

Nonprofit **Motives**

Miller College of Business alumni
see big returns in helping others



by Steve Kaelble

Start a company and make big money. It's a key component of the American Dream and a goal of many in business school. But for some Miller College of Business graduates, there's a motive more compelling than profits: helping others.

That's what prompted a group that includes several Ball State business alumni to build an orphanage in Nepal. It's also what inspired a marketing graduate to venture into "cause marketing," selling wares to benefit worthy missions. And it was that sense of altruism that sparked the creativity of a business alumnus who helped launch a unique Indianapolis store that turns profits over to charity.

Making a Difference Near and Far

When Jeff Papa was studying business at Ball State in the 1990s, a three-month internship took him to Korea. "I'd done a lot of foreign travel, but that was my first experience in Asia," he recalls. The internship taught him some useful Asian business etiquette, he says, but it also turned out to be the first step down a path of service to some of Asia's least fortunate. *(continued on page 14)*

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Marketing a “Nice World”

From her days as a Ball State undergraduate, Jill Hofer knew her career would involve marketing, although she couldn't anticipate the directions it would take her. “I knew I'd be doing marketing in some capacity,” says Hofer, who earned a marketing degree from Ball State University in 1991 and, a year later, an MBA from Kent State.

Like Jeff Papa, she was drawn to community and nonprofit missions, taking marketing jobs with the Girl



Scouts in California and contracting with the state of California to prepare a report relating to HIV/AIDS. Later she moved to Tucson and took an advertising and marketing position with a company that operates three small family-fun parks, where she continues to work today.

“But I needed a little bit of a creative outlet,” Hofer says, explaining how she began making sculpted silver jewelry and glass-filled sun catchers. Her plan was to sell the items online and donate a portion of each sale to a charitable organization.

Hofer began designing items with specific charities in mind. “Each item is paired with a different not-for-profit partner,” she says. For example, the American Heart Association receives proceeds from the sale of heart-shaped sun catchers. The Humane Society of Southern Arizona benefits every time Hofer sells a sun catcher shaped like a paw. And sales of her Braille rings assist the Southern Arizona Association for the Visually Impaired.

Called A Nice World, Hofer's online business operates at a profit, but, she points out that it exists in large part to benefit its nonprofit partners. “I write them a check quarterly for 10 percent of the sale of their items,” she explains.

The concept is known as cause marketing, a strategy that links sales of a product with fundraising for a charity, project, or cause. Though A Nice World began as a hobby, Hofer's Ball State marketing background helped her turn it into a thriving business. “I'm able to trust my decisions and take well-calculated risks,” she says noting that her business degrees not only gave her confidence, but also the skills to consult with not-for-profit organizations about cause marketing. “They have helped give me credibility to give that advice.”

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Making a difference Near and Far



By day, Papa—who supplemented his 1999 master's in business economics with a law degree—is an immigration attorney with the Indianapolis firm of Barnes & Thornburg. In his spare time, he's board president of Youth Enhancement and Training Initiative, Inc. (YETI), a nonprofit organization that is building an orphanage in Nepal and whose 10-person board includes four additional Ball Staters: Zach Stock, an economics graduate; Steve Wolff, who studied political science; legal administration graduate Jim Owen; and Allison Buckner, who majored in telecommunications.

His interest in Asia sparked in part by his Ball State internship, Papa traveled to Nepal five years ago on a “volunteer tourism” mission. A Nepali nonprofit, the Rural Community Development Program (RCDP), arranged for him to spend about a month teaching English in a village there.

“In 2003, I got to thinking about starting a project like that,” he says. “We got several friends together, and we incorporated a not-for-profit [organization] in September of 2003 and started raising some money.” The goal was to build an orphanage in Nepal, one of the world's most impoverished countries.

What has evolved is a partnership between Indiana-based YETI and the organization in Nepal, the RCDP. YETI raises funds in the United States, and RCDP is in charge of

Shopping for Good Causes



Twentyfive—a trend-setting home store on the north side of Indianapolis—guarantees much more than a stylish shopping experience. Its name, in fact, reflects a promise to direct 25 percent of its net proceeds back to the community via health-care education, research, and community-outreach programs.

Recently named “Best New Home Store” by *Indianapolis Monthly* magazine, Twentyfive’s mission to serve the needs of worthy nonprofits organizations is in part the brainchild of Mike Ault, a Ball State business alumnus. Ault, who graduated in 1986 with a degree in marketing and a specialty in advertising, is director of retail operations for the Methodist Health Foundation, a nonprofit associated with Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. He directs the hospital flower and gift shops as well as Twentyfive, the foundation’s for-profit offshoot that opened last year.

“We wanted to branch into the community to

enhance our mission as far as giving back to the community,” explains Ault, who admits that the connection between a hospital foundation and a store that specializes in unique home furnishings, accessories, and gifts is not an obvious one.

Indeed, Twentyfive, which brings to Indiana unusual décor and trends from the coasts and other forward-thinking locations, is nothing like a hospital gift shop. “It’s a lifestyle store,” Ault says. “It’s very New York, very San Francisco. There’s not a place in town that has the look that we have.”

There also aren’t many opportunities to shop for these types of items while simultaneously supporting charitable causes. Among the missions Twentyfive supports are breast-cancer awareness, cardiac critical care, various child-life programs, initiatives that provide needy children with backpacks and school supplies, and the Indiana Poison Center.

The home store was established as a for-profit limited-liability corporation, rather than a nonprofit, in order to compete with other home-furnishings retailers on a level playing field, Ault explains. “We didn’t want to have the upper hand. We wanted to be fair competitively,” he says. “The only difference is that we have a philanthropic mission.”

After graduating from Ball State, Ault spent several years in traditional retailing, working as a buyer for L.S. Ayres and Lazarus. His initial link to Methodist was formed when he had surgery there in the early 1990s and then met a hospital executive at a party. That connection led to consulting work and eventually the offer of a full-time job, which suited Ault’s desire to be part of an enterprise with a mission beyond profitability.

His marketing education has clearly served him well, but he believes one of the most important things he took away from his college years was the inspiration of Boyd Kuieck, who taught marketing. “That man just energized me, and my fellow Ball State graduates say he motivated them to be their best,” Ault says. “He was like a lower-key Donald Trump, always teaching us to think ‘outside the box’ before that was a popular term.”

planning and running the orphanage. “Working with RCDP made sense because they were already established, and I knew these guys always did right by me,” Papa says.

Another reason the partnership works well is the fact that dollars raised in America go a long way in Nepal. “RCDP went to different orphanages and came back with a cost estimate that was incredibly cheap,” he says, noting that YETI expects the 40-child orphanage to cost about \$30,000 to build and about \$11,000 to \$12,000 a year to operate.

“The orphanage opened in February with 10 children,” says Papa. Ten more arrived in the fall, and another 20 are due to move in next year. The facility employs one resident teacher-caretaker, plus a widow who lives nearby. “She was unemployed and was unable to get a job,” explains Papa, noting that when a woman in Nepal loses her husband, her options are very limited.

In addition to making a home for as many as 40 orphans, the YETI project is making a difference for other residents of the village of Chitwan, as well. The group recently donated part of its property to enable the Nepali government to build a school that will serve the orphans and villagers alike. In addition, once YETI reaches its goal in Nepal, the board plans to use a minimum of 10 to 15 percent of its funds to support disadvantaged children in Indiana.



YETI board members, clockwise from upper left: Jeff Papa, Jim Owen, Zach Stock, and Allison Buckner.

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