

Foundation Features

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{ Volunteer Profile }

Dennis Cooper

Atlanta CEO hopes to inspire fellow leaders to “be the change” for Shepherd Center.

{ By Rachel Franco }

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” These words so eloquently spoken by Mahatma Gandhi capture the philosophy of Dennis Cooper, CEO of Cooper-Global Chauffeured Transportation, Inc.

“Being the change” is not new to Dennis. In 2005, in response to Atlanta’s significant transportation challenges, Dennis launched Cooper-Global to help solve the problem. Dennis started Cooper-Global with just one car and has grown it into one of the largest chauffeured transportation companies in Atlanta. The company also services clients across the United States and overseas.

Before founding Cooper-Global, Dennis was chairman of RTM Restaurant Group, where he began to “be the change” for Shepherd Center. During his chairmanship, Dennis’ longtime friend, Billi Marcus, introduced him to the Shepherd family and the hospital. Impressed by Shepherd’s mission and pleased that Atlanta, his family’s adopted hometown, housed such a special facility, Dennis agreed to help Billi raise funds for Shepherd by co-producing and sponsoring a charity golf tournament. Aside from raising funds, the tournament – one the two would co-produce for more than 15 years – substantially increased community awareness of the hospital’s important work.

Dennis has also helped Shepherd by serving on the Center’s Advisory Board, a non-governing board that advo-

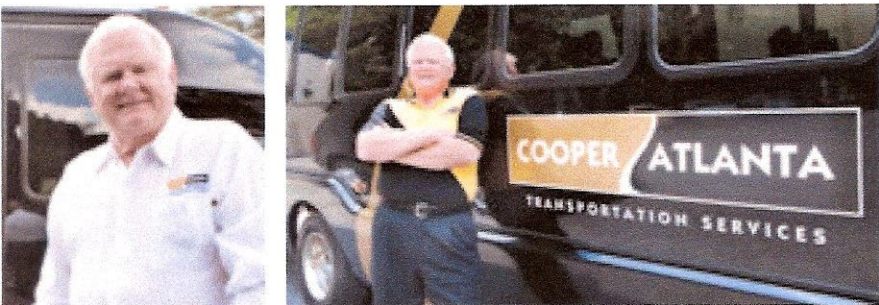
cates for Shepherd in the business and civic communities. When his schedule permits, Dennis, as part of the board, helps develop new relationships for the Center and introduces new volunteers and donors to Shepherd.

It is through his company, however, that Dennis ultimately strives to “be the change” for Shepherd. He kindly donates Cooper-Global’s luxury transportation services to Shepherd in numerous capacities. Most notably, Cooper-Global provides roundtrip bus service for the patrons of Shepherd’s annual Derby Day, a large outdoor party/fundraiser held in Conyers, Ga. Cooper-Global’s generous donation of upscale coaches increases attendance and ensures attendees (and volunteers) enjoy the event rather than worry about driving and parking. Dean Melcher, director of annual giving at the Shepherd Center Foundation, says the donation saves Shepherd more than \$20,000.

Cooper-Global also provides airport transportation services for out-of-town executives or VIPs visiting Shepherd, as well as for bands that perform at Shepherd’s annual Legendary Party. These in-kind services create a positive impression of Shepherd among these different individuals and save the Center time and money.

Through his company’s donations, Dennis genuinely hopes to influence his fellow Advisory Board members and other leaders in the community to “be the change.” “I do what I do because it’s the right thing to do,” Dennis explains. “I hope it influences other people and other companies to get involved. There’s a limit to what any company can do, but if everyone does his or her part, we can definitely make an impact on what’s going on in the world.”

Dean recognizes Dennis’ unique ability to “be the change.” “The thing that strikes me about Dennis is his passion for Shepherd Center,” Dean notes. “He feels very strongly about what we do and encourages other people to do the same.”



Dennis Cooper is CEO of Cooper-Global Chauffeured Transportation, Inc. He is a longtime volunteer and donor to Shepherd Center. Photos by Steven Dinberg