

Stories from the Field

how A Child's Hope International is making a difference

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Cookies for Orphans™ Chick-fil-A® Stewardship Pays Huge Dividends for Hungry Children

Chick-fil-A® is America's favorite fast-food chain—one that generates more revenue per location than any other in the U.S.,



even though they are closed on Sundays. It also ranks #7 on Forbes' Top 25 Most Inspiring Companies.

S. Truett Cathy, Chick-fil-A® (CFA) founder, was known as one of the finest Christian entrepreneurs in American history. Cathy loved people and was a respecter of God's Word. "I was not so committed to financial success that I was willing to abandon my principles and priorities," said Cathy, whose company's Purpose Statement reads: "To glorify God by being faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A®."

These cornerstones of the chicken empire that the founder built over 60 years have paid huge dividends—dividends that go far deeper than one's pocketbook—to the heart.

When Doug Peters was doing some soul-searching over a decade ago, it wasn't CFA's popularity or multi-billion dollar worth that prompted him to apply for a franchise. It was those things that served as the basis for its success: Cathy's philosophy, his Christian values, and the impeccable integrity of the business he had built.

"I wanted my work to matter," said Peters. "I hoped for a platform for doing a greater good. My wife, Karen, and I wanted to do something together. We have complimentary skill sets, and she has great business acumen." To them, CFA seemed like the perfect match.

Peters took the helm in Springdale, OH in April 2007.

In 2009, he and Karen visited Kenya with Chick-fil-A®, where they worked with Glory Outreach Assembly, an organization that serves 500 children in eight orphanages. "Witnessing the scale of poverty there created a heightened sensitivity, awareness, and greater sense of urgency for us to do something," Peters said. Unbeknownst to them, this trip would prime them for an encounter with A Child's Hope Int'l (ACHI), a Christian non-profit in Cincinnati that serves orphans and vulnerable children.

In one defining conversation, when Doug learned from ACHI Leadership that the sale of just *one* Chocolate Chunk Cookie, then priced at \$1.19, could provide high protein meals plus gallons of purified water for *four* needy children, he became passionate about partnering with them to help feed hungry kids.



This opportunity dovetailed perfectly with Chick-fil-A®'s corporate culture to use their businesses as platforms for community involvement. *Cookies for Orphans™* (CFO) was a win-win. The funds received from every Chocolate Chunk Cookie sold on that day would help take a bite out of hunger while patrons could enjoy a great tasting treat.

In 2012, when CFO was launched, just a few Cincinnati area Chick-fil-A® franchisees joined in the effort, which collectively raised \$5,000. Blessed by the outpouring of community support, Peters cast the vision to a wider audience in the region and has been delighted to see so many operators catch the wave. Over the years, those few shops have incredibly multiplied to 26—operating in three states!

Chocolate Chunk Cookies are a hot item on Chick-fil-A®'s menu, but on this one day a year, they fly out the door at participating restaurants. In 2017, the sale of 20,884 cookies generated over \$23,000 in revenues that provided meals and clean water for 80,000 children!



Cookies for Orphans™ Day, typically the last Wednesday of January, requires more supplies and additional kitchen help and staff to manage the exponential increase of walk-in customers and phone orders. Some patrons also choose to

make on-line donations through A Child's Hope Int'l, who places and picks up cookie orders, then delivers them to children at various institutions, homes, and hospitals. It has even become customary for some organizations and churches to buy large quantities to bless their employees or public servants. There is no doubt *Cookies for Orphans™* is becoming more endearing each year.

Due to the overwhelming response to this fundraiser, a tremendous amount of time, communication, and organization are required to coordinate the event. Even so, franchisees eagerly participate out of their love for children and obedience to God's Word to care for the orphan. "God has delighted in our humble offerings," said Peters, "and He has multiplied the 'mites' we did not withhold."

ACHI is accredited and credentialed with good stewardship practices. They choose to advertise minimally so the lion's share of their funds (90% in 2017) can be used to serve orphans. As such, one of the benefits of partnering with Chick-fil-A® is the aggressive marketing they do for the campaign. "Earned media is huge," said Peters, whose guests fervently support the non-profit, "so we're happy to use our brand to amplify their mission and build even greater awareness, so more children can be served."

For some operators, *Cookies for Orphans™* is personal. Daryl Nelson runs the Bridgewater Falls franchise in Greater Cincinnati. He and his wife, Christy, have two biological and four adopted children, plus they have fostered 15 others; so when Nelson heard about the program, he was all in. "CFO not only raises money for the orphaned, but it raises awareness," he said. "Families lives are changed because their eyes are open to a forgotten people. They can no longer walk around blind to the pain that exists in these children."

Doug and Karen, who also sponsor three children in Africa, are grateful for the opportunity CFA has afforded them to plant and bloom in their community. "I strive to add value to individuals within my sphere of influence by being a faithful steward of all God has entrusted to me," he said.

Out of gratitude for how the Lord has blessed them, Doug named his Limited Liability Corporation *DJP Enterprise and Zedahkah, Ltd.*. Zedahkah is Hebrew for charity. It

means: "Clarity in the spirit of justice and uprightness. Wealth is a loan from God. Share God's bounties with the poor." This is the couple's mantra.



Peters, who sits on ACHI's Board of Directors, ardently shared, "A Child's Hope Int'l is fueled with passion, vision, and enthusiasm. It is a well-respected organization that has made an indelible mark on countless people with their commitment to Christian principles. I wanted to tap into that." It is apparent that Doug has, and has himself become a catalyst for passing these things on to others.

There are 143,000,000 orphans of the world. Every day 30,000 children die from hunger and 4,500 perish from drinking contaminated water. In six years, cookie sales from the *Cookies for Orphans™* program have translated into over 400,000 high protein meals, plus clean drinking



water and life-giving hope to children in desperate need. These funds have also helped provide fresh water wells, medical care for orphans, and financial grants to assist families with adoption expenses.

With 26 Chick-fil-A®'s now on-board and more in the wings, Peters' spark has ignited a wildfire that is sure to keep spreading. True to CFA's internal branding statement, "to inspire people to take good care of each other," his hope is to keep the *Cookies for Orphans™* vision going strong. "There is still a world of good to do together, starting in our own back yard," proclaims Peters.

To learn how you or your organization can partner with A Child's Hope Int'l to help take a bite out of hunger, contact us at the number below or visit our website.



As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the mission of A Child's Hope Int'l is to motivate and mobilize the church and community to care for orphans and vulnerable children through adoption, foster care, orphan care, and humanitarian relief. As advocates for the least of these, our programs reach thousands of children worldwide.

We exist because the children are waiting™.

A CHILD'S HOPE INT'L

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