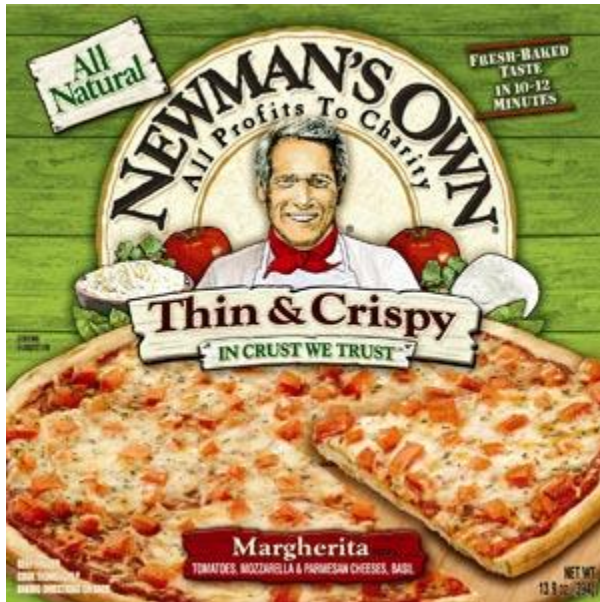


Paul Newman's Legacy of Charity

[Positive Impact Magazine](#) | Jun 06, 2011 | [Comments 0](#)



By: Marci Wise • Photo courtesy: Newman's Own, Inc.

Oh, those piercing blue eyes! For more than five decades he was one of Hollywood's most beloved and respected actors, but Paul Newman's Midas touch went well beyond the silver screen. In addition to receiving top honors as an actor, he's managed to create a specialty foods empire that continues to supply hundreds of millions of dollars to charity, even after his death.

Newman's Own

Originally intended as holiday gifts, Newman and his long-time friend A.E. Hotchner would casually mix up huge amounts of homemade salad dressing, pour it into wine bottles and hand them out to receptive neighbors while Christmas caroling. The enthusiastic response was unexpected and overwhelming. On a whim, the pair decided to invest a minimal amount of money and attempt to market their concoction. Since Newman had already conquered Hollywood and had no need for money, he decided that if the project succeeded he would simply give away any after-tax profits. Marketing experts were not so optimistic, however, warning that their chances for success were small. Newman was not one to be deterred. He ignored their dire predictions, jestingly put his picture on the label and set the wheels of his new business venture into motion.

To everyone's surprise, *Newman's Own Olive Oil & Vinegar Salad Dressing* practically flew off the store shelves, earning nearly half a million dollars for charity in the first year.

What began as an inspired idea had taken on a life of its own. Newman is quoted as saying, “If we’d followed the experts’ advice, we’d probably still be bottling dressing in our basement, wondering if Newman’s Own was a worthwhile business venture.”

The business soon expanded to include other varieties of salad dressings, pasta and steak sauces, salsa, lemonade and popcorn. All the while, Newman and Hotchner continued to have fun with the project – even writing their own whimsical, tongue-in-cheek marketing copy on the labels – *Newman’s Own Virgin Lemonade* label touting that it was “made from lemons that had never been squeezed.” Consumers ate it up, figuratively and literally.

Hole in the Wall Camps



Double H Ranch NY

With profits coming in, the dynamic duo were determined to fund a cause close to their hearts. Believing that laughter was indeed the best medicine, Newman and friends founded the first “Hole in the Wall Camp” in 1988. The camps are designed to give children living with serious illness a chance to experience the carefree, light-hearted fun typically associated with childhood. The camps are provided free of charge and staffed by highly trained medical personnel. For some children, the camp experience may be the first time they allowed to focus on having fun, instead of focusing on their illness. Padraig Barry, Director of Camp Support Services, says the experience is powerful. “You see kids come into camp feeling isolated and a little bit alone, and then twenty minutes later they’ve got their best friend in the world standing right beside them or sleeping in the next bunk over.”



Dynamo Camp in 2009

Today, children from all 50 United States and 39 countries worldwide have enjoyed the joyful respite that these camps provide. In fact, the traditional summer camps have been so successful that they've expanded their offerings year round, to include a variety of specialty camps and hospital outreach programs.

Their goal is simple, “to create a space for children to feel really good about themselves, if even for a fleeting moment,” says Barry.

The Newman’s Own Foundation

Although Paul Newman died in 2008, the Newman’s Own Foundation is committed to honoring his spirit, values and philosophy by carrying on his philanthropic legacy. To date, Paul Newman and the Newman’s Own Foundation have given over \$300 million to numerous charities around the world. In addition to the Hole in the Wall Camps, the foundation also reaches out to a broad array of organizations dedicated to educational and charitable purposes.

The foundation operates with a strong sense of optimism – envisioning a world where need is viewed as an opportunity to make a difference. They’ve devoted themselves to finding solutions to problems, responding quickly to an urgent need, and providing financial backing for innovative charitable endeavors – all the while, operating in a humble fashion that would make Newman proud. “When people would thank Paul for his charitable giving, he would always

reply that he didn't think he was doing anything special," said Robert Forrester, president of Newman's Own Foundation. "He believed that the real thanks should go to those people who work every day to make our world and the future world a better place. For Paul, it was a privilege to be just one among these many. That's how we all feel today as we carry on this unique and wonderful philanthropic legacy," says Forrester.

The second generation

In 1993, Newman's daughter Nell branched out to create Newman's Own Organics. Like her father, she too is a whiz in the kitchen. One Thanksgiving, Nell prepared a delicious, all-organic feast and quickly won her father over to the idea of establishing an organic division of Newman's Own. With Nell at the helm, Newman's Own Organics became a separate company in late 2000, with the motto "Great Tasting Products that Happen to Be Organic."

The younger Newman was well aware that people were beginning to become interested in how ingredients are grown and processed on the way to grocers' shelves. "We feel that people want to know more about the food they eat, not just how much fat or cholesterol a product contains," says Nell. It's a mindset that has helped to move the Newman enterprise into the new millennium.

Although Newman's Own Organics is an independent company with separate ownership from Newman's Own, for the right to use the Newman's Own brand they must meet certain quality standards and allot a percentage of their sales to benefit the Newman's Own Foundation. As a community partner, Nell Newman is working to carry on the legacy of love that her father began.

An example of excellence

Although Paul Newman achieved iconic status as an actor, perhaps his greatest success is still ongoing through his charity. A down-to-earth everyman, his life serves as a testament to taking a chance. The Newman's Own Foundation website includes a quote from Newman that provides a glimpse at his modest nature and can serve as an inspiration to all of us:

"I'd like to be remembered as a guy who tried — tried to be part of his times, tried to help people communicate with one another, tried to find some decency in his own life, tried to extend himself as a human being."

How to get involved

To learn more about the Newman's Own Foundation, please visit www.newmansownfoundation.org.