

# TRENDSETTERS

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## CHANGING LIVES

*Chad Barnett aims to help children both here and abroad*

BY ALISON BAILIN BATZ  
PHOTOS BY CARL SCHULTZ

For many men, the prospect of being knee-deep in hundreds of kids is daunting. But for father-of-three Chad Barnett—a co-founder of the Arizona Children's Business Fair and board member of Partners in Action who recently launched a partnership with Special Olympics Arizona—if there is a chance to help a child, he is in.

"Of all things, I have sandwiches to thank for a lot of the good I am able to do these days," laughs Barnett—and he is only half-joking.

In 1993, at just 19, he worked in operation management for TCBY. Newly married, he and his wife, Jeana, moved from Texas to Arkansas to Indiana, and finally to Arizona, with the organization.

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In 2000, Barnett met Rick Ueable, who owned about a dozen Subway franchisees in Arizona. He and his partner were looking for someone to assist in operations management, and Barnett—who had fallen in love with the Valley—jumped at the opportunity.

“Over the past 15 years, we’ve worked together to expand the business to 43 Subway locations and counting,” says Barnett, who today serves as president of Foods 2000, as well as chair of the Subway Franchisee Advertising Fund Trust (SFAFT), which oversees marketing and advertising for the Subway brand statewide.

## **Partners in Action**

“In 2005, Rick started to talk to me about his project of passion, Partners in Action,” says Barnett. “The nonprofit is focused on developing and funding orphanages, soup kitchens and women’s shelters in more than 20 under-developed countries worldwide.”

At the time, Ueable was visiting Africa twice a year to lend a hand, as well as to ensure that all programs and projects were moving along appropriately. Barnett eventually joined Ueable in East Africa, which included stops to provide aid to women and children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

“My life changed in an instant,” says Barnett, who just completed his 10th year of service to the organization and currently oversees the operations of one of Partners’ flagship orphanages in Uganda. “While I am certainly proud of the help we provide, I would be lying if I didn’t say that I needed Africa and those great kids more than they need me by a long shot.”

## **Subway Kids & Sports of Arizona**

Eager to also help kids right here in Arizona, Barnett also began volunteering with Subway Kids & Sports of Arizona in the mid-2000s. The organization has been focused on providing sports equipment, uniforms, registration fees, and access to major sporting events for kids who might not otherwise be able to participate.

“We raise money in order to provide grants to local kids’ sports organizations each year. But in addition, we work with partners on a program called Cycle for Success, which goes into schools and



rewards children with new bikes, helmets, locks, and a Subway-catered party for doing random acts of kindness that might otherwise go unnoticed,” Barnett explains.

## **AZ Children’s Business Fair**

Speaking of first-ever events, Barnett just managed to pull one off for—you guessed it—kids!

“I belong to a men’s group of like-minded entrepreneurs, the Camelback Society. While we all had causes we personally supported, we wanted to do something collectively to inspire and impact local kids,” Barnett explains. “We’d heard of Acton Children’s Business Fair in Austin, which is the largest entrepreneurship event for kids in North America, and thought Phoenix would be a perfect place for a similar program.”

So, the entrepreneurs got to work on the first-ever AZ Children’s Business Fair. The one-day event, which took place at the Arizona Center on March 28, gave kids the opportunity to spread their entrepreneurial wings by creating a product or service and eventually launching the business at the fair.

“Through an application process, we worked with kids on product ideas, development, and even strategies to pitch their product to customers,” says Barnett, noting that his two daughters even joined

in with their own business ventures.

“Our goal was to sign up 50 kids. We ended up with more than 150 kids, who sold products at 100 booths!”

## **Special Olympics Arizona**

So, Barnett was ready for a breather, right? Wrong.

In fact, since taking on the role of chairman of SFAFT in March, Barnett and Subway have put their heads together on a brand-wide strategy to help some of Arizona’s most talented and special children—the athletes of Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ).

“Our goal is to raise at least \$50,000 for SOAZ. Through the partnership, the more than 460 Subway restaurants in Arizona will donate a portion of proceeds from weekend sales now through Aug. 30 to the organization,” says Barnett. “We aren’t asking for donations at the counter. We aren’t encouraging customers to visit a website and make a pledge. We are simply inviting them to visit any of our locations in Arizona on a Saturday or Sunday for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Every visit will make a difference.”

Subway also signed on to take an active role in SOAZ’s spring and summer events through food and raffle donations, as well as hands-on volunteering opportunities.