

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

One of the defining features of the One Percent Club is its ability to exist on a very small budget. Our members do not want to fund an organization with unreasonable overhead. While we have kept costs to a minimum, nonetheless, there are expenses.

I am asking you to make a gift to the One Percent Club to help fund our operations. We need money for: mailings, clerical compensation, web support, special events, recruitment, and printing and postage. In the past, we have operated largely through the generosity of a small group of supporters. We now need to broaden the base of our support. I am asking for your help.

Our organization has a great impact on our community. In the anonymous surveys we've been conducting annually, our members over the last 7 years have given an **extra \$80 million to the community**.

**Please take a moment to complete and return the adjacent form** and help support the One Percent Club.

Thank you,



Bob McCrea  
2005 Board Chair

## I want to support the One Percent Club!

Please make your check payable to the One Percent Club and mail to:

One Percent Club  
1035 East Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

### CONTRIBUTION LEVELS:

Please check one:

- Benefactor (\$5,000 and above)  
 Sustainer (\$1,000 - \$4,999)  
 Patron (\$500 - \$999)  
 Friend (\$200 - \$499)  
 Supporter (\$100 - \$199)  
 Donor (\$5 - \$99)

NAME: (Please list your name as you would like it to appear in the acknowledgements):

check here if you wish to remain anonymous.

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Gift:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!**

The One Percent Club  
1035 E. Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Tel. (612) 455-5198  
Fax (612) 455-5101  
www.theonepercentclub.org

Giving

1111%  
of Net Worth

Back to the Community

1111%

The ONE PERCENT CLUB

Edition #74 November 2005

The mission of the One Percent Club is to increase charitable contributions in our community by engaging people to commit to a minimum standard of giving: the greater of 1% of net worth or 5% of income annually.

### Hear, Hear . . . to a Synergy of Business and Philanthropy

By Henry Owen

When Bill Austin says "people want more than just a paycheck," pay close attention, because this founder and chairman of the world's leading manufacturer of custom hearing aids is not mouthing a feel-good abstraction but living the example. He's equally driven to succeed in his chosen business and contributing to the community—in both instances globally and involving "the gift of hearing."



Bill Austin here fits a hearing aid to a girl at one of the Starkey Hearing Foundation's missions—this one in Latin America. (continued inside)

All this makes it hard to tell where Austin the business developer and executive ends and Austin the philanthropist begins. The roles are intertwined tightly, with Austin devoting as much or more time to the Starkey Hearing Foundation as he does to running Starkey Laboratories, a \$400 million hearing company with headquarters and research facilities in Eden Prairie, and manufacturing at 33 facilities in 18 countries in the Americas, Europe Asia and Australia.

The goal of the Starkey Laboratories is not just to sell hearing aids but “to provide better hearing” and without regard to the ability to pay. Originally, the company often donated hearing aids to indigent customers, and billed the cost to an account which, in 1971 metamorphosed into the Starkey Hearing Foundation, which has vastly expanded the charitable reach of Austin and his company to help hearing-impaired children on a global scale.

“So the World Can Hear,” the foundation yearly conducts more than 150 missions in dozens of countries, “providing hearing instruments and promoting hearing-impairment education,” Austin says. Since 2000, that involved the distribution of more than 65,000 hearing aids to children from Antigua and Albania to Zaire and Zimbabwe.

Heart-warming examples abound, with perhaps the most dramatic being the “before” and “after” scene in a South African school gymnasium where 360 deaf children had gathered to be tested and fitted for hearing aids.

When the group arrived, Austin says, “the gymnasium was totally quiet” with otherwise active children communicating by sign language. After receiving their hearing aids, he notes, the kids—now hearing—burst into a cacophony of happy noise.

Austin, often with his wife, Tani, conducts more than 20 of the foundation’s 150-plus annual hearing missions personally. As the foundation’s website notes, “In thousands of fittings [Austin] performs each year, he achieves his greatest success—measured in the smiles, hugs and laughter of those he helps.”

This personal attention to major philanthropy juxtaposes with an equally hands-on approach in business. You’re just as likely finding Austin conducting free hearing examinations at corporate headquarters as shuffling paperwork. In fact, he proudly tells an accountant-visitor, “I can’t read a balance sheet!” He points out, however, that all of Starkey’s employees provide the skills without which he couldn’t succeed—and devote his efforts to philanthropy.

What Austin reads very well, however, is customer needs. By doing hearing tests himself, “the boss” finds out about problems of fit or performance in an instant for immediate action, avoiding the percolation of problems upward in a conventional chain of command.

Likewise, hands-on action let the foundation respond quickly to help hearing-impaired victims of Hurricane Katrina. Bill and Tani Austin rushed to Houston on Sept. 11, arriving about midnight. By 11 a.m., Sept. 12, they helped set up a hearing clinic complete with video otoscope to visually inspect the inner ear.

In addition to its own work, the foundation invites hearing-care providers to join it in a non-profit program called “Hear Now.” In this effort, the foundation provides free hearing aids to care professionals who will contribute their services to qualifying clients.

The foundation conducts fund-raising independently of the sponsorship and participation of Austin and Starkey Laboratories. For example, it raised over \$4 million at its fifth annual “So the World May Hear Awards Gala” this year. The event featured entertainment by country singer Trisha Yearwood, Donny Osmond and others. Yearwood’s fiancée, singer Garth Brooks, also attended, successfully bidding \$250,000 during a live auction to fund a Starkey mission to South Africa. Yearwood also has participated in foundation missions in Mexico: “I felt like this is the

cause I’m supposed to give my time to, not just my name to,” she was quoted in Redbook magazine.

Austin’s passion for healing began early, when he set out with the goal of becoming a medical doctor. That path took a 90-degree turn, in 1967, when he chose “the gift of hearing” as his life’s focus and decided he could contribute more practicing business than medicine “by “taking advantage of leverage” provided by the cooperative work of others in an organization.

Austin dropped out of medical school at the University of Minnesota—“a decision that didn’t take all day.” He founded Professional Hearing Aid Service, innovating with the industry’s first flat charge for hearing-aid repairs. In 1971, he acquired Starkey Laboratories, a small ear-mold company, and merged the two firms under the Starkey name, operating on a philosophy of “treating everyone the same, whether they can afford it or not.”

The company has provided hearing aids for five presidents, Pope John Paul, Mother Theresa and Hollywood stars from Bing Crosby and Jack Benny onward. These “customer” photos line one wall at Starkey’s headquarters, and Austin is pleased to point them out. But, the smile really appears when he begins talking about “the children.”

“I found my purpose ... that is what happened,” says this new member of the One Percent Club, “Everybody should look to do that.”



From left, Bill Austin, his wife, Tani, met with country singers Trisha Yearwood and her fiancé, Garth Brooks prior to the Starkey Hearing Foundation’s gala, “So the World May Hear 2005.” Yearwood sang at the fifth-annual event, which raised \$4 million to aid hearing-impaired children. Brooks successfully bid \$250,000 to fund a hearing mission in Mexico.