***Snow cone sales project****:*

In 2010, my oldest son Anthony wanted to play football. To participate, the kids and their families were asked to purchase a spirit pack. Which consisted of nylon-poly athletic shorts with a team T-shirt, and a small drawstring gym bag. All three items had the school football logo silk-screened on it. The Spirits packs were $25 dollars each, which was a considerable amount of money for my family at that time.

In 2011, my second son Alexander wanted to play football as well. I knew I would have to come up with $50 dollars for two spirit packs. I had spoken with other parents of the players on the football team, and they agreed $25 dollar was excessive for the spirit packs. I felt as though someone was making money somewhere along the line. I didn’t think it was fair because the school was a catholic institution feeling fairness and equity was already baked in, so I thought. We were already paying what we felt a significant amount of money for tuition per year which was roughly $6 thousand a year per child.

After I started asking questions about the funds, I could tell some folks were becoming agitated. I decided then to ask the head coach if I could create a fundraiser for the team help reduce the price of the spirit packs. He agreed, and with his blessing my wife and I began to filter some ideas. In the 70s, my Dad, had purchased a snow-cone machine from the Snyder Brothers, who had built the In N Out Hamburger franchise. When my parents passed on, I became the owner of the snow cone machine. We cleaned it up, ran some tests and it ran great. Suddenly, we were in the snow cone business.

We started selling snow cones and chips at the pop-warner games on Saturdays. My wife and I supplied the syrup, ice, cups, spoons and the machine to get the kids started, otherwise known as seed money by some. It was a raving success. We expanded our sales to basketball, soccer, volleyball, boys baseball, and girls softball. Within 3 months, we had enough money to cut the price of the packs in half. The following years, we gave all football participants a spirit pack free. All proceeds went to the kids. Within 2 years, we were able to reduce the price for all sports teams at the school for a $10 donation so we could keep the process going. There were some kids who could barely afford tuition. With the snow cone and snack money were also able to get some of the kids free cleats.

In 2014 we were able to get the kids team windbreakers with the school football team logo and player number/last name. I created a fundraiser board of directors at the school so we could track the money and we could share the proceeds. In the beginning of the process we would meet once a week. Whomever could make it, would make it. After three or four months we moved the meetings to twice a month, then once a month. It was a great experience and a ton of fun. Towards the end of 2015 we were averaging about $7000.00 a year on proceeds. The only regret I have about the fundraising program is that higher institutions became aware of the fundraiser and the success of the fundraiser. Anyone could attend the meetings and see what we were doing with the money. We all made sure nobody was “dipping” so to speak. Higher institutions saw the amount of we were drawing and felt they should have a part in it. In the end, we allowed the higher institution to take the process over and sadly it fell apart, which was very sad for the kids. It was a great experience and a learning experience at the same time. The greatest gift my wife and I received was all the thanks from the kids. We still see some of the kids today some 12 to 14 years later and they always greet us with hugs and tons of thanks.