



## Why I started Ripple Kids

Written by Bridget Belden, Founder and CEO Ripple Kids, INC.

I first came up with the idea for Ripple Kids several years ago during a particularly introspective time in my life. I was inspired by my kids – my 7 year old daughter in particular – and her ability to look at an issue and want to help. It didn't matter how big or small the issue was - she knew she could make a difference. One dollar could cure homelessness; selling cookies could end hunger in Africa – in her mind, the possibilities were endless. When I considered my own approach to these issues, as troublesome as they were, I often didn't do anything because I felt overwhelmed. How could I possibly make a difference when the issue was so huge? I started to realize that my daughter had so much to teach me!

In today's world, there are so many global issues that are beyond our control. Experiencing events such as September 11<sup>th</sup>, the War in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina and the Tsunami in Thailand can be overwhelming to adults, let alone kids. But what happens when a kid has a bake sale to raise money for the survivors of Hurricane Katrina? Suddenly, they are empowered to take control of an otherwise uncontrollable event. We can't stop things like these from happening, but we can mobilize to help the people most affected by them. It doesn't matter how large or small the end result, what matters is that we can do *something*. What better gift can a parent give a child than to support them in their quest to make sense of an otherwise insensible event?

Supporting them in their quest takes time – trust me, I know. Whether you are working outside or inside the home, are single or married, have one kid or six, time is something that all of us could use more of. But the time you spend with your kids helping them find a way to respond to the world's problems will give them tools to help them cope with an ever-changing world, and this is the most worthwhile of investments. There are rewards for all involved – the recipients, the child and you, the parents. Perhaps the greater reward is found in all the people who buy the cookies or get their car washed and are also inspired. Some of might even go out and have their own bake sale – and that is the Ripple Effect and what Ripple Kids is all about.

