



Celebrating Homegrown Success Stories

JENI'S SPLENDID ICE CREAMS AND e-CYCLE SHARE A PASSION FOR GIVING BACK

Columbus' **SMART+OPEN** community is home to many businesses who believe strongly in investing in the places and people that have helped fuel their success. Established in 2005, the Foundation's *Center for Corporate Philanthropy* is proud to help local companies build relationships; respond to community needs; and sustain, strengthen, and improve the quality of life in our community through strategic corporate giving programs.



Pictured (l-r) John Lowe, Jeni Britton Bauer

AFTER JENI BRITTON BAUER closed her first venture, Scream Ice Cream, in the North Market, it wasn't uncommon for people to pick up her tab when they'd see her out and about. The collective community so believed in her product they wanted to see her save her pennies—and get back in the game.

"When I was first dating Charly and we would go out and someone would pick up our drinks after I closed the first business—that was amazing," Jeni said. "There were a lot of lessons I learned after the first business. We changed when we opened Jeni's. I put all my focus on the ice cream and customers and their experience."

This community spirit is a big reason Jeni's has expanded from the initial shop in the North Market to 12 stores, and a growing online business. Jeni traces the root of the company's philanthropic spirit to the camaraderie she felt in her early days at the North Market. "I think being a part of the community is always important," she said.



Jeni's CEO John Lowe agrees. "I think there's something special about Columbus—a sense of collaboration that doesn't exist in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Indianapolis. This is a special time in Columbus and I think we enjoy the benefit of that, sometimes very directly and sometimes just

by being fortunate to live in a place that is growing and improving. There is a sense of everybody working together for a common improvement of the community."

In 2012, the company gave more than 30 percent of its post-tax proceeds to charity. From school functions and silent auctions to community events, the company supports small groups and organizations with product and gift certificates.

Jeni's and its 300 employees are deeply committed to two things: making the best ice creams possible, and making a difference in the place that surrounds them.

In January, the company established the *Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams Trust* of The Columbus Foundation to continue its support of nonprofit organizations that are important to it.

"You do what you can in your own community, and then that impacts the bigger world in the end," Jeni said.

AS TWO VETERAN TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVES, Chris and Tonia Irion knew they wanted to branch off and create their own company, they just didn't know exactly what it would be.



"The message that kept coming back to us was 'what are you passionate about' and 'what do you love to do?' It ultimately came down to three core passions: charitable giving, environmental stewardship, and love of

technology," explained Chris.

In 2005, they launched e-Cycle, a wireless asset recovery and recycling company. e-Cycle was the first wireless recycling company in the world to be e-steward certified, the global gold standard for environmental stewardship. e-Cycle purchases nearly 500 types of used mobile phones and tablets that can be reused and recycles all other types at no charge.

In 2011, *Inc.* magazine ranked e-Cycle the fifth fastest growing private environmental services company in the U.S., and *Forbes* ranked it #68 on its annual list of America's Most Promising Companies.

In keeping with their goal of charitable giving, the Irions help companies maximize the amount of money they raise through mobile buyback and write a check directly to the charity of the company's choice on its behalf.

"We've raised millions for our clients and their charities of choice and kept millions of devices out of landfills. Just this year alone, we'll keep roughly 4–5 million phones and accessories out of landfills," Chris said.

In January, the Irions established the *e-Cycle Foundation of The Columbus Foundation*. With its formation, clients can now donate directly to the foundation and then suggest a charity to support with all or some of the money they recoup from the old devices.

In addition, e-Cycle is internally setting aside a percentage of its profit every quarter to give back to several charities of choice



Pictured (l-r) Chris and Tonia Irion

within the company, one of which is the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The couple is very passionate about finding a cure for the disease their daughter was diagnosed with three years ago.

"In our case, we're so excited because we are able to act as a catalyst for moving others forward, both internal to our organization as well as externally in terms of our clients, for the greater good. It really allows everyone to look at entrepreneurship and giving in a different way." Tonia said.