, & Wetlands" (Free Spirit Publishing, \$13.99), Kaye and Cousteau explain our waters, their inhabitants, and the threats they face, while presenting stories of kids in action around the globe and practical tips for making a difference.

"I believe that young people are the only ones who have the power to truly change the world," says Cousteau. "And not just tomorrow — they have the power *today* to make a positive difference. Let's prepare our youngest generation to get started right now on protecting our water planet and set them off on an exciting, lifelong adventure."

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Inset photo of Cousteau in the Arctic courtesy of CNN.