

# XanGo Goodness: Changing the World, One Life at a Time

Direct Selling News - March 2009

By Jennifer Workman Pitcock



At XanGo, charitable giving is built into the company's DNA, making it a core component of the business philosophy. "From the very beginning, we made a decision to give back," says Gordon Morton, XanGo Founder and Board Member. "We use our global resources to make a difference in the world. We help children and families in need."

XanGo's philanthropic profile attests to this commitment. Though little more than 6 years old, XanGo supports an astounding variety of charitable initiatives. Each year, XanGo pours millions of dollars into worthy causes. From building a village in Thailand after the tsunami in 2004 to partnering with Operation Smile in Mexico, XanGo is making a difference across the globe.

## XanGo Goodness

"Before we even made our first profit, XanGo was already giving back," says Bob Freeze, Vice President of Public Relations. "Initially, we partnered with a charity called Operation Kids that is headquartered here in Utah. It's an umbrella charity focusing on children, and it's largely domestic."

XanGo continues its commitment to Operation Kids. Today, it's one of several charitable organizations XanGo partners with, both in the United States and abroad. As the company has grown internationally, so has XanGo's giving.

"We've followed kind of a template of partnering with children's charities in markets that we serve," Bob says. "XanGo's in 23 countries right now, and we're doing things all over the globe."

Partnering with other charities instead of creating their own allows XanGo to give based on needs that resonate in each market. The company created XanGo Goodness to better accommodate this purpose. XanGo Goodness strives to raise the social consciousness and mobilize XanGo's global resources to serve, support and improve communities in need. "Through XanGo Goodness, we funnel profits to charities that are efficient in use of their funds and serve basic needs like food, safety, medical care and so forth," Bob says.

And it's not just about the money. "Our XanGo Goodness movement involves more than just donations. It mobilizes our employees, distributors and partners to roll up their sleeves and get involved, both with corporate initiatives and in their own way," Gordon says.

One way the company encourages distributor involvement is through the XanGo Goodness Meal Pack, a product that changes lives. Introduced in 2007, this meal pack is a first step for those suffering from starvation. "It's a dry, powdered mixture for the severely malnourished," Bob says. "The mixture includes vitamins and minerals that people who haven't eaten for quite some time can assimilate."

The product allows distributors to make a difference by feeding those who are starving. "They can buy the product, and we ship it to places in need," Bob says. "Last year, in the aftermath of the disaster in Myanmar, we were one of only three charities that were able to get in and help."

## Sustainable Projects



"One of the things we really believe in is courting sustainable projects," Bob says, "especially when you go into Third World areas where so many well-meaning contributors give money and then leave."

"An example of a sustainable project where we took a holistic approach is the village we helped to rebuild in Thailand after the tsunami in 2004," Bob continues. "I have to credit Gordon here. XanGo Goodness is his brainchild. He's really led the charge with our charitable giving."

In 2005, Gordon Morton made a trip to Thailand to find a project that could make a tangible difference. He found a fishing village a few hours north of Phuket that had been completely devastated by the tsunami. Because these villagers were essentially squatters on government property, the government wasn't really paying attention to them. They had no official status. "Gordon found a German foundation that was working with this village," Bob says. "It was called Farang Jai Dee (Foreigners with a Heart)."

After developing a plan to rebuild, finding land and buying it, the reconstruction process began. In addition to creating new homes, XanGo and their partner charity built a school for the village's children for the first time. They taught the villagers to build fishing boats that they could sell, as well as model ships they could sell to tourists in Phuket.

"XanGo really wanted to help villagers regain their sense of home, their sense of empowerment after the devastation they endured," Gordon says. "These special education programs give villagers and their families ownership in something valuable, which gives them a strong sense of pride after all they had known was swept away by the tsunami."

"It's satisfying to see," Bob says. "You can't help everybody, but our philosophy is that's not an excuse. So go make a difference."

Nor does XanGo ignore issues here in the United States. About a year after Hurricane Katrina, XanGo began working with Operation Kids and Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints to help rebuild community centers, kids' sports fields and a number of other projects. "I was able to be at that kickoff for one of the facilities with Drew, his wife and Operation Kids," Bob says. "We were dedicating the first outdoor sports facility. Community members were saying, 'Thank you for not forgetting. This is going to help us have hope for the future.' I'm proud that XanGo has been one of the biggest contributors to that initiative."

## **Giving Their Time**

As the title sponsors of the Children's Wish Foundation in Canada this past year, XanGo raised about \$1.5 million through sponsorships and events. XanGo was particularly happy to see how many distributors volunteered, marched and supported.

XanGo employees are encouraged to give back as well. Some go on the international humanitarian missions, but they also participate in local initiatives. "We're partners with Best Buddies, a mentoring program for mentally challenged teens," Bob says. "Every year we have Best Buddy days where we have 50 or 60 kids come in and shadow XanGo employees."

To encourage its employees to give back to their community, XanGo offers them two hours of paid time off a month. "They can volunteer in the community for something we're involved in or something else they feel strongly about," Bob explains. "We empower employees to get involved. That's really the whole idea of the XanGo business. We want to ignite and mobilize distributors, employees and others to catch the vision of becoming involved and making a difference."

Bob, like XanGo's founders and many of its employees and distributors, has participated in the work that XanGo does. "In Mexico, our second-largest market, we partner with Operation Smile," he says. "Last year, we funded two missions in Mexico to operate on children with cleft lips and palates. We were able to mobilize distributors in Mexico to come and volunteer, manning each 10-day mission."

Through the missions, XanGo was able to change the lives of about 200 children. Bob saw firsthand how the company and its distributors are making a difference. "The day that I arrived, one of our distributors, a dentist south of Mexico City, brought two children," he says. "One was a 10-month-old boy and the other a 15-year-old girl who needed surgery. The boy had a cleft lip. I got to carry this little boy to surgery and watch him be made whole again, and it was really neat to see. I went to our founders and said, 'This is a child you'll probably never meet but whose life you changed forever through your generosity in funding this mission.'"

Joe Morton, XanGo Founder and Board Member, also participated in the Operation Smile missions, and was struck by the way each of these relatively minor surgeries changed lives. "It's powerful and heartwarming to see children leave the clinic after just a couple of days with a new smile and an avenue of opportunity for success in

life—something that had been thought impossible just two days before,” Joe says. “When they enter the clinic, some of these children have masks covering their faces.” At first, he thought that maybe they were wearing masks so they wouldn’t catch anything at the clinic. Joe soon realized that the reason was much more sinister—they felt shame because of their cleft lips and palates. These deformities made them outcasts in their society.

“A surgery of less than an hour in duration removes the masks and the scars, both physical and emotional,” Joe says. “The surgery allows a little life a better chance to realize its potential. That’s what we’re all about at XanGo. Through our business and what we offer, we can literally change lives and, perhaps, alter the course of history in some small way.”