

## Keeping Up with the Jones Family

“You will never meet such hard-working, generous people as Amanda and Chris,” says Retha Nesmith, a proud employee of Plant Therapy. Plant Therapy, an enormously successful essential oils company, is located right in Twin Falls – and Chris and Amanda Jones are the face of the operation. But aside from their business persona, Chris and Amanda are just as Retha reports: generous, kind and the type of down-to-earth neighbors we all hope to have.

They are also the parents of four beautiful daughters. Their warm and inviting home is set off from town just enough to feel as if one has wandered into the woods; the safety and seclusion, coupled with the walking/biking trails and resident wildlife, provide a gorgeous backdrop for an afternoon interview. As the girls play and a delightful aroma fills the air (essential oils, of course), Chris and Amanda provide a peek into their lives – both professional and personal.

Both grew up in the Magic Valley: Chris in Jerome and Amanda in Hansen. Married 14 years, they have chosen to stay here because of their extended families. “We enjoy our family,” Amanda explains. “We spend every Sunday at my mom’s; my sisters are my best friends; the cousins all get along.” Chris acknowledges that running the business would surely be easier in a bigger city, but “Amanda’s family and my mom keep us here,” he says.

And their family – specifically, Amanda’s mom – is why Plant Therapy exists. According to Chris, “Amanda’s mom is an aromatherapist and has always used oils. She started a small business in 2008, selling natural makeups, lotions and oils; I ended up buying the business from her. In 2011, we realized we needed to make some changes or we were not going to survive. We changed the name and look and dropped everything except essential oils.”

Lovingly describing her mother as a “voodoo” mom, Amanda discusses her growing up years: “She was very into natural things; everything was whole grains and we even had milk from our own goats. Eating white bread at Grandma’s house was a treat! Oils were never foreign to me.” Chris, on the other hand, had never even heard of essential oils until he met Amanda and her family. However, he grew up with an entrepreneurial father who instilled in him a keen business sense.

Already a successful small business owner, Chris was thus able to blend Amanda’s background with his own strengths, and Plant Therapy was the result. “Oils were always expensive because up until the last few years, it was all multi-level marketing,” Amanda recalls. “Once we started selling them, I really started experimenting and fell in love with them. I use them for everything from cleaning to my kids’ health to making my house smell good. Truthfully, I’m really not even involved in the business; I’m just a stay-at-home mom who uses oils.” She especially sings the praises of Plant Therapy’s KidSafe line, formulated for children aged 2-10 and a definite feather in the company’s cap.

“Some people have a hobby and turn it into a business; for me it was the opposite,” Chris says. He continues, “An essential oil is an aromatic compound extracted from a plant. It is a good alternative to synthetic fragrances and people buy, really, for two reasons: to use aromatically (because they smell good) or to use therapeutically.” Chris and his 45 employees endeavor to provide 100% pure, high-quality essential oils at a reasonable price. Oils are sourced from top suppliers around the world in large quantities at the best prices possible. “A lot of people’s first reaction is that oils are for ‘granola’ people, but perception is starting to change,” he adds.

And clearly, that is the case – as evidenced by Plant Therapy’s extraordinary growth in just a few short years. From 2011 to 2014, the company grew by almost 8,000% and quickly outgrew the two warehouses it occupied. Renovation and construction are currently underway on Plant Therapy’s new 40,000 square foot location, the site of the former Latham Motors, which will open sometime this year.

Named the 31<sup>st</sup> fastest-growing privately owned business in the United States (for 2014) by Inc. 500 magazine, Plant Therapy sells primarily through its website but is also available through Amazon and Zulily, and has approximately 275 wholesale customers who sell the product, as well. The Inc. 500 list also named Plant Therapy #5 in retail and #1 in Idaho – an honor that Chris does not take lightly. He runs his business with an emphasis on high standards, integrity and “doing right” by his customers and employees.

In addition, since its beginning in 2011 Chris has seen to it that Plant Therapy gives back. Over \$500,000 has been donated to charities and families in need, locally and worldwide. From providing a tank of gas for a stranded traveler to paying for hospital bills or funerals to supporting St. Jude’s hospitals for children, much good has come from Plant Therapy’s success. Thousands of dollars have been spent to build water wells in Africa, ensuring clean drinking water for many – and in 2014, Chris himself traveled to Africa to personally check on the wells.

But life with the Jones family is definitely not all about business. According to Amanda, it’s not uncommon to find the three oldest girls together in one of their rooms, dressed in dance clothes, having a “dance party.” “All of my girls love to dance,” she says.

Church is a huge part of the family’s life: “I feel like a big part of who we are is because of our membership in the LDS church,” Amanda says. They also enjoy riding bikes and camping, often heading north to Ketchum to camp in their trailer. No cell phone service is an added benefit: “Our family is happiest when we’re all together without electronics,” Amanda states. “Camping is the best because we’re all connected,” Chris adds.

“We like to vacation,” says Amanda, “and when we get out of town we like museums. We also like to go on cruises,” she notes, citing a recent family cruise to the Caribbean but sharing that “cruising without kids is nice, too!” “The vast majority of our time is spent with the kids,” Chris continues. “But we do go on dates pretty regularly, to dinner

and the movies.” “Sometimes we go to CSI games because it’s something fun to do,” Amanda says.

The Magic Valley is fortunate to keep up with the Joneses. With a business that will undoubtedly continue to support the local economy and a core belief that integrity, honesty and hard work are worth clinging to, the heart of the Jones family beats strong. “These may seem like simple concepts,” Chris says, “but I believe they are the foundation to a successful business – and life.” In a world where generosity, kindness and respect are sometimes in short supply, Chris, Amanda and their girls provide hope that truly good people really do still exist.