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UP & COMERS

Craig Johnson
AGE 31 Chief strategist
Matchstic

Blake Howard
AGE 27 Creative director
Matchstic



Johnson



Howard

PHOTOS/JOANN VITELLI

The fusing of two creative minds willing to buck the norm on their way to blazing a successful path in the brand identity business has given rise to two up-and-comers with a zeal for community commitment. Craig Johnson and Blake Howard, chief strategist and creative director, respectively, for Matchstic, are sharing an Atlanta Business Chronicle Up & Comers award this year for their efforts to launch a successful business and give back to the city. The brand identity company has grown by more than 40 percent in

revenues each year since it was formed in 2001. This year alone, Johnson and Howard delivered nearly \$750,000 in client work and have upped their staff to eight. "I have always wanted to take 'starving artists' who thought that in order

to enjoy their job, that they had to do work that didn't make them any money," Johnson said. Clients include BearWise Landscapers; Sharefam.com, a social networking site for families; and All Callings, a Campus Crusade program that helps

college students find community while transitioning from school to career. Johnson and Howard are also touching the community with their same signature creative twists. For nonprofit Essential2Life, which reaches out to Atlanta's urban youth, they hosted a "Rapping Paper Party," where guests were invited to bring an unwrapped gift for inner-city youth and have it wrapped while professional rappers entertained the crowd. Recently they joined other Atlanta-based companies in a project to clean up a local bus stop. The project, called "You Got Benched," took on a bus stop that had no seating, covering or pleasing aesthetics and transformed it with landscaping and a uniquely designed bench dubbed "Benchy."

The two say they draw inspiration from faith. "[God] has blessed our business every step of the way, shutting more doors than He opens, but always leading us in the right direction," Howard said.

Matthew Johnson
AGE 32 Managing director of advisory services
KPMG LLP



food, supplies, clothes and other donated items for Rain-tree Village Children's Home in Valdosta. He has also been involved

Globetrotter Matthew Johnson uses his experience traveling to 40 countries and living abroad in India, Thailand and Malaysia to serve KPMG LLP's global clients. The recipient of KPMG's 2007 National Mentor Award, Johnson was promoted to managing director for the advisory practice this year. As the people management leader, he coordinates domestic and international engagements.

with the Education and Charitable Society (ECS) and Kottur Residents Education Society (KRES) in Chennai, India, since the mid-1980s when he taught in the organizations' schools and handled their finances. The ECS is a foundation that provides

Erinn Keserica
AGE 33 Director of marketing
Frazier & Deeter LLC



As director of marketing at Frazier & Deeter LLC, Erinn Keserica's efforts in brand position, niche development and marketing communications has helped elevate the company to be recognized as one of the top 100 accounting firms in the nation and one of the top 25 best-managed U.S. firms in 2008.

chapter of the Association for Accounting Marketing. Keserica is also a board member of the Frazier & Deeter Foundation and a founding

member of Project Impact, the firm's corporate volunteerism group. Contributing to the community is a high priority on her list.