

## Team attacks ‘time crunch’ *GoodDeeds ready for anything*

IT'S NOT AN "ERRAND" COMPANY. YET IT WILL DO YOUR ERRANDS. IT'S NOT A COMPANY THAT SEEKS THE OUT OF ORDINARY CHALLENGE. YET THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE READY TO DO.



SARAH HARRIS AND BETH MILLER ARE FOUNDERS OF GOODDEEDS.

Are you planning a home renovation project and need to select a contractor? Is there an event in your future that requires a caterer or entertainment, or other services? Or, perhaps your child needs to be enrolled in a new school and you need information about options.

A Newton company that provides many traditional services for "time crunched" persons, from shopping to party planning, also specializes in the unconventional, ready to do almost anything that requires time saving and doing it all under one roof.

According to a publicist, the purpose of the company is "to manage our time-crunched lives. People are desperately seeking ways to get things done, so they turn to resources like 'errand' companies. These companies are very helpful, but some of 'life's' projects require more specialized expertise and a higher level of trust than what 'picking up your dry cleaning' demands. For instance, you may need to research and analyze school systems for your child, or health care policy options for your parents...or, you need an inventory (with pictures and appraisals) of the possessions in your home for insurance purposes, or the best vet and kennel for your new puppy...all you'd prefer to do yourself because of how important they are, but can't - but you're also not going to get just anyone do them."

This is where GoodDeeds comes in. The firm, founded in 2003, expects to double its volume of business this year. It has grown to eight employees and current-

ly is working on 27 separate projects of which six currently are relocation jobs. While it does not necessarily seek out the unconventional requests, here are some of the unusual services the firm, GoodDeeds LLC, has provided:

- A frantic, high-level professional woman living in Massachusetts had just accepted a position in New York City and needed to be there in one week; GoodDeeds found her an apartment in New York City; obtained a broker and sold her house; handled sorting/storage/shipping contents of her home; sold her two cars; got her a country club and dating service in New York City; a vet, walker and reputable kennel for her dog; conducted tax analysis/recommendations re: move and relocation expenses; and planned a complete trip for her and her daughter to Aspen and Telluride, including dinner reservations, tennis times, spa services, etc.

- A newly arrived gentleman to the United States, needed a French/Italian/Spanish tutor for his five year old.

- A female divorce attorney needed information on how to transfer a deceased person to a foreign country. She also needed a reputable career coach.

- A woman (on a budget) wanted a makeover. (She felt like a dowdy mom.) GoodDeeds took her to appropriate shops, armed her with coordination strategies and techniques; brought her to the right salon to get

her cut/color matching her personality and busy lifestyle; visited with a makeup consultant who provided simple tips with dramatic results; developed note cards to keep as a guide. Cost: \$1,300. The woman reportedly cried 'happy' tears, had a new outlook, felt new confidence and, according to GoodDeeds, her husband loved it!

Sarah Harris of Natick and Beth Miller, a Newton resident all her life, founded the company after searching together for a firm that reflected their backgrounds and personal skills. Sarah came from the personnel placement industry and Beth's corporate background was in human resources. The pair had worked together for 13 years until a few years ago and maintained a friendship thereafter.

GoodDeeds offers six basic services: Home Project Management, Organizational Services, Personal Shopping Services, Event Planning, Travel Planning and Research and Resourcing. Each falls under "life management services," a term reminiscent of European companies.

“Much of our business is from repeat customers,” Harris said. She noted that having an experience in one area of the firm often leads them later to use of another.

"We want to be your right hand" is the company motto. When the company receives an unusual request, they are prepared to carry it out on an hourly basis. "We charge \$85 per hour, which is less than the cost of many services such as personal shoppers," Harris noted. She explained that often personal shoppers and event planners focus on one service and thus charge more. In acting as a "one-stop" service, GoodDeeds passes on any discounts it receives from vendors. In addition, company policy is not to accept referral fees.

Currently, their marketing effort consists of taking part in shows and events at schools, temples and charity auctions. The company selects vendors through a research and interview process. "Much of our business is from repeat customers," Harris said. She noted that having an experience in one area of the firm often leads them later to use of another.

A goal of the corporation is someday to introduce its broad range of services in other cities throughout the country. In addition, the founders see potential of offering their services to corporations.

The pair exudes energy and excitement about their business. An interview at 8:30 a.m. was no problem for these persons. They habitually have start their work hours ago. ▲

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