

# Local mom raises awareness and funds

by Delia Guzman

When Amy Moyer noticed that her 18-month-old daughter Zoe was exhibiting some symptoms of diabetes, Moyer called the doctor but thought the entire idea was “absurd.”

Within a month, however, came the diagnosis that would change everything for the Moyers: Zoe had Type 1 diabetes. Amy Moyer’s response to the disease would change not only their lives, but the way their friends and family—and even perfect strangers in the community—thought about diabetes and research.

Moyer already knew something about the disease, having taken human physiology while earning her biology degree and because she’d done a class report on the disease way back in third grade.

“A girl in my third-grade class developed Type 1 diabetes, so the teacher asked me and another kid in my class to do a report for the class so we could all learn about it,” said Moyer. “I learned the warning signs, and when Zoe started getting sick, I still remembered them from that third-grade

A diagnosis of Type I diabetes, once called juvenile diabetes, changed the lives of the Moyer family and turned Amy Moyer into a tireless advocate and fundraiser for a cure.

report.”

Nevertheless, when Moyer called the doctor to tell him that Zoe was always thirsty and that she was wetting through two or three diapers a night, she was a little relieved when the nurse at the doctor’s office told her to just stop giving Zoe so much fluid before bed.

“I kind of chuckled and said, ‘Well, maybe you should check her for diabetes,’ but the whole idea of it seemed absurd.”

Three weeks later, Zoe developed respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and began vomiting; her dehydration became so severe that she had to be admitted to the hospital. Moyer then insisted that doctors check Zoe for diabetes, recalling her earlier fears about Zoe’s constant thirst and excessive wetting,

Doctors then tested Zoe’s blood and discovered that the child was in diabetic ketoacidosis, a potentially fatal condition in which the blood becomes loaded with the sugars, acids and ketones that the body cannot process without insulin.

Doctors diagnosed Zoe with Type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disorder in which the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas are destroyed by the body’s own immune system. Once called “juvenile diabetes,” this disease is unrelated to diet or childhood obesity.

“I thought it was the end of the world,” said Moyer. “I didn’t want to have to give my kid shots. I was scared of what it was going to mean for Zoe. I didn’t even want to take her home; I was afraid it would kill her,

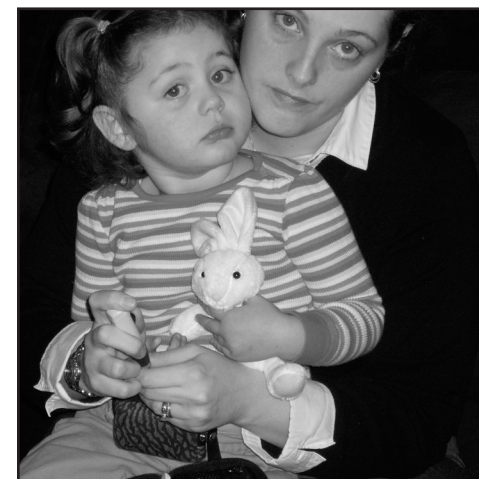


Photo by Chris Moyer

Zoe Moyer holds on to her bunny for support as her mother Amy lances her finger to check her blood sugar. Zoe must be tested like this 10 times each day to manage her insulin dosage.

that I would do something wrong and it would be fatal.”

As first-time and relatively new parents,

see Mom, pg. 8

# Jack Matson: Entrepreneur to ‘ecopreneur’

by Maggie O’Keefe

When lightning struck Jack Matson when he was 41, it changed his life in more ways than one.

First there was the Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and the minor brain damage. But then there was the clarity he’d been looking for since the days of his first paper route when he was 8.

Now, creativity and a belief in failure are a part of everything Matson does.

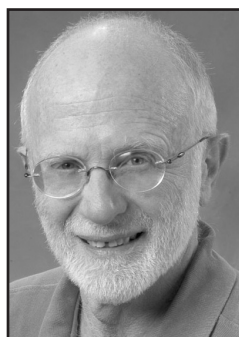
“I found that maximizing my creativity was a powerful idea, and it took over my life in a spiritual way; it became all I wanted to do, teaching it and living it,” said Matson in an interview with Voices.

This former-radical-turned-businessman has developed “intelligent fast failure,” the concept that repetitive failures produce greater success. The idea won him the First

National Zell/Lurie Award and Fellowship for the Teaching of Innovation in 1988.

His creative and environmental drive has, among other things, produced a local business called Envinity that reconstructs and builds

eco-housing in the downtown area, performs energy audits for existing homes and offers energy efficiency consultation to homeowners. Matson also owns properties on Westerly Parkway, Butz Street and Fairmount Avenue that he rents to college students and young professors with families, teaches at Penn State and runs a separate company called Matson and Associates.



Jack Matson

But before that lightning strike on a tennis court, Matson was still unsure of his life’s calling.

Born in Madison, Wis. in 1942, he was the eldest of five children. When he was 8 he took on his first paper route; he said it was his first lesson in entrepreneurship.

But it would be years of drifting through higher education and jobs before he came back to that lesson. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering Matson tried working for oil companies, then went back to school for a year of law but lost interest in that as well.

So, like many people drawn to the lifestyle at the time, Matson joined an ashram in the mid-1960s. There he discovered his interest in the environment and embraced the need to develop ideas and tactics to protect it.

“For the first time, living there, I got to

see how the soil nourished my life,” Matson explained. “It showed me how critical it was to maintain a healthy environment.”

But the government had other ideas, and Matson was drafted into the Vietnam War.

“My out was to get back into school, not necessarily to get an advanced degree, but to stay out of the army,” said Matson, expressing another popular sentiment of the time.

Back in college for the third time, Matson was working on his doctoral degree when he came up with a concept he called “ecopreneurship,” the idea that people can make a profit without harming the environment. This concept developed into Envinity a few years later.

It was around this time that Matson was

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# Alternative practice tries to fill modern health care's gaps

by Angela Rogers

Have you ever left the doctor's office with unanswered questions about the medicine he just prescribed? Have you ever felt that something was wrong, but you just couldn't put your finger on the problem? Or perhaps you skipped getting the care you needed because you don't have health insurance, or the money to pay for it? These are a few of the side effects of our modern health care system, in which time is money.

Corene Johnston, CRNP (Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner), relaxes on the sofa in "The Studio," headquarters of her new nurse practitioner practice. Clients who drive to her little homestead in Bald Eagle Valley can avail themselves of Johnston's training and experience in both mainstream and complementary health care, not to mention her twenty-year survivorship of many breast cancer recur-

rences. Those cause her to refer to herself as a "wounded healer," someone who has learned the path to wholeness from walking it, not just reading about it. The fact that she charges only what the client is willing or able to pay—or even barter—sets her apart from most health care providers. She has borrowed, she says, the Buddhist concept of "right livelihood" as the basis for her holistic practice.

Johnston does not provide physical examinations or prescribe medicine. Instead, she offers a consultory service.

"My purpose is to help clients use the relaxation available here as a foundation from which to build, or rebuild, good health," she explains. "If a client feels my help in explaining the workings of the health care system, the effects of a certain prescription medicine or herbal preparation, my questions leading to awareness of yet-unexplored options, have been valuable, I'd

like that client to offer payment in whatever fashion and amount the person feels to be appropriate, including barter arrangements—although a promised log stool has not been delivered yet. This makes such care available to people who may not be able to afford healing retreats, counseling and other beneficial services."

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), income, education and where you live are key factors in determining how healthy you are. Those with family incomes of less than \$20,000 annually are half as likely to be in excellent health as those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more. Rural folks are less healthy than those living in major metropolitan areas. In Centre County, median household income is \$44,968; 14.7 percent of persons live below the poverty level and about 12,000 individuals do not have health insurance, according to the U.S. Census.

Johnston is especially concerned about low-income women and those who are otherwise disenfranchised: "The ones who only get care when they're bleeding" or get a half-treatment. For example, a low-income obese woman may be told by her doctor to lose weight, but there is no follow-up to ensure she goes to weight loss counseling. A patient with depression might get the pills, but does not get the therapy.

Johnston's "kitchen table" or problem-solving sessions provide the missing link for those who need more than a pill. During these sessions, Johnston listens to the client talk about what is going on in her life, reflects back an understanding of the concern or problem and asks the client what she wants to do.

"One of the most important of these steps is naming the problem," Johnston says. "Medically, a diagnosis—even a bad one—can be such a relief because the problem has been identified." The benefit of applying this problem-solving approach with someone who has a therapeutic relationship with you is that person is neutral, confidential, informed and can provide documentation such as written referrals to specialists.

Other services Johnston plans to provide include grief counseling, cancer support groups, Reiki, dreamwork and workshops for health care providers on employing the healing power of their hands and voice.

Johnston feels called to this livelihood. As a breast cancer survivor—she discovered the first lump more than 20 years ago and has "lost count of the number of re-occurrences"—Johnston knows what it's like to be the patient who can't find what she needs. She co-founded the first breast cancer support group in Centre County in 1990, after traveling to Michigan to be with her ill mother and attending a support group at the hospital there "that was like rain on the desert."

As a nurse practitioner for many years, Johnston's work experience in clinics became unsatisfying when she was unable to give her patients the time they needed or risk inconveniencing her colleagues.

"All the clinic staff—other nurse practitioners, desk people, physician's assistants—were frequently frustrated with me because I took so long with clients and screwed up the clinic schedule."

In her new role as health advisor, Johnston is able to devote the time each patient needs. And she enjoys providing to others the kind of primary care she herself receives from her own primary care provider, who, like Johnston, is a nurse practitioner.


"Basic RN preparation focuses upon the whole person, not just the disease, and that orientation continues within the advanced practice of the certified registered nurse practitioner," Johnston explains. "And the NP can hold the center, keeping track of such care, sort of plugging it into his or her own or other services needed or used simultaneously."

And what happens when a client's needs go beyond Johnston's professional expertise? She refers.

"When one needs specialty care, the NP can make a referral and get such a consultation set up sooner than one is usually able to do on one's own."

"I have provided most of my described services in other situations, but this set-up is new to me. I've never before organized a private practice that doesn't interpose a specific fee as a gate between provider and needed. I'm creating it."

**Corene Johnston, CRNP, can be reached at (814) 355-2757 or [corenej@champagnecorkfarm.com](mailto:corenej@champagnecorkfarm.com)**



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from Mom, pg. 6

Amy and Chris Moyer were faced with a future full of challenges. The only way to face it, however, was head-on, Moyer said.

"You don't have a choice but to come to grips with the disease," she said. "So we took Zoe home, and life began all over again."

In the months ahead, life really did begin all over again as the family adjusted to life with diabetes.

"We started with multiple daily injections of two kinds of insulin, six to eight shots a day," said Moyer. "It wasn't that bad until Zoe started trying to bite me whenever I had to give her a shot."

They then tried an insulin pump to see whether it would work for Zoe; by January 2008, they had opted to use the pump permanently.

Still, Moyer knew that although the pump and a daily routine made life much easier

for Zoe, she would still have to worry about insulin for the rest of her life; that fact scared Moyer.

"I would always hear people saying, 'We're close to a cure' and, 'Any day now,'" said Moyer. "But cures take money. I realized that my life was already engrossed in this whole thing anyway, so I decided to do more. My hope and my mission is that there will be a cure by the time Zoe goes to college, and I'm going to help make that happen."

In 2008, the Moyer family formed a team of walkers in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) yearly fundraising walk.

"We had people from our family, friends, kids from Zoe's daycare, even some of her caregivers on the team," said Moyer. "I wrote a family letter about Zoe's condition for everyone on the team, and I guess that letter just got forwarded to other people. Suddenly, complete strangers were donating money for the walk. My husband Chris

"It's scary to think of Zoe's future...A single severe low [blood sugar level] and Zoe could die."

--Amy Moyer

was playing pool, and someone in the pool hall came up to him and gave him a check for \$200. She said she'd seen the letter I wrote and wanted to help out."

That year, "Zoe's Team" of more than 30 people raised \$7,300 for Type 1 diabetes research. The State College walk raised about \$50,000.

But Moyer still wanted to do more.

"It's just my personality to do everything I can, so it was natural to do even more this year," Moyer said. "I volunteered to be the local corporate sponsorship chair for the

2009 State College walk. In 2008 I had already had many corporate donors, so for 2009 our local committee decided we could all get even more corporate donors."

"If it's for my kid, I'm not afraid to ask companies for money," Moyer said. "The JDRF is the number one nonprofit funder of research dedicated to finding a cure for Type 1 diabetes. To me, that's worth whatever efforts I can give."

"It's scary to think about Zoe's future," Moyer said. "It's scary to think about what a single severe low blood sugar level or a series of high blood sugar levels could do to her. A single severe low, and Zoe could die. Enough high levels over an extended period of time could lead to blindness, neuropathy, heart problems and kidney failure."

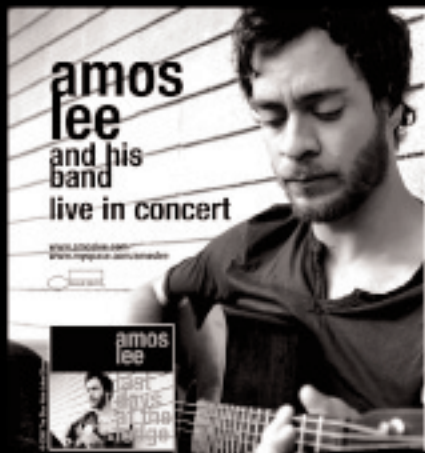
These fears keep Moyer working, not only to help Zoe, but to help raise money and awareness.

"When I send Zoe to college, I only want to have the normal worries that any other parent has when they send a kid to college."

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# Tough economy means tough times for some local pets

by Mary Miles

During a recent cold spell, Centre County residents quickened their steps as the minutes it took them to move from one destination to another became increasingly uncomfortable. As the dismal weather raged, a spaniel with auburn freckles in her short white fur shivered at the end of a leash, tied to the door of a local business—all night.

Why had the owners abandoned their pet without food, shelter or water? The dog couldn't say, but there are discouraging signs that stories like this become more common when the economy takes a downturn.

"Over the past year we've seen a definite increase in the number of people asking to surrender their pets because they are being evicted from their homes or are literally unable to provide basic care," said Lisa Bahr, Shelter Supervisor at Centre County PAWS. "We are also finding more abandoned pets."

Centre County residents are feeling the impact of global economic problems, and these downturns affect all members in a family including dogs and cats. The extraordinary rewards of choosing to share one's life with a pet are accompanied by major financial responsibilities. Bills for food and veterinary care alone can add up to many hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each year. When families can't meet these expenses, their pets can suffer the consequences.

PAWS board member Cathy Kassab expressed concern that many people underestimate the financial costs involved in pet ownership. To educate prospective pet owners, she helped organize the First Annual PAWS Dog Walk-a-Thon.

Kassab, who works with Nittany Beagle Rescue as well as PAWS, also raised concerns that veterinary costs seem to be on the rise.

"Vet prices are going up across the board as veterinarians themselves are facing higher costs for medications and supplies," she said.

How are Centre County pet owners dealing with these challenges? Bahr reports that PAWS is "receiving more requests for spay/neuter assistance and emergency medical aid." Some owners consider switching

to less expensive foods or struggle to maintain regular veterinary care.

Other families face more dire struggles. PAWS volunteers are learning of local residents who are sacrificing basic necessities for themselves in order to keep their pets' bowls filled. Some ultimately make the difficult decision to surrender their pets to local shelters.

Over the past year, at least three dogs were placed for adoption at PAWS because their owners were being evicted from their homes. PAWS currently has five kittens looking for new homes because their owner was unable to pay his rent.

Senior Adoption Counselor at PAWS, Bob Barry, recounted a tale about an elderly woman who sobbed as she surrendered her dog. Her apartment had instituted a new pet deposit and she couldn't afford to pay it.

"It bothered me that there wasn't more time and resources to organize help for this woman," said Barry. He said that organized community support for pet owners in need could have helped.

"The volunteers who were there would have been willing to help out themselves, if they had only known about her serious plight before she told her landlord that she was surrendering the dog," he said.

In some cases, economically strapped owners abandon their former pets without contacting a shelter. One dog was left tied up outside of a trailer when its owners could not afford their home and moved away. PAWS is seeing a growing number of cats abandoned outside to fend for themselves as well.

The majority of abandoned pets, exposed to the elements, predators and starvation, die before they are even reported to animal rescue organizations.

"It makes me very sad for the family but more so for the pet," said PAWS founding member Debbie Bezilla when asked about these abandoned pets and evicted families. "Animals do not understand why the people they love are leaving them, and domesticated animals do not know how to survive in the outdoors," said Bezilla. "Simply abandoning pets is the worst thing a family could do to them."

Unfortunately, at the time when pet owners are most in need of aid, the ability of rescue groups to extend help grows more

limited. Donations for all rescue organizations are down, while need is up. Giving money, however, isn't the only way to help. PAWS volunteers said that people can also donate extra pet food, medicine, cat litter or office supplies to a shelter. PAWS also offers free pet food to those in need of it.

Veterinarians can also help pet owners. They can work with pet owners to prioritize expenses by assessing the benefits of premium food, for example, and identifying crucial vs. non-essential medical care. Pet owners might also consider "comparison

shopping" when taking an animal to a veterinarian, as prices of veterinary care vary across the county.

Some local veterinarians are willing to negotiate payment plans or discounts on emergency pet care.

"When my house rabbit needed surgery, my veterinarians accepted half the total cost on that day and was willing to wait for my next payday—over a week away—for the other half," said Bellefonte resident Delia Guzman of her vet at All Creatures Veterinary Care. "That was a real lifesaver."

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struck by lightning while playing tennis.

"The lightning hit the court and my partner and I were knocked over," said Matson.

After going through intense therapy, he recovered from his brain damage, but was suffering from severe depression.

His therapist would talk him through the positives in his life: love, family and friends, but it was creativity and inspiration for environmental protection that pulled him through.

Matson's interests expanded to environmental law. He became a consulting engineer on chemical contamination problems, and that led him to his involvement in the now-famous case of Erin Brockovich and Pacific Gas & Electric in 1996, the story of which was later made into a movie. He then created Matson and Associates, Inc., a company that provides expert witnesses to testify against polluters in environmental

litigation.

He arrived in State College in 1992 to become the founding director of the Leonhard Center, a creative environmental program. He also started to teach environmental engineering courses and set up minors in leadership and entrepreneurship.

He currently teaches three classes where innovation and creativity are built into a project-based classroom. One of his classes is working on ideas for a lunar outpost for NASA, and another is a freshman seminar that trains students to become energy auditors.

"He always brings a fresh approach to looking at stuff; he's so eccentric about it," said Conlan Swope, 21, a senior civil engineering major taking Matson's course.

Matson's dream is to build an eco-community with his wife Elizabeth, the State College Borough Council president, but they have not yet found a plot of land big enough. He believes it is just one failure that is part of the process of success.

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