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# SCENE & HEARD: Troy McClain with Special Olympics Volunteer Profile

Discussing his wheelings and dealings, local businessman and former "Apprentice" star Troy McClain uses the phrase "social capitalism" — a business strategy that profits individuals but also their communities. It's a philosophy McClain put into practice after Donald Trump's NBC reality show made him a household name in 2004.

The 36-year-old McClain, who lives and works in Meridian with his wife, Crystal, hosts a syndicated reality show, "HomeTeam," that helps Americans realize their dreams of home ownership. The real-estate investor, mortgage broker and consultant also travels the country sharing his rags-to-riches success story and community-minded business approach.

His heart, however, is with his sister, DoraLynn, and the Special Olympics. When McClain was a teen growing up in Alaska, his parents adopted DoraLynn, a hearing-impaired and developmentally disabled Inuit girl. After his parents divorced and his mother fell ill, McClain played a large role in raising DoraLynn.

In 1998, two years after he came to Boise to work for WMC Mortgage Co., McClain moved his mother and sister, who were living in Montana, to the Treasure Valley to be near better health and educational facilities. A Special Olympian for most of her life, DoraLynn, 26, has been active with Special Olympics Idaho for nearly a decade.

So has her brother. An avid volunteer, McClain also is the official spokesman for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, which will be held in Southwest Idaho.

## How excited are you about the World Winter Games coming to Boise?

This is a world-recognized, world-renowned event. Eighty-five different countries are going to see Boise. The event is going to generate exposure, jobs and money. It's going to give us a chance as a community to show off how proud we are of our city. Now throw on the fact you're supporting a wonderful cause like the Special Olympics.

It's going to create a legacy for Special Olympics Idaho. It will allow us to live off that wave for a long time. Maybe we'll end up with 10 or 20 volunteers we didn't have before. Maybe next year, we'll have to do one less fundraiser, one less commercial, and can support 10 more athletes.

## How have you used your "Apprentice" fame to help the Special Olympics?

What I chose to do with the exposure was different than most contestants. Our family had been on the receiving end of help for many, many years. I decided to invest in the organizations that had invested in us — Special Olympics Idaho, Dress for Success, Junior League of Boise. These are great nonprofit organizations that are really out there helping people like me, and now I'm able to be on the giving end of help instead of the receiving end. We took our "Apprentice" fame and applied it to great causes like these.

## What's it like being a celebrity in Boise?

It baffles me. And humbles me as well. People will come up to me at IHOP and say, "You eat here?!" Yeah, I still eat here because I always have. Do I get to go to certain places that maybe a lot of people don't get to go to? Yeah. But the biggest thing that keeps me grounded is my baby sister. She doesn't care if I'm Michael Jordan or Michael Jones or Troy McClain or whoever, as long as I'm good to her and treat her with respect. To her, it doesn't matter. As long as I am a celebrity in her eyes, all is good.

## How much contact do you have with your fellow apprentices?

I talk with Kwame (Jackson) quite a bit. I talk with Mr. Trump. When I fly to New York, I stop by. I call and make an appointment and either say hi to the employees or Mr. Trump himself.

Mr. Trump is kind of like a silver bullet — he doesn't want to talk about the weather, he doesn't want to talk about the wind, but if there's a business opportunity or business advice he can give, he'll talk to you about it. He has been a wonderful, wonderful supporter. It's been an amazing contact even to have.

## What advice do you give business people in your speeches and consultations?

They all seem to want to talk about the Trumps, Warren Buffetts and Bill Gates of the world, but instead, I talk about what I've learned from my little sister and others with special needs. She's profoundly deaf, but she's the one who taught me how to listen. She can feel it when I'm angry; she can feel it when I'm happy. She really listens to me. If my little sister, who's supposed to be deaf, can listen, imagine what I can do. I tell them there is more to learn about business from people with special needs than the Trumps and Buffetts. They just need to learn to look beyond the obvious.

My kid sister and others with special needs are the best teachers there are. If I want to talk about stocks and bonds, I'm going to call the Berkshire Hathaways of the world; if I want to talk about real estate, I'm going to call the Trumps. But if I just want to learn how to have a good, positive image in life, I'm not calling those guys — I'm calling my kid sister and spending a day with her.

## What ever happened to college? Did Trump give you the money he promised?

It was an evergreen offer. I approached Boise State (University) and asked, "Can you help me out with this opportunity?" (BSU President) Bob Kustra said, "If and when you're ready, we're here for you." I just haven't pulled the trigger. I've been busy doing other things. One day.

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