

PROFILE:
PATRICK J.
COWLES



Featured in this month's Tub Times profile is Portland and Eugene Event Coordinator, Patrick J. Cowles.

Few people can say they care enough about disadvantaged children to start up their very own charitable organization. Patrick actively engages in charity efforts that have brought tangible results for many underprivileged children. And all this while maintaining a job at BATH FITTER! Read on to find out about an amazing person who we're proud to say is part of the BATH FITTER family.

TT: *Tell us what you do at BATH FITTER.*

PJC: My current position with BATH FITTER is Event Coordinator for the Portland and Eugene locations in Oregon. I manage a combined show staff of around 14 and complete an average of three shows a weekend (my record being five executed simultaneously).

TT: *You visited Uganda several times in order to do charity work to help orphaned children. How challenging was this for you?*

PJC: I find it a joy to help these children as much as possible. The challenge comes when I only have an allocated budget of \$100.00 for each orphanage and the needs of the children far exceed that amount. As an example, from my last endeavor over to Uganda in January, we visited 42 orphanages and an AIDS Hospital. One of those orphanages, called Recovery Ministries, was based in the slums of Jinja, a city in the eastern part of the country. This orphanage had 39 children aged between 4 and 17, living in 3 rented rooms. When the children grabbed our arms, they left dirt smudges. This orphanage's biggest need was de-worming kits, multi-vitamins, and mosquito nets. We upped the allocation to cover \$200.00 worth of requested supplies. We could have easily spent hundreds more on these children's needs.

TT: *Where does this profound desire to help underprivileged children come from?*

PJC: The first time I went abroad was in 2001 to help orphans in the Vladimir region of Russia (3 hours east of Moscow). It was a 10-day summer camp for 100 children from 10 different orphanages. My church sent a 26-member team to provide activities, drama, and crafts to these youngsters during this time. My heart fell in love with these children and I was heartbroken to know that most of these young children, by age 16, will be kicked out of the orphanage to live on the streets, join the military, or if they are smart (or lucky), to be placed in vocational schools to learn a trade such as cooking or sewing. I visited Uganda for the first time in 2002, as a videographer & teacher. The children in orphanages there also

needed so much help but I fell in love with the country, the people, and the ongoing need that the children have. I started Patrick's Children without Sponsors (PCwS) in 2004 and received the tax exempt status of a non-profit from the IRS within 3 months. My attorney said it typically takes 6-8 months to attain the 501c3 registration but somehow, my organization was blessed with early status.

TT: *Tell us about some of your accomplishments from your last Ugandan visit.*

PJC: This was my sixth trip to Uganda and we accomplished so much in the 19 days we were there. We helped 42 orphanages, visited a Children's AIDS Hospital, and started two sewing schools. We also completed preliminary research on starting a non-governmental organization (NGO) called Patrick's Children of Uganda that will help build income producing systems of operation (i.e. small businesses) in orphanages, train orphanage caretakers on these systems, and build a depot that will eventually raise and supply the key ingredients (piglets, chickens, rabbits, goats, and agricultural seeds) for those systems.

I currently co-own two unregistered businesses in Uganda that include maize and Irish potato fields, two piggery farms, and recently the profits of those projects helped purchase a refurbished refrigerator for a local mini-mart which can now sell cold soft drinks to customers. The shared profit from the sodas will be used to offset the expenses of education by one of the project managers who oversees the above projects.

TT: *You obviously care a lot about children. List a few things that remind you of your own childhood.*

PJC: As a child, I became an entrepreneur at age seven by selling fruit from my parent's backyard door-to-door in the neighborhood and surrounding areas. This continued throughout my days as a child and has helped me truly enjoy the joys of everyday life. Even now when challenges come up, I think back to me as a child and remember the neighbors who rejected my offer to sell

them fruit. It's a numbers game, the more you meet and greet prospects, the better your return will be.

TT: *Are you planning another overseas charity visit anytime soon?*

PJC: My next trip to Uganda will be on or around December 26th, 2011. This trip will entail revisiting 10 of the most disadvantaged orphanages that we helped in January, finalizing the potential purchase of land in Raiki (a district located in southern Uganda), visiting the orphanages where income systems of operation have been installed, and meeting with the executive team of Patrick's Children International to discuss the NGO's future.

Later this year (September), there are tentative plans to visit the makeshift orphanages in Haiti with my local church. It will be a week-long endeavor to help children who have been displaced and to share my heart among them.

TT: *How do you juggle your charity work with your job at BATH FITTER?*



PJC: Because my favorite hobby is helping others, especially children in Uganda, it doesn't feel like work. It is my passion to research, learn, create, and implement new ideas that may positively affect the lives of Ugandan orphans. I also enjoy working at BATH FITTER as an Event Coordinator. It is a challenging and rewarding opportunity to meet, educate, and persuade potential prospects who have bathrooms to remodel. Juggling the two just seems natural to me.

TT: *How long have you worked at BATH FITTER?*

PJC: I started working at BATH FITTER in June of 2008 as a Tradeshow Representative. I was offered the position of Event Coordinator after I showed interest in how the company installs their bath systems by shadowing a few installers during the week. It is a fun and sometimes challenging position that requires creativity, persistence, commitment, and humor.

TT: *Are you a morning person or a night owl?*

PJC: It depends. During the work week (Thursday to Monday), I have been trying to show up at the office around 7 a.m. and leave around 3 p.m. In theory, this would force me to go to bed early. Unfortunately after starting this routine, I get tired and therefore drink coffee to stay awake thus causing me to stay up late later in the evening. I still have not mastered this routine and must admit that I'm either a morning person or night owl depending on my coffee consumption.

TT: *Do you have any pets?*

PJC: My wife and I live on a so-called mini farm in SW Portland. It is a 1/3 acre in the middle of the city within a neighborhood of large lots. We have four chickens, four rabbits, two cats, two dogs, two dozen fish, and one enormously large pacman frog (the size of a softball). When we have extra eggs to spare, I challenge my staff with a contest to see who gets the most leads at specific shows. The winner usually receives eggs equal to their lead count, 1/2, or 1-dozen fresh farm eggs.

To learn more about Patrick's charity work, visit his website, www.PatricksChildren.org, where you'll find journal entries, pictures, and video.

Patrick's wife, Terrie, is pregnant with their first child and is due in late November. Between working at BATH FITTER, helping Ugandan orphanages, and having a newborn baby, we're sure his life is about to get a bit crazier! Congratulations Patrick, and good luck!

■ Kira Yager

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