



PHOTO BY DIEGO DIAZ

Jim Serrill walks with a team of Portland Timbers fans for the Blessing of the Log on Feb. 18. They selected the log that will be cut during home games every time the Timbers score.

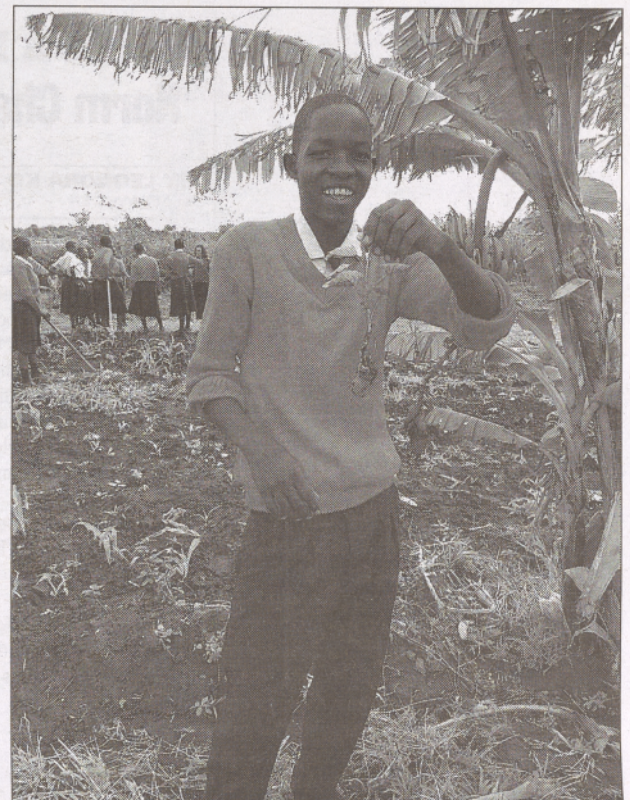


PHOTO BY PHOTO BY MARCIE RIVERA

The Red Sweater Project operates a school in Mungere, Tanzania. Building the soil will be Jim Serrill's focus when he travels to Africa to help with the school's garden, pictured above.

TIMBER JIM, from page 4

In the years since, Serrill has given back unequivocally. Using his status with the Timbers to leverage donations, he's helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for Portland-area charities.

"Jim has a big effect. He is so generous and so loving and so positive," said Cody Goldberg.

Goldberg met Serrill six years ago when he was trying to raise money to build a playground where kids with disabilities, like his daughter, Harper, could play.

Serrill caught wind of the effort and contacted Goldberg to see how he could help.

"It's really hard to put it in the right words," Goldberg said.

"He was a bull in a china shop 24/7 in support of our endeavor."

Serrill sold scarves with

proceeds going to Harper's Playground at every Timbers match, and with the help he solicited from the Timbers Army, \$86,000 was raised.

Today, the all-abilities playground in North Portland's Arbor Lodge Park is a popular destination for kids with disabilities. Goldberg and his wife have two more inclusive playgrounds planned for other Portland quadrants, and Serrill is still championing their cause at fundraising events.

He also created the Timbers Army CPR program, which hosts free CPR training for anyone who wants to learn.

Serrill said he'd often share the story of his daughter's car accident with CPR

students.

"Here's people coming in to get a first-aid card, and here's this guy falling apart," he said. "But I don't mind being exposed."

His friend, Montgomery, is a paramedic who expanded and now runs the program. Serrill asked him to help with it in 2012, and since then, more than 400 people have participated.

"He says it and he lives it," Montgomery said of Serrill's "spread the love" mantra. "Next to my father, he's probably inspired me more than any other male role model in my life - in a very short time."

Serrill's raised money for cancer research too. In 2012, he sold wristbands, hosted Timber Jim's Cancer Killer Auction and solicited donations through the Timbers Army to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

It's a cause close to his heart because he's had his own battle with prostate cancer since his diagnosis four years ago.

He underwent seven weeks of radiation treatment, and ultimately, it forced him into early retirement.

"It took all my strength. It fried everything," he said. Eventually he had robotic-assisted surgery at Oregon Health & Science University.

Now, he said, the only thing missing is his strength, but you wouldn't know it by the long hours he spends working in the community garden.

The garden, located at the Tualatin United Methodist Church, was Serrill's idea. Church member Larry McClure said Serrill "drove by our church, saw the open space and walked into the church office and asked why they hadn't put a garden there."

Serrill, a lifelong Methodist, joined the church's congregation and got the ball rolling.

McClure never heard of Timber Jim before meeting him but speaks as fondly of

him as any Timbers fan.

"He will be out there working many hours by himself until people come up wanting to know what's going on," McClure said. "Then he teaches them."

Children living in the apartment buildings nearby often take gardening lessons from Serrill during the summer.

This past growing season, Serrill delivered 3,400 pounds of produce from the garden to Tualatin School House Food Pantry, providing food for more than 700 hungry families each month, he said.

"Timber Jim has had a huge impact in our community," said the pantry's program coordinator, Tracy Smith. "Not only is he extremely generous; he also has a huge heart to train, coach and inspire others. You never see him alone. He always has someone tagging along he's invited to join his life journey of helping others."

Even in late February, signs of life poked through at the Hilltop Community Garden, with collard greens and rosemary in full swing.

"Most of the work in gardening is preparing the soil, then you put the seed in, and God does the rest," Serrill said.

Soil will be his focus when he visits Tanzania this spring.

Ashley Holmer, of Lake Oswego, asked him to make the trip. She needed his help.

She's the founder and director of the Red Sweater Project, a nonprofit that operates a school in the Tanzanian village of Mungere. In rural Tanzania, the average family income is about \$200 per year, but the average secondary school costs \$500 per year,

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TRACY SMITH,
TUALATIN SCHOOL HOUSE FOOD
PANTRY COORDINATOR

'CUP BOUND AND CROWNED'

This recently released book by Prost Amerika is a tribute to the Portland Timber's 2015 winning season. Available at Powell's City of Books for \$29.95, the forward was written by Timber Jim Serrill and contains photos by Street Roots photographer Diego Diaz.