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3 Minute Interview-Ruttenberg

By [Bill Myers](#)

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Daniel Ruttenberg is a partner at the Vienna law firm of Smolen, Plevy. He's also a vice president of Devotion to Children (devotiontochildren.org), a nonprofit group founded in 1994. Its mission is to help poor families obtain child care and early education.

How did you get involved?

The co-founder, Rosemary Lauer, told me she really wanted me to come. She told me it would be once a quarter. I'd just have to come to a meeting and give advice. Now I'm vice president, and it's at least twice a month.

What appealed to you about the work?

It was a mission I could really get behind. The mission of the charity is to provide child care to these families that otherwise can't work. These kids get into Head Start programs, that really helps them. The community really benefits because these kids tend to be more productive citizens.

How big of a problem is it in Northern Virginia?

It's a huge problem because the state government has made huge cuts. There is subsidized child care, but because of budget difficulties, there's been tremendous cuts. It's a real problem for the coming year because of the budget. There's a tremendous need in Northern Virginia. It's very expensive for child care.

Are you glad you got involved?

Yeah, I am. I think it's important to give back to the community. I feel like I'm doing a lot of good. It's very self-fulfilling, and I've met a lot of great people as well.

How many families have been helped?

We've touched a lot of families. Sometimes we do a lot for a few. That's really good because you can be hands-on.

Recently, we gave money to a woman. She was getting subsidized child care. She was succeeding at

work. She was succeeding so well that she got a promotion. When she got a promotion, she got a raise. That meant she would've been kicked off the subsidized child care rolls. Last year, we raised \$70,000 at our big gala. There's only so much you can do with that. We're hoping to break six figures this year.

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