

Our Team

Joseph Wright, Executive Director (E.D. since 1995)

Joe has spent the better part of his life working to improve the lives of children in need. It all started with Great Shape in 1988, playing Reggae music for a benefit concert that provided relief to victims of hurricane Gilbert. He went on to lead school building projects in rural Jamaican villages. While living with the locals in the same communities, the Jamaican children soon began to call him "Papa Joe" and taught him Patois.

Joe graduated with honors from Southern Oregon University in Business Administration with a minor in Social Sciences. A true adventurer, Joe has summited over 20 mountains, stood eye to eye with an Alaskan Grizzly, jammed Reggae with the Marley's in Kingston, been chased by a lion, hitchhiked across Australia, lived in a Fijian village, driven the back roads of African jungles, hopped freight trains across the west and caught a rattle snake. You should see his wildlife photography!

"I believe we are all chosen to serve. I am grateful Great Shape! offers me such an incredible opportunity to implement change. The lessons of perseverance and friendships fill my heart with one love."

Joe is looking toward the future when Great Shape! can facilitate year round "volun-tourism"; a chance for families to see the world and reach out to their neighbors in need. Georgene Crowe, Founding Board Member (1988), Co-Vice President of the Board

Georgene spends her days with scissors in one hand, blow-dryer in the other. Throughout her entire career, she's been an award winning hair dresser in Ashland, Oregon. She spends her "free time" volunteering for world-changing endeavors.

Georgene and her girlfriends founded Great Shape! Inc. in 1988 after the destruction of Hurricane Gilbert. Georgene began the process by filling duffel bags with needed supplies and shipping them to struggling Jamaicans. Now Georgene helps organize fundraisers for Great Shape!, helps facilitate the 1000 Smiles Dental Project in the fall and serves as Cultural Liaison between volunteers and the local Jamaicans. Georgene has an ear for language (and reggae rhythms) and picked up the Jamaican's native language of Patois in the early days.

"Jamaica fulfills my spiritual soul and heart to know we can make an immediate, positive, life-changing difference in the lives of so many children. To share the gift of love and life and receive even more from Jamaica: it's the love that we share and the way that we care. We are all called to serve. I am blessed Great Shape! is one of my "callings" and I do give thanks and praise. Jamaica is a gift I received in 1986."

Georgene dreams of a full-time clinic where volunteers can share their time all year long. Her two daughters call her mama. Jamaican children call her Mama G. Gretchen Lee, Founding Board Member (1988), Co-Vice President of the Board

Gretchen is known in Jamaica as "Getrin". She's raised her own two children and taught thousands of kids in US schools. Now she offers her teaching skills to Jamaica's children. Gretchen has volunteered with Great Shape! road building projects, school construction, 1000 Smiles and now the new literacy project. Jamaica doesn't have a printing industry and books are expensive and coveted. While Gretchen can chat with the Jamaicans in Patois, she follows principals' orders and sticks to the "Queens English" when teaching in the classrooms.

Gretchen's day job is at the Oregon Institute of Aesthetics in Talent, Oregon. She's an Esthetician and instructor.

"My goal has always been to bring better health and education to the children of Jamaica and Great Shape has enabled me to do this through our wonderful projects. As a teacher, I am excited about the new Literacy program which will be implemented in 2008." Gretchen envisions libraries full of books in all the Jamaican schools.

Derek Bentoff, Secretary/Treasurer (Board member since 2006) Derek Bentoff is a contractor for the Motley Fool and he's the co-founder and manager of Bankra Partners Real Estate Investment Company in Virginia. With Great Shape, Derek is in charge of Operations. He makes sure "it gets done".

Derek's first involvement with Great Shape included waiting tables at the hotel where organizers held an early Great Shape fundraiser. Derek had visited Jamaica twice before that fundraiser as a tourist, but once he visited as a volunteer, his life changed forever. Derek says, "Jamaica has been a great teacher to me over the years about what's really important in life. It's hard to comprehend that so many children live with out the basic necessities of life, things I may take for granted, such as a toothbrush or money to buy lunch during the school day. I could volunteer the rest of my life in Jamaica and would never be able to give what the country and its people have taught and given me."

Like the rest of the team, Derek dreams of the day when Great Shape can provide a year round volunteer clinic in Jamaica.

Lucinda Kay, Volunteer Communications Director (grew up with Great Shape) Lucinda is also President of Let It Shine. She offers communications coaching, public relations and video production. Lucinda serves non-profits, corporations, entrepreneurs and families.

Great Shape is a natural spot to be after following her mama, Georgene's lead all her life. As a former TV News Anchor and Reporter, she got into the news biz to help change the world. Story telling is the path to ignite emotion, thought processes and progress. She earned her B.A. in Communications from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, OR and went on to earn her Certificate in Lay Ministry at Whitworth College in Spokane, WA.

Lucinda has been hijacked in Brazil, ridden backwards down a steep mountain road while eyeballing Leftist Gorillas in Guatemala, and spent many a cozy night with her husband, Brad, raising money for Great Shape. Let It Shine is Lucinda's life philosophy. "We are all born with a powerful light. When we learn how use our light with wisdom we improve our personal lives, our personal environment and the global community. Let It Shine!" Brad

Adams, Volunteer Technology Master and Board Member (married into Great Shape, Board member since 2009) Brad is Vice-President of Let It Shine, creating graphics, web design and messes for his wife to clean up. He is also the co-leader for the Great Shape literacy project, SuperKids. He has always had a heart for the third-world and believes world-change begins with kindness. "Anytime you reach out a hand to help someone across the street, open the door to conversation, or write a check in the name of philanthropy, these acts of kindness change lives. Yours and the receiver." Brad's paying job has him teaching all-things-computer to high school students. Brad's quite proud of his students who have moved on to run their own computer companies. Brad and his wife, Lucinda, have lived and traveled throughout Latin America.

The food, the music, and especially the people are the reasons Jamaica has now been added to the list of adventures. Kate Wasserman, Volunteer Director of Operations, Board Member (Since 2009) Kate is the Director of Operations for Great Shape! During the day she is the Owner/Esthetician in the Oregon Institute of Aesthetics/Talent. Great Shape Co-founder, Gretchen Lee inspired her to join Great Shape! "When I was a student at the Oregon Institute of Aesthetics she showed us a video about the work Great Shape provides in Jamaica. I knew from that moment that I would get involved." Kate had always thought she'd become a doctor because she so wanted to help people. But when she began volunteering, she found she didn't need an MD to have an impact on the world. Her heart is full when she sees the smiling faces of the children and families in Jamaica. "It is my goal to help the growth of Great Shape, so that we may continue with our mission to empower the children of Jamaica through education and healthcare."