Dan Pallotta invented the multi-day charitable event industry with the AIDS Rides and Breast Cancer 3-Days. These events altered the landscape of options for ordinary individuals seeking to make an extraordinary difference.

Dan's work brought the practice of four-figure philanthropy within the reach of the average citizen who had never raised money for charity before in their lives. 182,000 people of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds participated in these inspiring, often grueling, long-distance events that raised $582 million in nine years - more money raised more quickly for these causes than any private event operation in history. Three million people donated to the events.

To put this in perspective, the events that Dan's company — Pallotta TeamWorks — created and produced, raised more money than the American Express Charge Against Hunger ($21 million), Pepsi Refresh ($15 million), Hands Across America ($34 million), USA for Africa ($66 million), Product (RED) ($150 million), Kiva ($100 million), and American Idol Gives Back ($175 million) combined as of 2011.

The company had approximately 400 full-time employees in 16 U.S. offices, won Brandweek's Best Cause-Related Event Award, and was the subject of a Harvard Business School case study on social enterprise. Its concepts and methods are employed today by dozens of charities in a variety of events throughout the world that raise approximately one hundred million dollars annually for important social causes. To date the industry has raised in excess of $1.5 billion for important causes in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K employing innovations Dan pioneered in the sector.

Dan also created the Out of the Darkness suicide prevention events, which brought that issue out into the open and gave its closeted constituents the courage to put the cause on the map. The event concept has netted millions for the cause.

Dan's career as the architect of these heroic journeys for humanity began as an undergraduate at Harvard in 1983 where he chaired the Hunger Action Committee and recruited 38 of his classmates to join him in bicycling 4,200 miles across America to raise money for Oxfam and to heighten awareness of the plight of the hungry.


Dan is a featured weekly contributor to the Harvard Business Review online.

Dan is the founder and Chief Humanity Officer of Advertising for Humanity, a full-service brand and
inspiration agency for the humanitarian sector. He is also founder and President of the Charity Defense Council, a new national leadership movement dedicated to transforming the way the donating public thinks about charity and change. He is a member of the board of Triangle, a center for the developmentally disabled in Massachusetts, and a member of the Invisible Children Advisory Board, and the Reason Project Advisory Board. He is a recipient of the Liberty Hill Foundation Creative Vision award, the Triangle Humanitarian of the Year award, the Albany State University International Citizen of the Year award, and the Seven Fund's Morality of Profit Essay Prize.

His iconic TED Talk has been viewed more than 2.5 million times. He is a William J. Clinton Distinguished Lecturer, and has spoken at Stanford, Wharton, Harvard Business School, Harvard's Hauser Center for Nonprofits, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Tufts University, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Council on Foundations, the Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, and the Milken Institute, among others.


Dan was also, at 21, one of the youngest people ever elected to the school board in Melrose, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. He spent his twenties writing music and playing clubs in Los Angeles. "My great claim to fame in music was having Edgar Winter record a song I wrote for a B-horror movie called 'Netherworld.'"

Dan lives in Massachusetts with his partner and their three children.