

# Direct Selling *News*

Serving the Direct Selling and Network Marketing Executive

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Industry with Heart

National Companies



## PAYING IT FORWARD

by Cheri Gann

There are many ways to celebrate success, but the giving back to others is among the most rewarding. National Companies finds itself in this fortunate position and wholly embraces the pleasure of giving support to those in need. The company has its heart set on the missions of two charities of choice: the Great Lakes Burn Camp, in Jackson, Mich., and Oklahoma City-based Feed The Children.

### Great Lakes Burn Camp

The decision to support an organization such as the Great Lakes Burn Camp (GLBC) is personal for National Companies. Burned at the age of 2, National Companies President Angela Loehr Chrysler embodies the self-esteem and confidence that the camp hopes to instill in children who are burn survivors.

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"The Great Lakes Burn Camp holds a special place in my family's heart," Loehr Chrysler says. "My burn happened at a very young age while playing with a lighter. Knowing I would need to be open and confident about myself as I grew up, my parents always made me feel beautiful and special regardless of my scars, the same message the camp imparts to the kids who attend it."

The camp is a unique place for kids ages 7 to 17 to meet, heal, grow and support one another as burn survivors. They share their stories and bond with other kids in a comfortable, relaxed environment, experiencing unconditional love and acceptance. Since 2001, National Companies has raised more than \$473,000 for the camp.

Loehr Chrysler heard about the GLBC through one of National Companies' independent marketing directors (IMDs), Chris Klavon, a fellow burn survivor and one of the GLBC's founders. He approached Chrysler's mother, Mary Lou Loehr, at a National Companies' event in September 2000. "His burn is the result of a car accident," Loehr Chrysler says. "As he spoke about what the burn camp did for him and the children there, my parents were so touched and inspired. After they told me about the camp, I wanted to be involved."

Loehr Chrysler volunteered at the camp in 2002 and 2003 and plans to volunteer again. "Volunteering there will always be a great memory for me," she says. "I didn't realize sharing my story with other burn survivors would be so healing."

She recalls one young girl, about 12 years old, who was reluctant to wear shorts even in the sultry August heat due to burns on her thighs. "She was so beautiful, yet so timid and insecure about showing her legs," Loehr Chrysler says. "I felt really fortunate that my parents handled my burn the way they did when I was growing up."

As far as Loehr Chrysler is concerned, the credit for her confidence goes to her parents, Dick and Mary Lou, for never trying to hide her scars and encouraging her to always be proud of her appearance. "At camp, the on-site psychiatrist took me aside to say how wonderful it was for the other young ladies to see me boldly wearing a tank top and letting my scars show," she says. "Truthfully, I wore it because it was hot outside. It never occurred to me that I was doing anything special."

Loehr Chrysler says she would have loved attending a camp like GLBC when she was growing up and is proud to support the organization. "They teach the important lessons I was so fortunate to learn from my family at home—'love yourself, be confident, choose to be positive, and know you're beautiful inside and out no matter what you look like.'"

## Feed The Children

The destruction wrought by 2005's devastating hurricanes prompted National Companies to add a second charity of choice: Feed The Children, a faith-based, nonprofit organization that provides aid and assistance to children and families in need in the United States and around the world.

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"After the storms hit last year, we had so many IMDs asking what they could do to help," Loehr Chrysler says. "Everyone wanted to do something for the relief effort." Her father and National Companies founder, Dick Loehr, was already supporting the organization privately, so adding it was a natural fit.

Feed The Children is appreciative of National Companies as a donor, too. Since September 2005, National Companies has raised more than \$256,000 for the charity. "I get a personal phone call after every check we send them," Loehr Chrysler says. "It means so much coming from a big organization like Feed The Children. Taking the time to call us really helps us feel like we're helping them make a difference."

"The folks in the sales field love supporting these organizations and feel it is the right decision," she says. "It has allowed our people to feel they're making a difference in the lives of children and families."

As its charities of choice, these organizations receive a lot of publicity from National Companies. During company conference calls, Loehr Chrysler regularly reports the amount of money raised for them, and the company provides—and publicizes—donation opportunities at its national and regional events and on its Web site.

## Grassroots Giving

Someone once said charity begins at home, and National Companies sets a good example by giving back to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where it is based.

One fortunate recipient of its support is the Broward County Chapter of the Boys & Girls Club, another organization to which Dick Loehr contributes by participating for the last four years in its Toy Run, the largest motorcycle toy drive in the nation. Boys & Girls Clubs of America is a place for young people ages 7 to 17 to improve their lives by building self-esteem and developing values and skills. As one of the largest youth-service agencies in the United States, it has a membership of more than 4 million boys and girls.

Last year, Angela Loehr Chrysler joined the board of the Deerfield Beach Boys & Girls Club and has since taught several Junior Achievement courses, participated in fund-raising

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committees and attended many local events for the club. Also, Angela, Dick and Mary Lou Loehr are part of the exclusive Cattlemen Club that helps raise money for the children of the Boys & Girls Club.

Loehr Chrysler recently taught a class about using credit cards responsibly, borrowing money and understanding credit. "It's targeted toward the older kids," she says. "This is one of several classes that are college-preparatory in nature. I'm looking forward to more interaction with the kids, and I hope to teach them a little bit of what I've learned.

"This organization does a lot for the South Florida community," she says. "The crime rate has decreased, and more kids are graduating from high school today."

Three years ago, National Companies' corporate staff and sales team members participated in the Walk for the Animals fundraiser for the Humane Society of Broward County. "This is the third year our staff has participated in the Humane Society Walk for the Animals, and in March 2007 we won!" Loehr Chrysler says. "We were the top fund-raising pack, raising \$35,422. And we raised another \$13,403 from some of the regional events with our sales field in early 2007. Our staff and our reps helped us raise the money and did a great job. We make the fund raising into an office contest. Whoever raises the most money gets a day off, second place gets a half-day off and third place gets two hours off."

For the last two years, the corporate staff adopted a local childcare center through a community-based help group, Family Central. "The entire office looks forward to creating a fun craft and giving presents to children in need," Loehr Chrysler says. "This past year we had 50 kids at our office, we bought them McDonald's Happy Meals and they each received two gifts from under the Christmas tree. I dressed up as an elf, one of our VPs, Lynda Davis, was Mrs. Claus and one of our staff, Demetrius Jones, was Santa. We hope to make this a tradition."

In April, National Companies announced its sponsorship of Help1Up, the furniture industry's national consumer-awareness campaign encouraging Americans to donate gently used furniture to their local furniture banks. Each year these banks distribute more than 1 million pieces of donated furniture to victims of natural disasters and domestic violence, underprivileged families and others requiring emergency assistance. There are more than 30 furniture banks across the United States, and National Companies hopes to add more furniture banks through its new division, Team National Factory Direct, which offers home furnishings at wholesale prices.

National Companies also donates to charity 100 percent of the revenue it receives for one of its products, Dick Loehr's Seasoning Salt. "We absorb the production costs and pass on the revenue to our charities of choice," says Dick Loehr, Chairman and CEO. "We sell a lot of bottles of this stuff. And the nice thing about it is it's helping some people and animals around the country. And helping people is what it is all about."

Loehr Chrysler says Dick's attitude of gratitude is reflected even in the profit sharing bonuses he gives to National Companies' employees. "Dick always tries to give a little extra money so our employees can give to their charities of choice," she says. "We are fortunate that we've grown enough that our staff gets bonuses. I think that's why we continue to be more involved in the community projects like our independent marketing directors, who have the funds to do it and want to share—so our success is passed on to those who need it most." 🌐