Intro (00:05):

It's time for supply chain. Now broadcasting live from the supply chain capital of the country. Atlanta, Georgia heard around the world supply chain. Now spotlights the best in all things, supply chain, the people, the technologies, the best practices and the critical issues of the day. And now here are your hosts.

Scott Luton (00:32):

Hey, good morning, Scott Luton, Adrian Patil, and Enrique Alvarez with you here on supply chain. Now, welcome to today's show. We have a wonderful conversation teed up Adrian Enrique. Good afternoon, afternoon, Scott. Great to see you again, uh, looking forward to this, uh, to the show as usual. Thank you. We are too Enrique. How are you doing? I'm doing great. Thank you very much for having us. This is, uh, this is our favorite show as well. And uh, and we have an amazing, well, two amazing guests. So it will be fun. Well, and you've already earned a new moniker, which we won't, we won't reveal we'll save that to later conversation. Well, we've had a great time on this series. This is a really special series for our supply chain now team, and of course, vector global logistics. So it's all about logistics with purpose, right?

Scott Luton (01:15):

We're featuring folks and leaders, organizations. They're all changing the world in some way, shape or form. And we're very pleased to partner with vector to make this, uh, this series happen. Hey, quick program in, uh, if you enjoyed this conversation, be sure to find, find us wherever you get your podcasts from. You can search for supply chain now subscribe for free money back guarantee on the content, but check out other similar conversations that you don't want to miss. Just like this one here today. So with no further ado, Enrique, Adrian, you ready to introduce our guests here today? I'm ready. Let's go. Let's do it. Got a great conversation. Teed up. Let's welcome in Tracy homey, executive vice president and cofounder of Samaritan's feet. How are you doing Tracy?

Tracie Ohonme (01:56):

I am doing great. Thank you guys for having me this wonderful Friday afternoon,

Scott Luton (02:01):

Excited to learn a lot more about you and your journey. And of course the story over at Summerton's feet. And you've got a colleague that joined you, uh, Angela Carlson, executive director of finance and general manager also with Samaritan's feet. Angela, how are you doing?

Angela Carlson (02:15):

I am doing well. I really appreciate you guys having us on today. And you know, this is now going to be monitored. Tracy's there very favorite podcast.

Scott Luton (<u>02:24</u>):

Wow. Right out of the gate. Well, we really appreciate that. You know, your ears may have been burning now for several weeks as we we've teed this up and really looking forward to learning a lot more about your story. And by the way, Angela, for folks that may be listening or watching this interview via video, we've already talked about your beautiful artwork just over your shoulder. So love that, that kind of lights up our interview room a little bit, doesn't it sure it does. Yeah, absolutely. And, and it's not a

Magnolia blossom, which I should know. Having, having grown up in Aiken, South Carolina, Magnolia is on every corner and it looks like also across your other shoulder, is that from Augusta national? I was going to ask that as well, but it looks like a little too much water. It's a little, it's a little too much water. It's actually a bridge in France. Okay. Awesome. International appeal just over your shoulders. I love that, Angela. All right. So let's see here. We're going to get started. We're going to get to know you both of y'all a little bit better before we dive into Samaritan's feet. So let's start with you Tracy, and tell us a little about yourself and, and your journey to get to where you are here today.

Tracie Ohonme (03:33):

Yeah, I would love to. So on the personal side, I am a, a wife, a mom global citizen, my husband and I are co-founders of Samaritan's feet. We have four children ages, 27 down to 18 three girls. And in true African style, our last child is a boy. So you've got to get that boy in there and in the African culture. So he's here. Surprise, surprise. Um, so 27 down to 18 keeps us very busy on the professional side. Um, we have started Samaritan's feet back in 2003 with the goal of providing 10 million shoes, pairs of shoes to 10 million individuals in the next 10 years. That was our big, hairy, audacious goal. When we started, my husband is originally from Nigeria and that's kind of the catalyst for what, what propelled us into besides, you know, servants of what we're called to do for Samaritan's feet. So we're in our 18th year now, believe it or not. Um, and logistically speaking, we started in our garage. So that gives you a little bit of where we're at to where our warehouse space is. Now, as Angela can attest to, we we'd seem to bus over the seams from our warehouse to, to where we need to get to. And, and you know, that is exciting. Truck loads can be exciting and challenging as well. So logistics with purpose is definitely something that's always on our forefront of our mind.

Scott Luton (04:51):

So 10, 10, 10. I love that. So a little birdie told me that you've got a great story in terms of how you met your husband, Manny. Oh my God. Anything you can share there.

Tracie Ohonme (05:01):

Well, since I'm way past, you know, that that age range to be able to remember everything, I get to tell my version of it, whether it's full truth or not, you don't have another side of the story. So you'll have to take me up at what it is. But, um, as I mentioned, my husband was originally from Nigeria. So if you guys remember back in the day had chemo, Malaysia, Juan was a big basketball player for Houston. My husband had some of the same coaching staff. So in that time we didn't have zoom and teams and all this great way to market. So my husband sent in five, uh, opportunities via coaches for playing basketball here in the U S the offers were five scholarship offers from university of, I'm not going to tell you where I'm from yet to, um, the university of, uh, Oklahoma, Christian, et cetera, et cetera, these great offers.

Tracie Ohonme (05:53):

So all five of them came in. His visa did not. So not until his RESA got approved. Did he ended up picking? He said, I'll pick the, the brochure with the best looking, uh, marketing materials in front of it. And he ended up picking the university of North Dakota at Lake region. And that's where we met. I'm originally from the Midwest about an hour and a half from Winnipeg. So that tells you how far North I live or lived and grew up. I will say, I wish I had some of your guys's accents because they're much better than the little bit that I still have left. But basically when he came to the U S and to the school, it was in my hometown of about 3000 people. And so he was a year ahead of me. We had a lot of the same friends, a

lot of the same sporting activities. And so we met in college. We had an event called snow days where you had a King and a queen. He was the King. The previous year we had started dating in that year. They come back and crown the queen. I was the queen for four student Senate and student government as Emmanuel was the King. So the time we were dating, he came back in crown his queen. And since then, guess what? That's what I visited. So that's my story. And I'm sticking to it. And Angela can't say anything else. So there we go,

Scott Luton (07:04):

Enrique and Adrian, you wanted to tell us that we're in the midst of royalty. So shame on exactly. Other than that, it's a great story. It really is a great story. And then of course, secondly, uh, Keem, Elijah won NBA hall of Famer. I mean, he was huge on the scene. That's right. And the rockets one, or say they went back to back titles. If my memory serves me right back in the nineties. So

Tracie Ohonme (07:30):

I love that.

Scott Luton (07:32):

Yeah. Hey, we're, we're hoping the Hawks trying hard to get back, but, but Tracy, thanks,

Tracie Ohonme (07:40):

Charlotte Hornets. We, we can only, we can only dream,

Scott Luton (07:43):

Hey, mirrored. Back to good old days. Alonzo mourning and Larry Larry Johnson, right? Yep. Dell Curry was a three, three pointer specialists for Hornets back in the day. Of course his son is lightened up the scene out and golden state. And so that's when I knew basketball the best back in the nineties point, Tracy, we'll see golden age. Maybe can, may come back, but thanks so much for it's all I got. It's all I got. All right. So Angela, same question to you. Tell us a little about yourself and, and, and same thing, your journey kind of to where you are here.

Angela Carlson (08:15):

Okay. Just wanted to, to, uh, do an add on to Tracy's story. One of my favorite parts of she and Mary's story is, you know, when Manny talks about his whole trajectory and coming to America, he talks about it as one of God's, uh, you know, funny jokes in his life is taking a boy from Nigeria and putting them in, in North Dakota. But, uh, Tracy and I, our personal lives and, you know, very similar, um, I was drawn as well. Um, 18 to 28 have been, um, newly married for a year and have gone back and forth between the corporate and the arena, um, and landed at Samaritan's feet two years ago. Um, and it's been a fantastic experience. Um, it's just a, it's a really, really great, great company. Great mission.

Scott Luton (09:08):

Yeah. And ambitious. I love the, uh, Tracy, I think you said the Beehag big, hairy, audacious goals. I think that stemmed from what was the popular business book series, uh, last, well, I guess. Yeah. Yeah. So I love that. And clearly you are making some headway on big goals to serve a ton of people across the world. And so Angela w when did you and Tracy meet, you've been with the organization now two years, where did y'all meet?

Angela Carlson (09:34):

Well, we met during my interview. The rest is history. You know, it's funny, the God connections. And sometimes you forget those, those connection points as they're woven together. But unique thing with Angela's one of our colleagues and, and obviously mutual friends is just said, Hey, there's an opportunity for this lady. Do you want to interview her? And, and the rest is history and she's, she's here to stay with us. We like to say within our SF family and volunteers, once you, once you drink the Kool-Aid a little bit, you kind of become, or not the mafia, but it's hard to get out once you're in. And not because we don't let you because you don't want to. So it's, that's, that speaks a little bit to just the, the nature of the team that we have and the love that, that they show. They showed everybody that comes in contact.

Scott Luton (<u>10:24</u>):

Awesome.

Adrian Purtill (10:25):

Tracy, talking about connections quickly. I first learned about Samaritan's feet through my, uh, son-in-law Brian Davis from truest. He forwarded the Gawler event to me last year, and I enjoyed watching that on the Saturday night. It was wonderful. So that was my introduction.

Tracie Ohonme (10:42):

Oh my gosh. You just made my heart so much happier and I love you even more because we love Brian.

Adrian Purtill (10:48):

Yeah. He's, he's wonderful. We love him. He's the most incredible husband to our daughter and son-in-law,

Tracie Ohonme (<u>10:55</u>):

I love your daughter. So that just makes me even, yeah. That's that's we can, we can be done now. That was great. That's all I need.

Scott Luton (11:04):

Yeah. Bless be the ties that bind a much smaller place. Once you start peeling the layers back. One final question. I will turn over to Enrique sounds like, uh, Tracy given Angela's background, especially corporate and other nonprofits. So y'all gotten quite a great get for the team there at SF as you put it.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>11:22</u>):

Yes, definitely. And I think, um, you know, Scott talks a little bit about our leadership team in general, not just myself and my husband, but we are huge proponents of making sure we have smart to if not smarter people around us. And we certainly do. And we have people that have the heart, which you can't teach, and to have the expertise, to be able to help us carry forward the vision. We started out with that big Beehag, but we really see ourselves as becoming the entity that can help help to zero. So we want zero Sheila's children in the world. And how do you and partner

Tracie Ohonme (<u>11:54</u>):

With other organizations with like-minded citizens that can help you accomplish that? So that someday we will see that there is a world with zero Sheila's children and not just children, but individuals, but

obviously children resonates with all of us, especially women when we are centered on how do we affect our community for the change that we need to see in the difference that we want made well said

Scott Luton (<u>12:14</u>):

Very well said. All right. So Enrique, where are we going next?

Enrique Alvarez (12:17):

No, Angela, I wanted to start with you. Cause you mentioned it. Um, no, you were saying that you've had like corporate experience and then you went to the non-for-profit and corporate experience back again. So a couple of times, so how, tell us a little more about your professional life and then also a little bit about what kind of maybe a moment in your life that made you make that decision and shift from a corporate environment to a non-for-profit environment, which, which I'm sure it's very different at many different, uh, multiple levels.

Angela Carlson (12:45):

Yes, definitely. You know, I kind of gone back and forth between the non-profit and the for-profit arena and actually was not, um, you know, really was not in the process of looking for a job when, when I got approached by the mutual friends about Samaritan speeds, you know, there was a longing, you know, with a need to get back into the nonprofit arena, but wasn't really sure, you know, whom I wanted to align myself with and, you know, it's, God definitely had a plan and it's been, it's been really great the last two years, but, you know, I've, I've worked in the healthcare space, you know, I've worked in banking, uh, you know, I've kind of been all over all over the board. I've worked with churches. And so it's just, uh, you know, being, having the ability to, to serve in your everyday work life is just it's it's time announcements and nothing else. For me,

Enrique Alvarez (13:37):

It sounds like you have a big passion for giving, giving back and helping people. Where does that come from? Can you kind of trace it back to maybe a moment or a couple of stories from your past that kind of make you the person you are now?

Angela Carlson (13:51):

I mean, I would say for me, you know, I was, I was raised by, you know, parents who were very giving of themselves to the people around them, to their community, you know, first and foremost, you know, and just having a very full, very enriched, you know, church life is, you know, has kind of fed into that as well, but just really just really deep connections with people in general, there is so much need out there and there's so much, there's just so much need for just general kindness. And so I, I feel that, you know, most, most of my desires, you know, are fueled from just a very strong inclination to really connect with people on a deeper level.

Enrique Alvarez (14:34):

Absolutely. And you probably have seen like this, um, need through throughout your career because you've been actually moving from different industries and different positions. And so that's no, that's definitely something that, uh, that resonates with me. And I think with everyone here on this, let me just shift gears to Tracy now. And Tracy, could you tell us a bit more about why, why did you start this? Why, why shoes, why Samaritans feed with your story and your personal background and what you just told

us a little bit about your, the way you met your husband? Why, why did you start this and, and what was the moment for you?

Tracie Ohonme (<u>15:12</u>):

Oh my gosh. Yeah. Listen, I'm going to give you the condensed version because we could be on the phone. We could be on the phone for the weekend, if you want to hear the full story, but I have to give the reader's digest version. So I want it to be applicable to the time and keep people's attention. But for myself personally, I think one of the things that I have I've from when I was young and growing up in a smaller community, you quickly know the haves from the have-nots, right. And you, and you feel that I grew up in that environment a little bit, grew up with, you know, my mom, even though doing her best, still had to take on a lot of the responsibility for our upbringing. And because of that, some of the, have not that happens when you're in that, that, uh, predicament, but I will say this one of those moments for me was when I was a senior in high school and we had to write a paper kind of like an exit paper that you do.

Tracie Ohonme (16:01):

And so one of the things that we had to write was what do you want to do when you grow up? Well, 18 year old, you have no clue, at least, I didn't know. Um, and so I just remember writing a really good paper, at least I know I got a good grade on it. I still have that paper actually, because it was probably one of the, one of the best grades that I got for my senior year, as you have those great senior year moments. But the thing that was asked was what do you want to be when you grow up and how do you plan to do that? And I just remember telling, um, and writing it on the paper, I want to help people, and I want to own my own business. Now, how I got to that. I had no clue and I would lie if I told you that when Emmanuel and I got married, we had this great plan of how we were going to start this organization and wham.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>16:41</u>):

Um, I worked in hospitality and tourism a lot. I booked, uh, corporate travel for years before we started Samaritan suite. So we were that kind of a conglomerate for a lot of companies from Weyerhaeuser to computer science corporation, to government entities. So I booked a lot of corporate accounts and loved it, loved it, loved it. Um, we moved to Charlotte and continue doing that as we raised our children and then I was called to homeschool. So we can talk about that another time. And those fun, those fun benefits of logistically trying to homeschool for kids and lots of different ages as logistics applies to every part of our life. Doesn't it. But I will say, um, my husband coming from Nigeria when my children were young, our two oldest, his father got really sick and he had to go back to Africa. First time he had been back in 10 years and his father was dying and, and was dying from cirrhosis of the liver.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>17:33</u>):

And so that was the first time he had been back in his country, feed on the ground as an adult and his eyes were open and he was shocked. And he talks about the fact that he couldn't even use the bathroom when he came, when he got there, because they grew up in a small two bedroom house, 15 people, you know, the more the merrier, but not enough space for that many people and certainly not enough income. And when he got to the park that he grew up in, that was outside of his home called Rowe park, where he grew up playing basketball and grew up playing sports. He also grew up selling spirits and minerals and beverages because part of his job as the age of nine, was to provide water soft

drinks to the athletes that were around that park. And when he was home, Molly, all he could see was the fact that, gosh, did I grow up like this?

Tracie Ohonme (18:21):

Did I grow up? Because you know, when you're surrounded by in a forest and every tree looks the same, you don't realize that there was great need, but God still provided for his family. So when he was home, he really, I would say it was the catalyst for the start we had. We had done a lot of things within our local church. And Angela mentioned that in her, in her brief personal life, that's very important to us. We had ministered and, um, Saturday morning church for kids feeding the homeless programs, things that were still kept us comfortable in our day to day life, but not until my husband went home and went back to that image of being that nine-year-old selling drinks and soft drinks to two people in that park. And remembering that when he was nine years old, there was missionaries that came to Africa and they were playing games like vacation Bible school.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>19:10</u>):

You know, when you go, when you pass out different things to kids in, in those, in those areas and just want to love on and bless people. And so, uh, the missionary, there was from a Midwest town in Wisconsin and was playing a game and the game Emmanuel didn't know what it was. He all they've seen with soccer balls. He he's bouncing around this big orange ball. I was like, Ooh, this looks interesting. You don't have to kick this thing. It's a basketball. And so just was playing games in that park, keeping the kids entertained, showing them that they were seen and loved. And so out of that, they did a, a shooting competition. And here's where the story gets a little bit. I don't know, I wasn't there, but so they included Emmanuel in this, as he was selling, you know, minerals and sodas, they asked him if he wanted to play. And, and so he came along, you know, a lot of the kids pushed him aside because again, he was just a street vendor selling, selling soft drinks to help his mom, but he got to get in line and play this game. And, and the guy Dave that was from Wisconsin said, Hey, whoever makes the first shot gets a prize. So Emmanuel likes to say his first shot. It was nothing but net and blah, blah May have been like not have been. Yeah. But

Tracie Ohonme (<u>20:19</u>):

Because of that, the prize and Dave pulled the manual aside and I'm shortening this so much because it's such a great story to tell, but I'm going to condense as much as possible. But what had happened that day was Dave pulled the mail aside and said, Hey, wait, we have a prize for you. The prize was a pair of shoes. Okay. And so look at Amanda and nine-year-old and then he goes back 10 years later. So we're in our early twenties. Um, and that imagery is coming back to his, to his mind of, Hey, I remember this was a Eureka moment for him. Right. And so what does that look like? And so, um, David told them, listen, you know, no matter your circumstances, your environment, God has a plan for you. And manual was so excited about those pair of shoes. First kid in that area, first kid in his little village and community receive a pair of shoes, let alone a pair of tennis shoes.

Tracie Ohonme (21:09):

So if you guys have ever been on a mission strip, and if you haven't, here's the plug to come with us, when everything opens back up, of course he did not want to wear those pair of shoes because it's like having a Mercedes-Benz in that area. Right. And, and having that opportunity to have a pair of shoes in his community was invaluable running home to his mom to show the shoes and just say, mom, look what I've gotten. And a lot of the kids, when you go on those mission trips and still do that same thing,

they put those new shoes over their neck, back in their, in their hope that we give them because they don't want to mess them up for a lot of them. That's their first good pair of shoes to get them back and forth. And as you know, or know, or don't know, shoes in the U S is, is still on the top 10 gifts that kids need for back to school. So it's crazy to think in the us, it's, it's replenishing and making sure kids have shoes for the school year that fit them properly overseas. It's still that, but it's amplified because that's a lot of people's main mode of transportation. And that was for Emmanuel and so long story, hopefully even shorter. When he went, when his father passed away, it was an eye-opener and he came back. He has his degree in logistics and supply chain and economics and agriculture thought that

Enrique Alvarez (22:22):

Is that what he was doing at the time. Uh, he actually, his dad passed away.

Tracie Ohonme (22:27):

He worked, he worked for a, a startup it company here in Charlotte, North Carolina. But his ultimate goal someday was to be able to provide food for people all over the world. And when we were in college, actually worked for pioneer seed company, planting corn and other things of that nature. But again, it was, I think an Angela has talked about it too. I think you either seen that modeled that kindness and that generosity, whether that be through your family or through your church or through friends, or that's so innate in you, because you've come from that environment where if you would have had that person advocate for you or that person want to help you or that, that mentor. And so for Emanuel, it was always ingrained just like for myself that I know what it meant when I had a big sister helped me Emmanuel knew what it meant when Dave gave him that pair of shoes.

Tracie Ohonme (23:18):

So paying that forward, what you've been, you've been encouraging him and blessed him to be a blessing back. And so that's always been his Eureka moment in the back of his head was probably when he went back, you know, when his father passed away and then coming back here working, he had just gotten the job and moved us to Charlotte, actually our first big boy and big girl job out of, out of college, um, mine was still in the Midwest, but my company was also here in Charlotte for Emmanuel it's. It was one of his mentors and still is that he took his first job out of college and he was actually at a con, uh, used to be, Oh, what are the logistics conference used to be called CMS or see us, can't remember the term. If you guys have been to some of those, those logistics software conferences, but he met his potential boss at that conference in San Diego.

Tracie Ohonme (24:06):

That connection brought us to Charlotte. And just from there worked in, in software, went back when he came back from Nigeria, still worked for that same software company. And it took us about five years before God said, you're comfortable. You've been doing the same thing. You've been working corporate America, you know, coming from Africa in any place I think, and even people in the U S you, once you feel like you've accomplished your dream and your vision, you want to keep making that American dream happen. And so to be called out into full-time ministry, not knowing who's going to sign your paycheck. It took us a few years to get brave enough to do it and to jump out and not just keep our big foot tapped in the water, but to really make more of a ripple effect in the lives of people.

Enrique Alvarez (24:48):

That's, um, that's incredibly impressive and very inspirational. And it's a great story, too. And so when he came back, did you immediately started collecting some shoes? And you mentioned earlier today that you had like a, you start in your garage, like we did this huge, uh, it companies, they all start in their garage. It sounds like. So tell us, tell us a little bit more about the garage and how, because you told the story and I'd say it's very, it's very uplifting and inspirational, and it's also incredibly exciting. I mean, I, I kind of feel like someone should listen to you and maybe write a book or make a movie out of this, because it sounds like a, like a really great, uh, exciting story. But at what point did you say, okay, well, tell me a little more about the transition, right? When was it that you said let's do this shoes Africa,

Tracie Ohonme (<u>25:36</u>):

Right. Gosh, you know, like I said before, we, we both knew and both had those Eureka moments in our life that, that we were called to something bigger. I think we all know that I think we all are, if we're true to ourselves, know that we are born into this world to accomplish a purpose, and that's unique to each one of us individually. And so finding that is the sweet spot of living a life that's full and abundant. And so once a manual got back from Nigeria, we just really went back to life as normal. It wasn't until, Oh, probably two beginning of, you know, latter part of 2001, 2002. And we started in 2003, where we really started to say, what is it going to take? So we got away. Um, we are ones that like to plan and set our strategy and our themes for the year.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>26:25</u>):

So we went away to Charleston. I remember this, he had been talking to his boss at this time. And again, I said it was a young it company. So they had some venture capitalists that want a little bit more gray hair in their business suites. And so Emanuel and his boss are still very good friends. And, and Emanuel started sharing a little bit more about this that we had. We didn't even have a name at the point. And we went back and forth on a lot of different names. And so they just continued to share a manual, shared a little bit more of our vision, a little bit more of a vision. And so there was an opportunity where Jay, his boss at the time said, Hey, let's, let's get, get away to a game and, and just talk. And he asked a manual question that kind of started some of this and said, Hey, if, if you could do anything, what would you do? You talked a lot about this organization. You're thinking about starting, what would it take to start at? And Emmanuel was a little bit, you know, taken back. Cause when your boss starts asking you questions about

Enrique Alvarez (27:17):

Why are you asking me, am I in trouble? If you kind of start reading between the lines of like

Tracie Ohonme (27:24):

What they're getting at there. And so that was just a, just a brief, little, like, wanna want to kind of get a gate check of where you're at manual came home and share that. I said, let's just get away and pray. So we went to Charleston for a weekend, prayed. That was a Friday. We talked about, Hey, what, what is it going to take? We had savings. We tried to plan well and plan our life a little bit so that we, we actually can, you know, not live, not live without having some preparedness and preparation, as we all try for our children, we're still little so had about a year's versus savings. And Emmanuel said, you know what? If I could get like another six months, if I could get a severance of six months, we could probably make this stretch for a couple of years, we pared down everything that wasn't essential came back Sunday, Emmanuel went to work on Monday. You remember that conversation you had with Jay Jay's in his office, Emmanuel's getting ready to go to lunch and walked by his office, said, Hey, it might come in and,

and, uh, let's chat for a minute and shut the door. Okay, well, now you've had this conversation offsite. Now your boss is telling you It's coming. This is not feeling good. This is not feeling good at all.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>28:25</u>):

And so at the time I had only been working. Part-time still booking corporate travel, but, but knew that with two children and a third on the way our son was born in 2002, we started the ministry in 2003. And so this wasn't the opportune time to step out in faith and not have a paycheck and live on your savings. It just wasn't well by lunchtime on Monday, Emmanuel called me and said, Hey, I think I just got fired. Jay, basically called them in and said, you know what? That dream you've been talking about. What if I can help you? Somebody else, the VCs that are coming in want to bring in their own team. And you're in one of the positions that we don't need to have. You can go into this department because we still love what you do. Or an a manual had obviously worked his way up the totem pole.

Tracie Ohonme (29:08):

So it wasn't really wanting to take a lateral or a step down and just set at that time. I guess this is, this is what God's doing is pushing me out a couple of years before that, even before we went and prayed, I had went into a Joyce Meyers conference. And one of the things that she had said was just giving me some unique words. This lady that was at the conference with me and saying, you know, I see truckloads of shoes being delivered. This was before we haven't shared our vision or our dream with anybody. And this was before manuals boss said, you're finished. She had potent, this was another Eureka moment. I gave you a little bit of Emmanuel as mine was also, this was going to the choice Meyers conference, a friend of a friend, kind of like how I got to meet Angela and so thankful for those friends connections, but had pulled me aside out of the car and said, you know, I know that you've been called to some other things that God's putting on your S your heart and your husband's even putting them in a box.

Tracie Ohonme (29:58):

You should not be in the backseat anymore. I see a Conway of trucks taking shoes. Your family has all been called to do this because I had put the request out to our Lord that if we were going to go into and do something in a ministry, and that was going to service other individuals around the world, I needed to make sure that my family was still able to serve and be a part I'm not going to gain the world and lose my family to what God's called us to. And I knew God promised us that. And so one of the unique things, and I still have this bottle of water. If she said, Hey, do you mind if I wash your feet? So she washed my feet with the deer park bottle of water. And up until when COVID happened, you know, that's one of the things that we do when we distribute shoes to people all over the world is we wash their feet because we want them to know there's a transaction and there's an interaction that happens. And there's a, we see you. We love you. We value you. And as Angela shared, showing forth that love and generosity and kindness in a world that can be very much the opposite. It can be very callous in hurried and not allowed to be interrupted. So we have those interactions with people intentionally so that they know, I know your name. I don't want to know a face of billions of children. I want to know names of people. And so

Enrique Alvarez (31:08):

It's a powerful message that you're sending, right? And I'm guessing that's just something that, uh, everyone clearly is seeing it and experiencing it. And I think you guys have done an amazing job kind of leading the way in terms of helping others. And I'm sure that at least your children must be incredibly proud of what you guys have done. And it's such a, such an amazing thing to have growing up as well.

Right? I mean, the example you said for your children, that's probably something a very unique way of changing the world too. So, yeah, it's amazing. Thank you. Thank you for sharing all those.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>31:43</u>):

Um, and sorry if I got long-winded you can always do it. Stop it.

Enrique Alvarez (31:47):

No, no. We'll, we'll schedule a couple of new interviews with you. I just have a quick question. So you said 10, 10, 10 was the initial goal when you started right. 10 million, 10 choose 10 years. What were, or are we now from a numerical standpoint? How many shoes? Uh, gosh, well, 13 years after

Tracie Ohonme (<u>32:07</u>):

Angela, Angela is my numbers gal, and she knows that off the top of my head, way better than I do. We are just under 8 million serves.

Enrique Alvarez (32:16):

So we have to make a collective push to get this 10, 10, 10 out of the way. And honestly, I think we all get up, uh, by, in 2020. I think we can all count that as not a full year for purposes of your goal. And let's make sure that we actually help you push to the 10 million Mark, but that's, uh, thank you again, both of you. It's a, it's great.

Tracie Ohonme (32:37):

You're welcome. No, and I think, um, it's, it's

Tracie Ohonme (32:40):

Definitely something that, as we've said before, how do we push to get everybody? And, you know, the awareness of all of us being a global minded citizen, um, helps to accomplish that goal. Yep.

Scott Luton (<u>32:51</u>):

So before Adrian asked about one aspect of your mission, Angela, won't bring you back into it because it's neat to kind of hear Tracy walk us through those journeys, but you see it day in and day out, right? The cultural element we'll touch on shortly, the mission, the service, and of course the business that just has to happen. Anything, you know, in terms of what you saw early on and how it, it really met that need, which it, which you spoke to of, of needing to serve others, anything, any element of Tracy's story that really resonates the most.

Tracie Ohonme (33:23):

Uh, I mean, there's so many pieces of it. So, you know, and for me, you know, one of, one of my Eureka moments was my very first week with Samaritan speeds. Um, we had a local, um, shoe distribution going on at movement school over off of freedom drive. And, you know, I remember being at that shoe distribution and, you know, at first the volunteers would come and pick up the shoes after they found out the size, they'd go and take it to the kids. And so worked, you know, doing that for a little while and then, you know, had the privilege of, you know, interacting with some of the kids. Um, you know, it was, you know, sitting in a circle with them while they were waiting to be called and then got to actually go and, and be present or, you know, some of the foot washing and them getting their issues.

Tracie Ohonme (34:08):

And there was a little girl, um, she was eight years old and of course I'm going to get choked up song in story, but it was, it was her very first pair of new shoes. And just seeing that pure joy, you know, just in being singled out and being loved on and, and, you know, prayed for, you know, in that moment and having that connection. And, you know, of course, again, it was, you know, a weekend and, you know, you're drinking from a fire hose and, you know, it's, you're trying to learn, learn all things. And in that moment it was like, this is totally, totally where I'm supposed to be and was so completely hooked from that moment on, you know, and I've been to a couple of shoe distributions, you know, since, I mean, obviously being in the, in the day to day business, there's not a lot of extra time to, you know, to be on the front lines.

Tracie Ohonme (34:57):

But I went to Northern Kentucky with one of our distribution reps, um, and did a couple of distributions with her. And we had partnered with some of the Walmart employees and there were some of them, Walmart employees who, you know, they had driven down from Michigan just to participate in this particular shoe distribution, because it was a, you know, a staff event that they wanted to do. And so I was talking to several of, you know, of the people right before we were going to be doing the event and some of the people, and this was like their work or fifth year doing it, you know, hence why they would drive four hours and, you know, just to, just to participate. And so we, you know, we were talking, they were like, you know, they said every time that you know, that we come here, it is so to, you know, not just, you know, lose yourself in, in that moment and just get so overly emotional about, you know, the needs and the fact that you are touching, you know, the, these kids' lives, you know, and I told them, I said, Hey, you know, becoming a mom, you know, obviously your skill at being overly emotional and crying at the drop of a hat goes way up.

Tracie Ohonme (<u>36:01</u>):

But I told them that, you know, taking on this job and working with this organization crying is definitely a resume worthy skill of mine at this point.

Scott Luton (36:12):

Well, yeah, I imagine, well, I imagine I know all Eureka moments are not equal, right? You have some small ones, you got big ones, but I can only imagine, I bet it was an epiphany and, and, and, and kind of an, a life altering moment, not to be dramatic, but accurate to see these kids, you know, excited to have what they really need and then get it in the moment. And, and it's probably a mixture of emotions, but I can, I can only imagine how powerful of a moment that was.

Tracie Ohonme (36:42):

Yeah. And, you know, and just to the, you know, those reminders, um, you know what I mean, that, that was a distribution that we did, that was five minutes away from our office. And, you know, we, we, we have a huge international focus, but we, you know, we have, uh, you know, an equally large focus, you know, here in the United States. And it's just those constant reminders that there is such an unbelievable level of need, you know, right here in Charlotte, you know, in all, in all States. Um, yeah, that's one of the really cool things that we've been able to do. And, you know, this is another Eureka moment, you know, in the face of COVID and everything that's gone on and all of their restrictions around having, you know, public events and, you know, being in contact, being them, being around people.

Tracie Ohonme (37:29):

And so we've, we've been able to, um, to pivot and just, you know, the Eureka moment for me is, you know, our team members and how they have absolutely, you know, they've, they've banded together. They've kept their spirits up. They've kept each other's spirits up and they've been innovative, creative. They, you know, they've just done so many things to help us change our model. We have now added in a whole domestic missions, um, uh, platform to, you know, to our whole, uh, our missions departments. And so we, we've done several domestic distributions where a team will go, you know, for a couple of days and, you know, in-country and go to a different state and serve communities and name. We've done a lot of drive-through Xi distributions since we can't do the full on contact with the feet washing. And, you know, we've instituted something called hope totes where the kids don't just get shoes. Now they get their shoes, their socks, they get a strain backpack, they get, you know, personal notes, they're called hope notes that we've had corporate partners partner with us to, you know, get their employees engaged, writing those notes. You know, there's a notes there specific to veterans, to homeless people, the children, um, that, you know, just, we we've done just a whole lot. And I guess it was just, you know, referencing that that's, uh, you know, recognizing the strength of your staff is another week, a moment for me.

Scott Luton (<u>38:52</u>):

All right. So Adrian, where are we going next,

Adrian Purtill (38:54):

Angela?I know when we spoke initially last year when we had our first call, uh, it became very clear to me that you mentioned to Cuba very near and dear to your heart. And, and could you just say why that is and, and, uh, you know, the story of how you went down there and the impact that those missions had on you?

Tracie Ohonme (<u>39:11</u>):

Yeah, well, actually, um, I have not been on an international trip with Samaritan's feet yet. Um, I was actually supposed to go on two and 2020 and, you know, again, not to beat a dead horse, but, you know, we, we all kind of have that small little bug pandemic going on. Um, but so one of my favorites videos that we, that we show to our volunteers that come to the warehouse and we've moved, shown it's, um, a lot, you know, and the, the video, there's a narrative in there from one of our huge supporters. Um, she and her husband are just, you know, they've been pivotal in our organization, but she usually is our team leader or Workiva. And I have watched that video that we show the volunteers, I don't know, probably seven times now, whatever, and it's still chokes me up every single time. Um, and there's just so many, so many great stories, but yeah, Cuba, Cuba and Africa are, are both really high on, uh, on my list personally. Yeah,

Adrian Purtill (40:12):

Absolutely. Just, just talking about your outreach, could you share with us where you, where are you currently shipped to at the moment, what regions of the world, and, and also what type of logistics challenges that you have right now?

Tracie Ohonme (<u>40:24</u>):

Yeah, so we, uh, we shipped to Africa. We, we shipped to Billy's Bahamas, Dominican Republic, God, as one of the countries in Africa, and Uganda helped me out, Tracy, where, where else, Philippines,

Honduras, and Nicaragua, trying to go off of my list that we just, we just went through the other day, but let's just say, it's probably a blast to say some continents that we don't ship. Let's just go with, we haven't went to Antarctica. So that's one that we probably won't ship to at anytime soon, but our international and Angela alluded to it. We have a huge presence in a lot of the partnerships that we do international. And with that, and not just our partnerships with, you know, the likes of other organizations here in the U S that also go overseas, but our partners that are on the ground there, whether that be in Honduras or Nicaragua with some of the missionary work better, there some other NGOs that are there that help us receive the containers and help with some of the, you know, logistical nightmares as you guys all know that can happen with, especially even escalated in this world of COVID right now, things properly to

Tracie Ohonme (<u>41:34</u>):

Where they need to go.

Scott Luton (41:35):

Yeah, absolutely. I know I'm, I'm enjoying working with Angela at the moment on a, on a ship into, to Ghana. And I'm trying to work with our agent date to get a, you know, a waiver of duty exemption for you because the, the, just the duty component of that one container is about 65% of the total door to door costs, which is huge. Um, so that's happening, that's happening right now. And so we believe very, very strongly in that. And, uh, now obviously issues come up and problems come up and challenges and roadblocks and international logistics. But we, we believe in, in working through those and trying to find a solution around them, rather than just admitting, you know, sorry, that's just, you know, the cost and that's what it is

Tracie Ohonme (<u>42:15</u>):

Exactly. Exactly. And we appreciate that because there's, there's so many aspects from just from clearing agents to, you know, getting things even in Africa. And Angela mentioned a couple of different countries in Africa, and then just that internal aspect of, you know, from country to country or point a to point B in Africa. And well, there are, might, there might be some logistical equipment and just a lack of resources. And some of those small, you know, getting it from ocean to, to truck to the people can be, you know, challenges that are not for the faint of heart. Let's say it that way. And it requires a little bit of ingenuity that might not look like what you always think. You know, we're not one, I'll say this. One of our, um, our staff got a sentence retired. We have taken a shoes into Cuba, our first trip into Cuba on a sailboat, a Catera. And when we were, because that's how we could get them in the most effectively and the cheapest, we've also seen our shoes on the backs of donkeys. So we're not opposed to some of those options. It's just, you know, whatever we can streamline most effective, we're going to use darn it.

Scott Luton (<u>43:24</u>):

Right, right. Looking like a true logistician, Hey, whatever it takes. Right. So in recap, we're going to talk culture here in just a second. I want to point something out, because I think with the vaccine that we've all referenced the pandemic numerous times, of course, we've got that noble mission taking place at the vaccine distribution, but as consumers and as, as non supply chain practitioners are learning, which is a silver lining. Right. All of this, part of the silver lining of these challenging times is that nothing works just as, just as it's planned. I mean, just here recently, uh, probably a couple of weeks in the, in the backdrop, uh, as this public podcast publishes, you know, like in the European, in European, uh, AstraZeneca,

they're expecting perhaps as much as a 60% drop in less of the vaccine shipments. And it's all because of the yield projected versus actual is two thirds off.

Scott Luton (<u>44:18</u>):

And those kind of, unfortunately, despite all of our advances as an industry manufacturing and elsewhere, those things happen and nothing. And so Tracy, I think pointing out the catamaran and the donkeys and just, uh, whatever it takes to get the product to, to the people that either ordered or need it. I, that that's, uh, that's the art and the craft of, of global supply chain that I admire so much. And I love how y'all have embraced that to make it happen and to serve the folks that you serve. So that's a beautiful thing. Thank you. All right. So in Rica, moving from there to now, we can let your moniker out of the bag. I think if you're, can I have your permission, it's time, Adrian, what do we identify early on in the pre-show about Enrique, that he is Mr. Culture culture, and that is going to be as hash hashtag, uh, he lives in breeds. That's, that's a, the top of culture is that we have evicted global is a commons comes from him and, uh, it's it filtered throughout the company. So I'll let him elaborate on that more. Um, but it's something that we believe so strongly in. Awesome. Mr. Culture of nerd, the, you had the Baton, sir.

Enrique Alvarez (45:28):

Well, thank you very much. Um, but, uh, no, I, I love, I love my team basically. That's just what everything else boils down to. And I think, uh, Angela, you mentioned it too, right? That was one of the main things that you said, and I can totally agree with you. And so that's what it is for me. It's just, I, we have such a strong team at vector that share values that all want to go and help people and make a world a better place. And we're all leveraging logistics to do. So, which is very exciting because there's so many opportunities out there and everything needs transportation. So, so no, for me, it's all about the people. It's all about our team. And, and I agree with Angela and Angela mentioned it before I did. It's, it's really kudos to my team and the people that I work with.

Enrique Alvarez (46:13):

And I'm so happy and proud that they let me be part of the team. So with that said, let's go back to our guests of Orner. Angela, you mentioned, uh, you mentioned the team, you mentioned being creative and innovative, and you like your team. It sounds like you're very excited with the team that you guys have. And that's basically just a reflection of, uh, of the great culture that you probably have as well. So if you had to kind of give advice to people that are listening to us, like the top three things that you think make like a, like a good corporate or organizational culture for you, what, what would those three things be? Uh, and Tracy, Ella, I'll ask you a similar question afterwards, so you have a little bit time to, to noodle on it, but what would those three things be that make you guys great and could make other organizations great?

Tracie Ohonme (<u>47:01</u>):

Well, first and foremost, you know, I think it's, it's approaching, you know, everything that we do with the servant leader mentality. You know, we've, we've talked about that, you know, that we want to portray that to the world and we want to portray that to the recipients of the shoes, but, you know, it starts with how we treat each other. It's, you know, it's really, it is making your, your fellow employees feel that they are heard. Um, it's

Tracie Ohonme (47:30):

Helping them to feel appreciated, you know, and just, you know, constantly encouraging, you know, that free thought and encouraging that collaboration, or then to be able to be creative and come up with, you know, those great ideas that are gonna, you know, make, uh, you know, move the needle for the organization. That would be, that would probably be the three things, um, you know, and you might be the culture nerd, but tracing how the culture means.

Enrique Alvarez (47:58):

Yeah. Yes you are. I know where that let's move on to the other queen Tracy, when he comes, when it comes to culture, you started the business with your, or the organization, uh, with your, with your hospital and then your family and friends. And it has grown to so much more than just that initial top thought that you had. W why, what, what, what, what are you doing, right? What are you guys doing, right. And what can you share with others that are listening to you with similar passions and ideas, but haven't been able to probably grow it as much as you guys have.

Tracie Ohonme (48:32):

Hmm. That's such a good question. And I think it starts with reminding yourself that, you know, you got to remember that you don't do everything wrong because it's easy to look at internally. And, and from that leadership perspective where you need to get to versus how far you've come sometimes. Um, so what Angela mentioned with servant leadership, I think certainly leadership, it starts and stops with leadership. As we all know on this call, I think for our team, we, and you, you mentioned it it's that family good and bad. We, we are team members, but we also deeply care for each other. And Angela mentioned that it starts with our team. We try and strive to do a really good job of letting people know that we care about where you're at, because as you know, professional and personal life balances is a fallacy to some degree, right?

Tracie Ohonme (49:17):

You're carrying yourself home from work and you're carrying yourself from home into work. And so helping to understand that it's that care and concern. Isn't just from a professional perspective, we, we deeply care about our, our team and when they hurt and how that hurts us and affects us. And, and I, I hope that, um, to Angela's point that we just said that we try really hard to make sure people feel that from the inside out first, because if you don't take care of yourself first, you, you're not good for anybody. Right. And I'm sorry, I'm gonna have to plug my phone in, in a minute. I think the other piece too, is something that we've taken on is that's love, serve and care, and that starts at home. And so that family feel if, if anything that we've tried to carry through is, is those things we need to model that first, we don't save our leftovers for everybody else. We give our best to our team and out of that, they then have what they need to give their best out.

Enrique Alvarez (50:12):

Excellent. No, that's yeah. Incredible message. Do everyone that's listening to this podcast or watching us on, uh, on the different chat channels. This is, this is really powerful and very practical information to, to how to create a good, reliable and an outstanding culture. Like

Scott Luton (50:28):

The one that you guys have. And thanks again to the, uh, to the, uh, culture Queens, Tracy, cultural Queens. I love that. I love that, but you know, that's gonna be your, your nicknames from now. So Tracy and Angela, we're going to wrap up here in a minute, Tracy, if you need to plug your phone in, go right

ahead. Um, we'll make sure you're covered while we do the love serve care. And there are so many quotable quotes and Enrique and Avery, and, you know, I've got 17 pages of notes on my end. There's so much Angela and Tracy have already shared that really, you know, whether, whether you're a nonprofit leader, um, you know, looking for best practices and benchmarking inspiration, or if you're on an older corporate side or entrepreneur, there there's so much here in this conversation, I think that you can take act on and, and w will inspire you this cultural component.

Scott Luton (51:21):

We just wrapped up the segment on culture, servant leadership, Angela, that is, uh, it's on one hand, it's become like a, a cliche, but clearly as Angela pointed out and as Evatt is evident in their culture, it is very real. And it's acted upon an executed, you know, hour in or day in and day out. And it's not lip service, you know? So anyway, let's make sure our listeners know exactly how to, you know, jump into the fight and not only connect with the Samaritan's feet team, but support and be part of this incredible, a noble mission. So y'all might have some of the same answers and some of the separate answers about someone asks both of you, but how can folks can start with Angela, Angela? How can folks connect with you? And of course, learn more about emergencies?

Tracie Ohonme (52:09):

Well, our website tells an incredible story. There's lots of videos. There's information about, you know, who we are, how we got started, all the different platforms that we have available. There's, you know, information on our, our missions, you know, trips, domestic and international shoe drive opportunities. There's different fundraising things. There's volunteering with us. There's volunteering and distribution. There's virtual volunteering. There's the whole host of, um, information on the websites, um, which is the managing speed.org

Scott Luton (52:43):

Feet.org, Samaritan's feet.org, outstanding. And Tracy, same question. You, anything else you'd like to add to how folks can plug in maybe your greatest need, you know, right now that we can maybe challenge our community with, what else would you add, Tracy?

Tracie Ohonme (52:58):

Yeah, I think our greatest need is just resources. And I, you know, I don't think any non-profit would say different right now. It's the resources and the partnerships and the collaboration with which to, as we've mentioned on the logistics front of just getting things to where they are to the people we need to serve, whatever collaboration, whatever partnership we are, we are so encouraged and look for that to be that like-minded opportunity to help advance what we're doing as well as partners. And so we look, we look forward

Scott Luton (<u>53:26</u>):

With anticipation to those continued efforts, outstanding, what a, um, a wonderful way to close out. You know, we're recording this on a Friday afternoon, we'll be publishing this and, you know, 10, a couple of weeks here, what a great way to, to, you know, cap off a very, uh, challenging but successful week. Because if this doesn't, uh, Enrique and Adrian, if this doesn't get you ready to run through some brick walls, you better check your pulse. Right? Absolutely. Yep. So now we are, so Adrian and Enrique, I want to, uh, in a moment, I want to pick your, your favorite aspect of this conversations. And we're going to talk about Angela and Tracy as if they're not right here on the line with us. So first let's thank

them for their time. Um, Tracy homey, uh, executive vice president and co-founder with Samaritan's feet and her colleague, Angela Carlson, exempt executive director of finance and general manager also with Samaritan's feet, Samaritan's feet.org. Y'all jump into fray. Thanks, Angela. Tracy, thanks so much for your time today.

Enrique Alvarez (54:25):

Thank you. Thank you.

Scott Luton (<u>54:28</u>):

We'll be reconnecting soon. We'll see how the year treats the great team there. All right. So don't go anywhere though. Enrique and Adrian. I want to put both of y'all on the spot. One thing reader's digest version of your favorite thing you heard from Angela and Tracy here today, and Enrique, let's start with you. I'll put you on the spot first. Why

Enrique Alvarez (54:46):

It always started with me. I thought you were going to go with Adrian this time. There's so many. I there's just so many things and, and I didn't write 17 pages, but I wrote a lot of pages of notes. And again, it's been, it's been fun and it's been exciting and it's been inspirational to hear both Angela and Tracy. And I was talking about all this. So I could think about the one thing in the background, which is zero shoeless kids in the world. And I think Tracy mentioned that at some point at the beginning of the conversation, that's it that's, that's it it's hero shoeless kids in the world. That's, that's a goal that we should all try to reach. I think it's realistic. Why not? It's we're all in this together. And we should all push really hard to, to accomplish that. So I'll, I'll stay with that zero shoeless kids in the world.

Scott Luton (<u>55:37</u>):

I love that Enrique, Adrian, I just loved hearing the personal stories. Tracy's personal, personal story and how she met Manny and, and taking that leap of faith to, to really get out of their company, their comfort zone and make things happen and make a difference is really, really inspiring. And, uh, Angela, forgive me, but I'm going to mention it, the fact that, um, while you were talking about, uh, the story about the young girl with a first, uh, with the first pair of shoes and your voice broke and, and that made a huge impact on me, the business thought of it as is, is one thing, and it's hugely important, but I think the spirit and the passion and the dedication that is still so evident in both of you is, is just inspiring. And it's wonderful to see, and it really made a huge impact on me today.

Scott Luton (56:21):

I thank you for sharing. Well, put Adrian, I love that and I'll add, uh, love, serve care, love that. Uh, and second, I think it was Angela upfront way back front. Part of the conversation mentioned a general need for more kindness. And Hey, I absolutely agree. We got to find a way to create and build more bridges in these fractious times. So I really appreciate what you all are doing in that regard abroad and right here under our nose folks that that need, need the basics and, and bare essentials right around the corner from us. So, uh, thanks so much again to Angela and Tracy with Samaritan's feet big, thanks to Adrian Enrique. And of course the vector global team for their partnership on logistics, with purpose. I love how Tracy Angela both spoke to that here today. Tons of purpose to our audience members and our community.

Scott Luton (<u>57:10</u>):

Hopefully you've enjoyed this conversation as much as we have tell you, it'd be easy to book book in a couple of additional hours and dive even deeper on this intriguing story, but Hey, make sure you go check out Samaritan's feet.org. If you like conversations like this, be sure to check us out@supplychainnow.com. Of course you can find us wherever you get your podcasts from. Hey, on behalf of our entire team here, Scott Luton wishing all of you all, nothing but the best. Hey, do good give forward and be the change that's needed to be like the team over at Samaritan's feet. And on that note, we'll see you next time here on self-pace now,

```
Intro (<u>57:45</u>):
Uh,
```