

HE GAVE 50,000 KIDS THEIR FIRST PAIR OF SHOES

Blake Mycoskie, 31

Founder, TOMS

RUNNER-UP: After finishing third in *The Amazing Race II* in 2002, the Los Angeles entrepreneur returned to Argentina, a favorite destination on the show. While visiting a remote village, he was struck by the number of children with cuts on their feet, unable to afford the espadrille-like shoes worn by locals. "I had an epiphany," he says. "What if I redesigned the shoe, and every time I sold a pair, I gave one to these kids."

THE PLAN: Mycoskie enlisted craftsmen in Argentina and began selling a more durable rubber-soled version of the canvas shoes for \$38 online (www.tomsshoes.com) in May 2006. In no time, he lined up 400 stores such as Nordstrom, winning fans like Karl Lagerfeld and Scarlett Johansson.

RESULTS: Mycoskie has given shoes to 50,000 kids in Argentina and will distribute shoes in South Africa this fall. Says Teresa Villalba, 47, a grateful mother of 12 in Argentina: "I've never been able to buy shoes for my kids. Blake has a great heart."

By Lisa Ingrassia

"For me, it was always about making money," says Mycoskie (with his shoes), "then giving it away."

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