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After a life-changing trip to Haiti, a successful businessman hopes to change the lives of millions of orphans around the world.



Craig Juntunen lived a life of leisure and all things grand with his wife, Kathi, in a lavish North Scottsdale home. Early on in life, he strived to have a successful business—which he did—and eventually retired by the time he was 43.

After years of the life he thought he wanted, Juntunen knew there had to be more than ski trips at the drop of a hat and hitting the greens all day long. It wasn't until he was 51 years old—after he traveled to an orphanage in Haiti—that he found what was missing. By swearing off parenthood and having a vasectomy at 30 years old, no one expected what he was about to do—not even him.

In 2006, Juntunen traveled to Haiti to visit orphanages, with nothing on the agenda but to explore and fulfill a philanthropic gesture. It was there that he fell in love with three young children: Espie, Amelec and Quinn. “I found the love in my heart I didn't know existed,” Juntunen says.

When he came back to the United States with the addition of three children, Juntunen's friends were so blown away, they urged him to write a book about his experience. Three years later, Juntunen penned “Both Ends Burning: My Story of Adopting Three Children from Haiti” while adjusting as a new parent to his children, who were 4, 5 and 9-months-old at the time. He says the idea for the name, “Both Ends Burning,” came from his mother, who often used the term when confronted with overwhelming situations.

Juntunen says he was awestruck by the number of people who wanted to adopt, but were turned away due to an adoption process that became too bureaucratic, too expensive and took two-and-a-half years to complete. Juntunen researched international adoption and realized the process was inefficient. He wanted to change the course of international adoption, thus forming the Both Ends Burning Campaign, Inc. in May 2010. “A family is a child's most basic human right, a right denied by millions upon millions of children around the world,” Juntunen says. From 2004 to 2009, adoption to the U.S. has fallen more than 50 percent, and Juntunen says that for every million orphans in the world, only 237 are adopted.

To help change the future of international adoption, Both Ends Burning will be sponsoring the first-ever Summit of Nations International Conference in early November. Additionally, A Night of Greatness, an event that was held in April in Scottsdale, is set to travel to various spots throughout the world to raise funds and awareness. (During the events, time with celebrities and athletes will be auctioned off.) Juntunen is now making a major documentary film on the international adoption crisis, “Wrongfully Detained,” which is set to debut in November.

To Learn More:

Both Ends Burning is currently trying to obtain 1,000,001 signatures to take to the United Nations to help change and reform the ways of international adoption. For more information about this campaign or to sign the petition, visit www.bothendsburning.org.