

Point Beach's Jimmy Sherlock draws on 'entrepreneurial spirit' in his charity work

By Erica Florentine

Jimmy Sherlock started it all with \$100 in his pocket and a dream in his soul.

Now 51 years old and residing on Curtis Avenue in Point Pleasant Beach with his large family, Mr. Sherlock can say he has done what he set out to do — make that dream a reality. Not only does Mr. Sherlock radiate success, he also has managed to share his wealth of knowledge and passion, to give back to any and everyone he encounters.

But, before considering Mr. Sherlock's present, it is important to see how it all came to be.

The story begins decades ago, in Park Ridge, where a young boy was growing up far more quickly than those around him

"By eighth grade, I was 6-2 and 195 pounds," Mr. Sherlock recalled, of his days attending parochial school in North Jersey.

Mr. Sherlock was grown beyond his years, but struggled with dyslexia, which often left him the target of many a playground taunt.

"I would try to read and comprehend, but I just couldn't do it," Mr. Sherlock remembered. "And the nuns — they took a liking to me. They were around, but they also let me fend for myself."

The young lad did not let the childish teasing bring him down, however, and found alternative ways to keep himself happy. He signed up as a patrol boy and spent much of his free time hanging out at his local church.

His days spent with God and the kindness he witnessed from his school's nuns were the glue that held together the first pieces of Mr. Sherlock's tale.

At age 24, with \$100 to his name, Mr. Sherlock took a business leap that earned him a fortune. He began a business that handled auto insurance. Based out of South Plainfield, that company grew and grew — and grew some more — until its net worth was valued at \$26 million.

In 1982, Mr. Sherlock made yet another leap of faith, when he became familiar with gap insurance and again incorporated this into his business empire.

"I was making millions every year at that point," Mr. Sherlock said.

With money, however, does not always come true happiness.

Photos

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Point Pleasant Beach's Jimmy Sherlock has brought happiness to people all over the globe, using his success in the business world to directly benefit the less fortunate. *Photo by SUEANNE GOSS, STAR NEWS GROUP*

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Mr. Sherlock said his days were becoming more and more wild, and he ultimately prayed to God to help him gain control of the situation he found himself in.

His prayers were answered.

“I ended up selling 51 percent of my company,” Mr. Sherlock said.

Following the sale, the company sank in a downward spiral, as did Mr. Sherlock’s bank account.

“I was spending more than I was making,” he said.

“When I saw that I was out of control, I went to the church and asked if I could teach CCD,” Mr. Sherlock said, adding that he attempted to regain that relationship he had always known with the Lord.

“Even as a child, I was close with God — God was my buddy,” Mr. Sherlock said.

Now, here he was, without a cent to his name, and attempting to gaining clarity through teaching.

Slowly, he noted, the friends he had made as a rich man were becoming few and far between. It was time to refocus, yet again.

“I always wanted to work with the homeless,” Mr. Sherlock said, leading up to his next move.

Mr. Sherlock went out to California and began seeking out these less fortunate individuals, giving them motivation to improve their lives.

“I’d rebuild their entrepreneurial spirit, and I’d teach these people that you are the way you think and feel,” Mr. Sherlock said. “It’s about giving them that support.”

And that is just what Mr. Sherlock did. He said he would travel to homeless shelters to give the residents inspirational talks.

“I would get them all excited,” Mr. Sherlock said, adding that he always made it a point to remember that “if God’s with you, who will be against you?”

In 1993, Mr. Sherlock planned a prayer service and gathering of the homeless to take place at Wrigley Estate, in Pasadena, and though the event ended up falling through, the experience of meeting homeless people and walking in their shoes set him off on his next path in the road to success.

It was back to New Jersey then, where Mr. Sherlock moved back into his parents’ home – from a mansion back to his roots. With his fortune now depleted, he went back to work, this time focusing on a job at a local car dealership.

As things progressed, the entrepreneur inside of him was yearning to be let out. He began another business, 1-800-Bar-None, which “specializes in helping people get car loans, even with bad credit, using an online auto loan credit application.”

Soon, he found himself in love with a lovely lady, Patty, who he encountered one night at Clark’s Landing, in Point Pleasant. Within two months, the couple was wed.

At the time, Mrs. Sherlock resided in Point Pleasant Beach, in the home she and her husband now share.

Mr. Sherlock’s love life was a success, and now his work life was becoming a success again as well.

Following 1-800-Bar-None, Mr. Sherlock expanded his business ventures further.

Nowadays, Mr. Sherlock operates nine different companies, from technology firms to car dealerships, just to name a couple.

A full list of Mr. Sherlock's companies is posted on his Web site, www.reborninternational.com.

"If you have a good idea, go for it," Mr. Sherlock said, of the secret to his success in business.

It seemed as though everything was going just how God planned it. Mr. Sherlock, however, was sure not to forget his commitment to giving back to those who are less fortunate, and has continued to do all he can to better communities from the local area to places around the globe.

After visiting the United Nations to give an inspirational speech on the "entrepreneurial spirit," Mr. Sherlock came in contact with Gloria Starr Kins, the former editor of the Saturday Evening Post and a member of the United Nations Correspondents Association.

"She's an icon," Mr. Sherlock said. "She made me international."

On March 18, 2009 Mr. Sherlock, who is the founder of Reborn International, spoke at the Info Poverty Conference at the United Nations in New York.

Mr. Sherlock said, through his speeches, he preaches the concept of using the "entrepreneurial spirit" to achieve prosperity.

He returned to the UN to deliver a similar speech this March, as well.

After his 2009 UN address, Mr. Sherlock was offered the opportunity to visit any two places in the world that he would like, and he opted for Mali, Africa and Haiti.

Haiti was chosen prior to this year's earthquake, and has since continued to be a place near and dear to Mr. Sherlock's heart.

In each of these countries, he has since given of his time, money and effort to help the native people.

Mr. Sherlock and his colleagues have raised funds to build bridges, maternity clinics and hospitals. They have spent days and nights among the locals, getting to know and care for them.

His experiences have found him traveling back and forth to the countries again and again. Recently, he visited a Haitian hospital, Jewish Renaissance Center, where he administered conducted over 1,000 eye examinations on patients.

In total, over 100,000 people are been treated at the facility for free, Mr. Sherlock noted.

He has brought health and new life to people in the countries he visits. Currently, Mr. Sherlock is working alongside the prime minister of Jamaica to get funding for a water purifying plant to be built in Haiti that would extract and purify water from soil.

According to Mr. Sherlock, the entire production of extracting and bottling water would happen at the proposed facility — bringing hundreds of jobs to those in need.

"It's to help rebirth Haiti," Mr. Sherlock ,said of his recent efforts.

Mr. Sherlock has also played a role in working to protect maternal mortality through Active Intervention for Mothers [AIM].

More information on the movement can be found at aimformaternity.org.

"I met Jim on a recent trip to Haiti," said Charles Willard, a friend of Mr. Sherlock's who owns a building company in North Carolina. "He was walking around the parking lot with no shoes on because he had given his shoes to a Haitian."

Mr. Willard's company has been active in building houses in Haiti, a task Mr. Sherlock has taken part in.

“He is just one of the most charismatic businessmen,” Mr. Willard said. “He has helped me beyond belief.

“He just has a burning desire to help people,” Mr. Willard continued. “What a testament that is as a Christian.”

Alan Goldsmith, another of Mr. Sherlock’s friends, who is a doctor, first met him at the United Nations where they discussed ways of treating Haitians in need.

“Jimmy has helped me a tremendous amount,” Mr. Goldsmith said, “through treating patients and through raising funds.”

Mr. Goldsmith said he and Mr. Sherlock worked together to help generate jobs in Haiti as well, as to assist in directing hospitals there.

They have also worked together to raise money for “safe havens” for children in Haiti. According to Mr. Goldsmith, the two men spent time living amongst the Haitians, sleeping in tents in the earthquake-ravaged Caribbean nation.

Jean Charles, who is currently running for president of Haiti, is a friend of Mr. Sherlock’s, as well.

“Jimmy has this sense of humor and this wit, and wherever he goes, he looks like a movie star,” Mr. Charles said.

“He loves everybody,” Mr. Charles said, of his friend’s passion. “And he really loves the Haitian people.”

“He’s influential to people all over the world,” Mr. Charles added.

For his good deeds, Mr. Sherlock is has received some prestigious awards, including the 2010 World Harmony Run’s Torch Bearer Award, which was presented to him at the United Nations in New York.

Standing by him through it all have been his proud family of eight children, including Ryan, 30, Darren, 28, Briann, 26, Luke, 25, Danielle, 23, Dylan, 18, Jimmy Jr., 10, and eight-year-old Jason, who his father lovingly refers to as “the caboose.”

“I’m blessed,” Mr. Sherlock said. “God always gives me these great opportunities. I’m using this time to empower myself, and also to empower other people.

“It’s a miracle,” Mr. Sherlock added. “The people that I’ve gotten to know, it’s just incredible.”

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