

How Brandin Swisher turned summer job into \$3m business

By APRIL GUILMET
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LONDONDERRY — Just over a decade ago, Londonderry resident Brandin Swisher was mowing neighbors' lawns using the equipment kept in the back of his car.

Things have changed a bit since then. Last year, Swisher's company, Alliance Landscaping and Excavation, Inc., yielded upwards of \$3 million.

Still, the 34-year-old married father of one and 1995 Londonderry High School graduate, who recently returned to his hometown after living in Manchester for the past 10 years, said he hasn't forgotten his roots nor the exuberant feeling he gets from helping those less fortunate.

As a teenager, Swisher began mowing lawns: a summer job that continued well into his college years at University of New Hampshire. By his senior year, however, Swisher's "summer job" employed 10 additional workers, and in fall 1999, he decided to withdraw from his college studies to pursue the expanding business.

Today, the company employs between 30 and 45 workers, depending on the season (Some workers only help out during the winter snow season.).

By the time Alliance Landscaping and Excavation was facing its second winter, Swisher became aware of the struggling Toys for Tots program when several of his employees, who were Marine reservists, were called to duty.

"That December, I lost four of my eight plow drivers," Swisher recalled. "I decided I wanted to honor them by collecting toys for the Londonderry Reserve Center."

Using the company's oversized trucks for toy pickup, Swisher and his employees collected thousands of toys for the program over the next

Brandin Swisher, 34

Home: Londonderry

Birthplace: Manchester

Family: Wife of nine years, Greta, and daughter Julianne, 2 1/2 years old

High school: Londonderry

College/post-grad degrees: Attended UNH Whittemore School of Business to senior year, then ran Alliance Landscaping, which had approximately 10 employees at that time

Current job: Owner of Alliance Landscaping & Excavation and Swisher Industries

Key past positions held: Co-owner of Design Works, co-owner of Dirt Works, co-owner of Performance Towing

Volunteer activities: Bella Tucker House (coordinated the landscaping outside the house in Londonderry), Boys Scouts (donated employee time to mow the lawns at Camp Carpenter and salt roads in winter), N.H. Food Bank (helped build holiday float and pulled float for last two years, winning first prize in each parade), American Breast Cancer (Van Loan showhouse)

several years.

"I liked giving back," he said. A former New Hampshire Shriners football player, Swisher regularly donates to the Shriners children's hospitals, and with his current office located next door to the Boy Scouts' Camp Carpenter in Manchester, Swisher and his employees regularly provide free lawn mowing and sanding/salting services to the camp.

Most recently, the story of a Londonderry elementary school student struggling with the aftermath of a life-threatening infection hit Swisher, who has a two-year-old daughter.

"No one hears a story like that without getting choked up," said Swisher, who didn't hesitate to assist with the community-based project of remodeling the home of Londonderry's Bella Tucker, who had to have both arms and legs amputated last spring after being stricken with streptococcus pneumonia sepsis.

After learning of the impend-



ing project through Suffolk Construction's Tony Nigro, who organized the efforts, Swisher worked closely to design and implement full landscaping for the Tucker residence.

"I was able to complete a patio, a retaining wall and walking paths using the materials I'd asked around 10 of my vendors to donate," said Swisher.

Bella returned to her newly outfitted home in early November.

"We'd always donated our manpower, but until then, I'd never thought of asking vendors to help out. We literally finished the project at the 11th hour," he said.

What's next for Swisher? He said the future is looking bright; indeed, with his recent purchase of 16 acres of land near the Auburn traffic circle: a site he hopes will soon be his company's new home.

"We hope to just keep on growing from there," he said.