

## **Patrick Flanigan** **International Goodwill Ambassador, Valmark Global Gift Fund**

In November of 2017, Patrick Flanigan, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader from Columbus, Ohio, left his home town to embark on a life-changing, international adventure to Hanover, a small village in the mountains of Jamaica.

In the poorest regions of Jamaica, there are families who are unable to care for their disabled children. Abandoned, many of these children find their way to an orphanage called the Westhaven Children's Home. Given an opportunity to visit this home by his Uncle, Larry J. Rybka, and volunteer his time to help the children, alongside his Dad, David, and his brother, Jake, Patrick realized quickly that there are others in the world who are much less fortunate.

"It was shocking to see how much poverty was in the area," said Patrick. "It made me realize how fortunate I am compared to other kids around the world. I feel very blessed."



Patrick spent his two days at the Westhaven Children's home working very hard and doing whatever he could to make a difference for the children. He spent hours talking to them and playing with them and helping some of the adults that attended with construction-type work, including digging a pit by hand for a septic system.

Patrick was so inspired by his experience that when he came home, he wanted to do more to help the children he met. With a huge and benevolent heart, he called on his friends, family members and neighbors to raise money to buy wheelchairs for the children. He even built a flyer promoting the Westhaven Children's Home for his Dad to take to work to show his co-workers, hopeful of raising additional money. As a result of all his tireless efforts, Patrick raised almost \$5,000, which will be matched by the Valmark Global Gift Fund.

Thanks to others that have accompanied us on the Valmark service trips to the Westhaven Children's Home, these children in Jamaica have a safe place to live, a caring staff, healthy meals, new housing cottages and a playground. Patrick's efforts will make it possible for many of these children to now get a wheelchair. Some of the chairs will replace the original chairs that the Global Gift Fund delivered on our first trip in 2004.

Patrick plans to attend a second service trip to the Westhaven Children's Home later this year with his Dad.

"My experience in Jamaica is one I will never forget. For the first time, I saw a much broader and different perspective of the world. I've never been more motivated and inspired to do more to make a difference for the greater good."

Half of those who join us on our service trips include the children and grandchildren of Valmark Member Firms. At Valmark, we believe exposing people to service work at a young age helps them see that they can make a tremendous difference in the lives of others around the world. Take it from Patrick, who hopes his efforts and determination to make a difference will inspire other young individuals in the same way.