

What Really Matters

When I first met Minneapolis, Minnesota native Dennis Doyle, he was already a successful businessman in real estate with huge holdings in the Twin Cities and beyond. Over the years Dennis had been involved in various charitable giving and was beginning his journey of building “Hope for the City,” a charity leveraging corporate surplus to elevate healthcare access in some of the most broken corners of the world.

I was immediately impressed with the innovative concept of Hope for the City. The Doyles had an extensive list of contacts in the Twin Cities and maximized on the corporate surplus from companies like Target, General Mills and others. Doyle was in the real-estate business and housed the equipment in his underutilized warehouse space for global distribution to those who needed it the most. With these key pieces in play, Hope for the City would be able to move massive amounts of food and corporate surplus for both local and global distribution with a small overhead.

As time passed, Hope for the City grew, distributing used medical and dental equipment that was being replaced with newer models, but was still functioning. Equipment like this could greatly improve the level of healthcare in places like Africa, where they have almost no access to healthcare.

Over the years, the ministry has evolved and we have written a couple of short articles about Hope for the City and the Doyles. But recently, Hope for the City (now called “MATTER”) has made such huge strides forward, I decided it was time for an update.

Recently when I was in Minnesota, I visited with Dennis and his vivacious wife Megan in their home about this important and exciting ministry. My interviews ran as two podcasts. You can hear Megan’s today. We will post Dennis’ podcast tomorrow

on the Charisma Podcast Network.

As you listen, you can hear in the passion for their ministry and it is evident their hearts are as big as the state in which they live. The Doyles had been blessed with the resources to give financially to nearly 40 non-profit organizations each year. Yet, they still felt they could do more. “We wanted to know from God what we could do to be really serious about our giving,” Dennis said.

Seeing corporate surplus as an opportunity and not as a problem, the Doyles started Hope for the City in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, outside of Minneapolis, in 2000. It soon became their calling to get material resources that still had value, but were otherwise going to waste, into the hands of people that would benefit, specifically people living in scarcity.

“We basically had two international programs where we would ship things overseas, primarily gently-used medical equipment,” Megan says. “Then we had a program where we worked with food shelves, and we were just the middle man to divide the food up and distribute it to food shelves. That was it in a nutshell.”

From 2000 to 2014, the organization helped distribute more than \$550 million in wholesale goods to people in need all over the world. In 2014, Hope for the City evolved into MATTER, with a focus on expanding access to health, next door and around the world. In 2015, MATTER gave away more than \$27 million of surplus, with an operating budget of \$1.2 million.

A couple of years ago, it became apparent to the Doyle’s that, in order to reach the younger generation donors, they would need to rebrand their ministry. The one-word ministry title they came up with was MATTER.

“We felt like the up-and-coming 20-somethings and 30-somethings would be more attracted to MATTER,” Megan says. “It’s what that generation understands. We wanted people to

understand what we do, everything from serving the poor in our own backyard with food to helping furnish hospitals overseas. It makes sense because the whole supply chain matters. The donor is interested in who the recipient is at the end of the line, and the recipient wants to know who the donor is. The volunteers MATTER, and the staff MATTER.”

One of their innovations was creating the MATTERbox: A Healthy Box of Food. Ever conscious of being good stewards of the ministry God has given them, the Doyles and their staff began two years ago to review its food program to provide healthier meals to help combat one of the biggest problems facing America today—obesity. Working with dietitians at a prominent local hospital in the Twin Cities, MATTER developed a breakfast, lunch and dinner portable healthy food program called the MATTERbox, which Megan says is “self-stable and highly nutritious.”

The MATTERboxes contain a starch, a protein, a fruit and a vegetable to provide well-rounded and nutritious meals. These healthy food boxes benefit recipients who might not otherwise be educated on how to eat properly and to avoid diabetes, among other major health problem in America.

“The beauty of the MATTERbox is that it’s healthy and it creates access to healthy food for people living beneath the poverty level and who are food insecure,” Megan says. “We even now have the diabetes departments in various hospitals using our boxes to teach people how to eat properly and to get off of insulin. Obesity and diabetes are America’s diseases of the future, and that’s why we’re trying to do our part to fight them.”

“We’re a little bit ahead of the industry in developing these MATTERboxes that give people access to healthy food. And we’re dealing with non-traditional partners. A food shelf would not be interested in our MATTERboxes. The people that are using them are hospitals, especially if they have a large portion of

people below the poverty line that they are serving. Charter schools are using our meals. Progressive churches are using them. The Hennepin County (Minnesota) Sheriff's department is putting them in all of the deputies' cars because they deal so often with evictions and people moving and there is no food in the cupboards. Insurance companies are also on board with the boxes. It's a great thing." Megan says the results of their health-conscious efforts are tangible.

"We're working closely with Hennepin County Medical Center with their diabetes program," she says. "They are not only teaching people how to eat healthier with our MATTERboxes, but they are telling us that they have patients that are getting off of insulin. That is one of the goals, praise God."

The MATTERbox is slowly being introduced in other states, such as Arizona, where the Doyles spent the entire month of February earlier this year. "We talked to the head of the Diabetes Association in Arizona, and they told us about a group of Native Americans who have resigned themselves to the fact that they're going to die early because of diabetes," Megan says. "This doesn't have to be. With simple life changes and access to the right food, they can change the lifespans of their whole group of people."

It might surprise many to know that Gene Simmons of the secular rock band KISS, who has befriended the Doyles in recent years, is one of the biggest supporters of MATTER. After meeting in California through a mutual friend, Dennis began talking to Simmons about MATTER, and Simmons, who grew up with a Jewish background, was all in.

A successful entrepreneur in addition to his musical exploits, Simmons regularly speaks with MATTER's financial donors, and himself holds an annual fundraiser for MATTER in Los Angeles called *The Children MATTER*. Later this year, Simmons and his band mates will hold a concert that he and the Doyles hope will raise more than \$1 million for MATTER.

If you want to go to an exclusive event in the Twin Cities and have lots of money to give to a worthy cause, you can purchase tickets for the event here.

“Many people see Gene as simply as musician. He’s much more than that,” Megan says. “He’s a college-educated school teacher who learned to play the guitar. But he understood the value of marketing, and that’s how KISS was so successful. He’s a brilliant marketer and manufacturer, and he’s been a huge help with MATTER.”

If you read this far you’re obviously interested in the Doyles’ ministry. But what’s the take away for your life? It’s to ask what resources you have within your own two hands and how God can multiply it to help others! In the same way Dennis and Megan Doyle are an inspiration and example to many of how you can leverage the resources around you to create a world where we all MATTER.

To find out more about the Doyles and MATTER, please visit , or email Megan atmegan@.