

**Christopher Gardner** is the owner and CEO of brokerage firm Gardner Rich LLC with offices in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Conquering grave challenges to become a successful entrepreneur, Gardner is an avid motivational and aspirational speaker, addressing the keys to overcoming obstacles and breaking cycles. Gardner is also a passionate philanthropist whose work has been recognized by many esteemed organizations.

Gardner is the author of the 2006 autobiography, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* #1 bestseller that has been translated into fourteen 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. The movie is the #2 all-time domestic grossing drama. Gardner’s second book, *Start Where You Are: Life Lessons in Getting From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be* will be published on May 12, 2009.

Always hard working and tenacious, a series of adverse circumstances in the early 1980’s left 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.

Chris 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, and financial illiteracy; issues of the utmost importance to Gardner.

He lives in Chicago and New York.