

In the Spotlight

Help Me Grow Champion

Delaware Lt. Gov. Matt Denn



***Champion
Help Me Grow-Delaware***

Matt Denn has served as Lieutenant Governor since January 2009, but he has long been a champion of children and the disadvantaged. His office is dedicated to advocacy for Delaware's children, including improving the state's schools, securing health coverage for Delaware kids, protecting abused and neglected children, and improving services to children with disabilities.

Matt and his wife Michele live near Newark, Delaware, with twin sons, Adam and Zach, and their pug, Lenny.

Why did you decide to endorse *HMG* and be involved as the champion?

Children's issues are why I ran for the office, and that's been the centerpiece of the work that we've done. *Help Me Grow* looks to us to be a really well thought-out, intelligent way of augmenting the services we've been trying to improve for kids already. It wasn't a difficult decision to get on board.

How has being a parent influenced your understanding of the needs of families?

Anytime you're dealing with the development of a child firsthand, a child you love, it's totally different than reading about it in a book. It enhances your understanding of how things play out on a day-to-day level, and it makes you that much more determined on an emotional level to do right by all kids.

It really does make a difference to have children of your own. My boys just turned seven; it's especially compelling to have kids in the early childhood age range as I'm working on these issues.

How do you envision *HMG* affecting Delaware's children and families?

What we are going to do with *HMG* is expand the universe of kids we are able to help when they most need it. We know that if we can get involved with some of these kids at a very young age, outcomes for them are going to be dramatically better. The opportunities to help are huge, and the consequences of not acting are tragic.

One priority for us has been early developmental screening. I found when I was running for office that Delaware is significantly behind in terms of the percentage of kids who get appropriate screening at an early age, so we started taking steps in 2009 to make sure family doctors and pediatricians who used American Academy of Pediatrics screening tools got reimbursed by insurance companies.

That was one obstacle to thorough screening we addressed, but it was just the first step of many. *HMG is going to be great for our state.*