

The Front

★ In This Section MONEY INVEST AUTO HOME



David Feldman, member since 1986, with his wife, Wendy, and their son Jonah, 13.

\$ HOW I DID IT

Started a Business Fueled by a Cause

David Feldman turned his child's medical need into a new product that's helping his son, as well as athletes, achieve their best.

AS TOLD TO KATHY SENA

Shortly after our son Jonah was born in 2001, my wife, Wendy, and I were told he had a rare metabolic disorder: glycogen storage disease, type Ia. The disease, commonly known as GSD I, occurs in only about 1 in 100,000 births.

Jonah's body was unable to break down certain carbohydrates, including glycogen. To survive, he had to be tube-fed every two hours with both a special infant formula and a cornstarch-and-water solution that helped maintain normal blood-sugar levels.

Wendy and I started raising money for research and founded the not-for-profit Children's Fund for GSD Research in 2002. We also got busy researching >>

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Generation UCAN sponsors athletes including Meb Keflezighi, winner of the 2014 Boston Marathon.

the disease ourselves and connected with a starch chemist at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. He had created a slow-energy-release starch. We came to call it SuperStarch. This complex carbohydrate provides a steady release of glucose, keeping blood-sugar levels balanced for several hours. The discovery has been a huge help to athletes, but it was even more important for Jonah. It meant a chance to live a much more normal life.

After more years of research and testing, we started a small company in

2010 — Generation UCAN. The company produces sports-drink mixes powered by SuperStarch. The drinks have improved the performance of marathon runners and other elite athletes, while also providing everyday athletes with healthy nutrition for workouts and helping people with diabetes regulate their blood sugar.

Wendy and I believe what we have learned can be applied to anyone who has a cause and the desire to start a foundation, create a business or — in our case — both. **Q**

Kick-start your own project in three steps

» STEP 1

Get into problem-solving mode early on. We looked at plenty of research that didn't pan out, but we still learned from it. Your first answer might not be the solution. Keep asking questions.

» STEP 2

Surround yourself with people who will help. Family, friends and even strangers will want to help, but you have to be willing to ask. Put yourself out there.

» STEP 3

Don't be deterred by the word "no." A good salesperson will shrug off hearing "no" 20 times in a row. Keep your eye on why you're doing what you're doing. In our case, it wasn't just about helping our own child but also being able to help change the lives of other families.