



Jacquie Berglund



YEAR OF BIRTH: 1965

FAMILY: Happily single, with dog named Maggie

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree from Augsburg College, 1987, communications major and political science/sociology minor; master's degree from American Graduate School in Paris, international relations

Beer. It makes Jacquie Berglund feel all warm and fuzzy inside. But it's not just the hops and barley that do it. All profits from the 39-year-old's line of potato-based beer go to fund programs benefiting at-risk youth and the working poor.

The nonprofit is called the Spud Society.

Although she's a big fan of ale, Berglund hasn't always dreamed of running a beer business. The Augsburg College graduate knew only that she wanted to run her own nonprofit.

After college, she embarked on a seven-year stint in Paris, where she worked for the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation and earned a master's degree in international relations. In 1997, she returned to Minnesota and took a job as marketing director for the well-known Irish pub, The Local.

Under the influence of all that Irish beer, Berglund got an idea: Why not launch a product whose sales are simply aimed at helping people? With help from the James Page brewery, Berglund in 2000 created Finnegans Irish Ale, a brew "with a conscience."

Finnegans is now served in more than 140 bars and restaurants and 200 liquor stores throughout Minnesota, and is brewed by Summit Brewing Co. After covering costs and paying herself a "modest salary," 100 percent of Berglund's profits go to her established charity, the Spud Society. In 2003, the ale brought in \$10,000, and has allowed the society to double its giving every year since. Berglund expects to donate \$40,000 in 2005 and hopes to continue that rate of growth until at least 2007.

To establish Finnegans in the competitive beer market, Berglund said she has to think strategically. She tries to stay involved in the community.

"I figure every person I meet could be a potential beer drinker," Berglund said.

She's active in the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and sponsors local adult rugby teams — who, of course, like to drink beer.

When making sales calls to potential vendors, however, Berglund doesn't just talk about how tasty Finnegans is.

"A big piece of what we do is raise awareness, and give people an opportunity to get involved," she said.

In every sales pitch, she talks about homelessness issues or lets buyers know how the Spud Society helps low-income children through its various funding projects.

As a local beer, Finnegans has been on the receiving end of a little "Minnesota Nice." Pro-bono partners Fallon Worldwide, Lindquist & Vennum and McFarland Cahill

Communications help with advertising, legal issues and communications, respectively.

Their only payment? A couple of cases of suds — and that's the spirit Berglund's talking about.

"I'm a big believer in 'it takes a community,'" Berglund said. "If everyone did just a little bit, imagine what our community could be."

Kieran Folliard, owner of The Local, has known Berglund for 18 years. He said it's her passion for "the cause" and big heart that have gotten her this far.

"Good is never really good enough," Folliard said of Berglund's drive to succeed. "There's always an opportunity to grow the business and grow herself. I think that's how she looks at it."