

Bob BARNES

Co-Founder, The Children's Hunger Project



Bob Barnes is co-founder of The Children's Hunger Project. As executive director, his duties start early and end late. Bob's passion for helping hungry and undernourished kids is fed in great part by the many volunteers that flow in and out of the charity giving of their time and treasure.

5:00 a.m.

No matter the hour of retiring, I awake around 5 a.m. each morning. A quick review of the paper's headlines and a cup of coffee gets my ball rolling. I gravitate toward the letters to the editor to get my aggravation level increased and then calm down with the day's Sudoku puzzle. A quick breakfast and a smoothie are the normal routine before hitting the road.

6:30 a.m.

Start my drive to our facility near Cocoa Hyundai from West Melbourne. Most days I'm able to avoid the traffic crunch. At the office I review my e-mails, letters and print out my things to do, calls to make and places to see. I am obsessively organized about these three lists.

9:00 a.m.

Meet with our two staff members, Sarah Anthony and Cynthia Thompson. I come up with the harebrained ideas to raise awareness and money and these two do the work to make it happen. The kids we serve do not know how lucky they are to have these two women making sure all is done to ensure the delivery of weekend food to them each Friday.



"The biggest problem we face is that most people are not even aware kids are going hungry here in Brevard County."

Rest of the Day

Some nonprofits are well organized and run like a quiet hospital. Ours is more like an emergency room. No matter how well organized we try to be, there are always schools at which an emergency situation comes up.

For example, a new family in town with a few kids arrives at a school long after our program is set up. So what do we do? Abide by the "rules" or get food to the kids? We do what it takes to make sure the kids at our schools get food. They already have enough problems in their young lives. We are comfortable in this uncomfortable and sometimes illogical way in which to do business based on our nine-word business plan: *See a hungry kid. Buy food. Feed the kid.* That's the entire business plan and that's what we do. We don't allow any bureaucracy or hierarchy to get in the way of what is best for the child.

Most days are spent in following the top two priorities of our charity: Awareness and fundraising. I work closely with the media to develop a rapport and earn their care. Both result in increased awareness in print and broadcast stories. I work with United Way, Project Hunger and a host of generous businessmen and women that recognize that children going hungry in their own back yard is unacceptable.

Although a speech is not scheduled every week, I seek out any and every opportunity to tell The Children's Hunger Project story to anyone who will listen. The biggest problem we face is that most people are not even aware kids are going hungry here in Brevard County. I am willing to speak at any breakfast, lunch and dinner meeting every day of the week to generate awareness and money to expand our program.

Late Afternoon

Leave for home or errands

6:00 p.m.

Dinner. Feet up. Watch the TV talking heads for a short time.

Evening

Catch up on paperwork and e-mails. Read a bit. I have a short attention span, so I have four or five books open at a time that range from politics to history or religion. One is always there and appropriate.

11:00 p.m.

Hit the sack after an exhausting and long day at a low-paying job that is the best one I have ever had.

Watch a BEHIND THE SCENES video about Bob's day exclusively in our digital edition.



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