

Chris Gardner

Inspiration for the Film, *The Pursuit of Happyness*

Chris Gardner is an entrepreneur, author, philanthropist, and single parent whose work has been recognized by many esteemed organizations.

Chris Gardner is the author of the 2006 autobiography, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* #1 best-seller that has been translated into over forty languages. Gardner is also the inspiration for the acclaimed movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* for which Will Smith, starring as Gardner, received Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and Academy Award nominations for his performance. Gardner's second best-selling book, *Start Where You Are: Life Lessons in Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*, was published in May 2009.

In the fall of 2010, Chris Gardner was named the Ambassador of Pursuit and Happyness for AARP, which has nearly 40 million members worldwide.

Always hard working and tenacious, a series of adverse circumstances in the early 1980's left Chris Gardner homeless in San Francisco and the sole guardian of his toddler son. Unwilling to give up Chris Jr. or his dreams of success, Gardner climbed the financial industry ladder from the very bottom. He worked at Dean Witter Reynolds and Bear Stearns & Co before founding the brokerage firm Gardner Rich in Chicago in 1987.

Gardner's aim, through his speaking engagements and media projects, is to help others achieve their full potential. He is a passionate philanthropist committed to organizations combating violence against women, homelessness, financial illiteracy, and providing access to medical care and treatment; issues of the utmost importance to Chris Gardner.