

Short Bio:

Robert is the founder and CEO of L.A. Kitchen. He has been a leader in the food recovery/job training/social enterprise movement since 1989, when he founded the D.C. Central Kitchen, which he led for 24 years. Collectively, these businesses have used donated food to produce over 40 million meals, and helped over 1,600 men and women gain full-time employment. Robert is an award winning author (*Begging for Change*, HarperCollins), and a sought after speaker on subjects ranging from innovation, leadership, the role of nonprofits and social enterprise.

Long Bio:

Robert is the founder and president of L.A. Kitchen, which recovers locally sourced, cosmetically imperfect fruits and vegetables to fuel a culinary arts job training program for men and women coming out of foster care and older men and women returning from incarceration.

Founded in 2013, L.A. Kitchen is now located in a 20,000 sq. ft., two-level processing kitchen, located in NE Los Angeles. L.A. Kitchen operates Strong Food, a wholly owned, for-profit subsidiary that hires training program graduates and competes for food service contracts, with an emphasis on opportunities to serve healthy senior meals. L.A. Kitchen's founding partner is the AARP Foundation, which gave its first million dollar grant to help establish the model.

Robert pioneered this model during his 24-year tenure as the president of the DC Central Kitchen, the country's first "community kitchen," where food donated by hospitality businesses and farms is used to fuel its nationally recognized culinary arts job training program. Since opening in 1989, the kitchen (which is an \$12-million-a-year, self-sustaining social enterprise) has produced over 35 million meals and helped 1,500 men and women gain full-time employment. The Kitchen operates its own revenue-generating business, Fresh Start Catering, as well as the Campus Kitchens Project, which coordinates similar recycling/meal programs in over 57 colleges or high school kitchens.

In addition, Robert founded CForward, an advocacy organization that promoted the economic role that nonprofits play in every community. In Washington DC, Robert was the founding chair of both the Mayor's Commission on Nutrition, and *Street Sense*, Washington's "homeless" newspaper. He was also the co-convenor of the first Nonprofit Congress, held in Washington DC in 2006.

Currently, Robert serves on the boards of:

- Kitchens for Good (San Diego)
- Chef Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen
- #HashTagLunchBag

He also serves on the advisory boards of numerous social enterprise and food justice organizations, including Waste No Food, Food Shift and The Food Recovery Network.

Robert's book on the nonprofit sector, *Begging for Change: The Dollars and Sense of Making Nonprofits Responsive, Efficient and Rewarding for All*, was released in 2004 by HarperCollins. It received the 2005 McAdam Book Award for "Best Nonprofit Management Book" by the Alliance for Nonprofit Management. L.A. Weekly named Robert one of their 2016 People of the Year, and in 2015, he was given the Conscious Leader of the Year award by Conscious Capitalism. He was included in *The NonProfit Times'* list of the "50 Most Powerful and Influential" nonprofit leaders from 2006-2009. He was the recipient of the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington's 2007 "Lifetime Achievement" award and the 2004 James Beard Foundation "Humanitarian of the Year" award. Robert has also been named an Oprah Angel, a Washingtonian of the Year, a Point of Light, a Food Hero by Food Tank, a REAL Food Innovator by the US Healthful Food Council, and one of the Ten Most Caring People in America by the Caring Institute. He is also a 15-gallon blood donor to the American Red Cross.

Robert speaks throughout the country and internationally on the subjects of hunger, sustainability, nonprofit political engagement and social enterprise. He writes blogs and editorials to share his ideas about the nonprofit sector and the future of America.