

CHRIS HEIERT — STEP FORWARD GROUP RUN LEADER



It's difficult to picture Chris Heiert sitting at a cubicle — let alone sitting at a cubicle stuffing his mouth full of junk food. But that was what became of his office lifestyle soon after the Northern Kentucky native arrived at Procter & Gamble in 1999.

“I was sitting in the cubicle, eating all the cakes and donuts that people were bringing in every day and putting on the pounds,” says Heiert, who had gained 15 pounds. “It was pathetic.”

But Heiert quickly tired of that. In 2000, he stopped eating those omnipresent office treats and started running — a lot. It rapidly became a passion. That passion has led him to run almost a dozen marathons. And it has led the full-of-energy Heiert to City Gospel Mission, where he's now in his second year as the Group Run Leader for CGM's Flying Pig Step Forward Team.

Heiert, 39, Procter & Gamble's director for North American skin care, was moved to get involved with City Gospel Mission's Flying Pig running team after he read a story about it in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* in May 2008. Heiert, who attends Crossroads Community Church, had previously heard of City Gospel Mission through its partnership with Crossroads. So he decided to call the Mission.

When he made that call, Heiert had more in mind than just running with the homeless and men and women from the Mission's recovery programs. He also wanted to raise awareness and funds for City Gospel Mission through the Flying Pig event.

“I said, ‘Get me the men and women, and I'll take care of the rest,’” Heiert says.

Heiert certainly has delivered on that promise. He helped secure a \$10,000 grant from Procter & Gamble for this year's Step Forward Team, which for the first time in its three years will include youth runners from City Gospel Mission's Whiz Kids tutoring and mentoring program. He has helped secure several other sponsors, partners, volunteers and guest speakers for the Step Forward Team, which had 25 participants in 2009 and expects to have more than double the amount of runners this year.

“It's about the men and women,” Heiert says. “I want to help teach them that with hard work, they can accomplish something. Last year, they were amazed that, little by little, they made progress — and *everyone* finished. It's been a huge blessing for me.”