



FLYING TO NEW HEIGHTS

26th annual IMPACT Awards: Flying to New Heights

The Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta strives to support its member companies in their commitment to social impact and civic engagement. One way the CVC does this is by recognizing companies whose work makes a significant difference in the community through the annual IMPACT Awards. For nearly three decades, the IMPACT Awards has been the only awards program in metro Atlanta program celebrating companies leading the way through volunteering and service. The 2023 IMPACT Award winners and finalists are:

IMPACT Corporate Program of the Year

Presented to an exemplary corporate employee volunteer or corporate social responsibility program that went above and beyond in the period between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023 to effectively integrate community service and impact and/or volunteering into the company's business culture.

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CORPORATE
VOLUNTEER
COUNCIL



26th annual IMPACT Awards: Flying to New Heights

The winner is **IHG Hotels and Resorts**, which has made caring for people, communities and the planet one of the four core priorities of its company strategy. **IHG's** target is to improve the lives of 30 million people in its communities by 2030. In 2022, during the fifth year of its global month of giving initiative, more than 1,100 Atlanta-based corporate colleagues participated by volunteering nearly 3,600 hours with local nonprofits. **IHG** supported families at local public schools through food-security volunteer efforts, including assembling and delivering meal kits for students in need. The company also hosted a free pop-up grocery market at a school to provide an additional 200 families with a week's worth of healthy groceries.

The finalist is **Georgia Power** which made

impactful changes to its long-time volunteer program in reaction to reduced engagement from the pandemic. This included leadership financially sponsoring its volunteer program in 2023, which previously had a \$10 annual membership fee for operational support. This led to an increase in project engagement, including one of the largest Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service when the company hosted more than 80 service projects, doubling from the previous year, and 20 larger "legacy projects."

IMPACT Corporate Innovative Project of the Year

Recognizes businesses that have successfully completed an innovative, creative and impactful short-term employee engagement,

volunteer or social impact project. The project must have taken place between January 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, and must have achieved measurable results. The award emphasizes the importance of thinking outside the box and embracing new and innovative strategies to employee volunteerism and community service.

The winner is **Amazon** which brought together Goodr, Southern Crescent Technical College and the Griffin-Spalding School District to organize a grocery and toy pop-up to assist Griffin-Spalding families following an EF3 tornado. The unique program occurred months after the tornado impact, when much of the initial flood of support had waned. Through listening and meeting with local leaders, the community was involved in determining the

type of aid provided. This community-led planning effort was the pilot for using the nonprofit partner's mobile grocery truck in disaster relief efforts, a vehicle that was launched two months prior with the goal of distributing groceries in food deserts. What also made this effort unique was the inclusion of \$30,000 worth of new toys, which aren't typically included in relief-efforts, plus the more than 10,360 pounds of food distributed to 200 families. **Amazon** also presented the local technical college with \$25,000 to support its Opportunity Fund, which provides student hardship assistance, supports special initiatives and strengthens academic programs.

The finalist is **Yamaha Motor Manufacturing** which sponsored entries for 20 children into a soapbox car race to raise funds for the community support activities of three nonprofit partners. **Yamaha** hosted three workshops with the students and their volunteers to design the vehicle, assemble it from parts fabricated by **Yamaha** teams and test it on a course. On race day, more than 30 **Yamaha** volunteers set up the course and cheered on the participants. The Soapbox Academy also offered a repeatable STEM-focused curriculum that can be used each year going forward.

IMPACT Corporate Skills-Based Award

Presented to a company for utilizing its employee skills to support a nonprofit or community partners between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. This award recognizes companies that have successfully utilized their employees' skills to support a nonprofit or community partners, while also promoting professional growth among its workforce.

The winner is **Veritiv** that shared industrial design and videography skills to help launch **Girl Scouts'** newest product. Specializing in shipping container box designs, **Veritiv** offered design, labor and printing services to the nonprofit and produced a video highlighting the design process of an interactive cookie rally box. In addition to the box, **Veritiv's** in-house packaging design team created life-size cookie boxes for a 2023 cookie season kickoff event. The in-kind gift represents 170 hours of design work, relieving Girl Scouts of nearly \$15,000 overhead cost.

The finalist is **Delta Air Lines** that partnered with **Science ATL** during the Atlanta Science Festival, an event that showcases STEM career opportunities through more than 150 events catered towards students and adults. Reaching approximately 47,000 people and hosting more than 80 community partners, the program fulfilled a critical need that **Delta** recognized to cultivate the next generation of professionals for the airline industry as a whole. **Delta** was a presenting sponsor and many of its employees volunteered at the interactive family science event, sharing their expertise and experiences.

Another finalist is **Jones Day** for its support of **Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation** and the Standing with Survivors Program. **Jones Day** provided the funding to launch the program, including the purchase of a mobile advocacy van serving domestic violence survivors who can't make it to the courthouse to secure a protective order. The firm's attorneys also volunteer for many of AVLF's programs and recently hosted a Pro Bono Fair for their summer associates to educate them on the importance of giving back through legal services.



Committed to Caring



It is our pleasure to support Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta who exemplify excellence in leadership and are positively influencing our communities.



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KEEP CLIMBING



Welcome Note

The Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta (CVC) supports member companies to deliver business results through their strategic commitment to social impact and civic engagement. We offer monthly programming to support community-facing professionals from Atlanta's most civically minded businesses.

The CVC provides a forum where business professionals may share leading practices and fine-tune community investment strategies. Whether your business is just getting started with community engagement or your employees have been engaging in meaningful service for decades, the CVC stands ready to support you. Together, we are better equipped to learn, grow and evolve.

I hope that you enjoy reading about what CVC member companies of all sizes are doing to build meaningful partnerships in support of Metro Atlanta's unique and dynamic communities. If your company is not a member of the CVC, we invite you to join us today to connect, inspire and impact.

Thank you for reading!

Cheryl Kortemeier
Executive Director
CVC of Atlanta
LinkedIn: @corporate-volunteer-council-of-atlanta
Instagram: @cvcatlanta



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André Archer
Cox Communications

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CVC Members Are The Secret Sauce to Move Atlanta Forward

As the home of numerous corporations, the foundation of the Atlanta Way has been a strong, collaborative spirit between Atlanta's public and private sectors. This intentional collaboration was ignited by former Mayor William Hartsfield and has continued under the leadership of recent mayors.

In his first few months in office, Atlanta's 61st mayor, Andre Dickens, challenged Atlantans to come together to "move Atlanta forward." With this charge, corporate Atlanta continues to rise to new heights, working with community leaders to build off the foundation that was laid many years prior. Through the Atlanta Committee for Progress and the Metro Atlanta Chamber, the vision for this collaborative work has been shared from the C-suite. But at the crux, it continues to be those managing corporate community engagement, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate foundations who are bringing forth the realities of these initiatives.

Having worked with many of Atlanta's great mayors and now as Corporate Volunteer Council (CVC) of Atlanta Board President, I have continuously witnessed CSR professionals leading the way to bring great ideas that impact our city to fruition. This is personified by initiatives like Atlanta's Promise, the mayor's Youth Scholarship Program, One Atlanta Initiative, Year of the Youth, Westside Future Fund or the development of affordable housing across our city. Through each of these impactful projects, and many others, CSR professionals have been in the boardrooms, nonprofit conference rooms and council chambers at City Hall to ensure that financial and human capital is available. When our city has witnessed some of its most challenging times, it's the leadership of CSR professionals that has provided the guidance for how corporate Atlanta should respond.



Mr. W. Imara Canady
National Director, Community Engagement & Communications, AHF Chair, Black Leadership AIDS Crisis Coalition (BLACC)

Atlanta's beloved Mayor Maynard Jackson tokened Atlanta the "City Too Busy to Hate." Though the reality of this has not been fully realized, I would affirm that it will be Atlanta's CSR professionals that will play a critical role, with other leaders from across the region, to make Atlanta the city that Mayor Jackson spoke about. As the CVC hosts its annual IMPACT Awards, paying tribute to outstanding leadership and community impact in corporate social responsibility and employee volunteerism, at a time when our country continues commemorations around key milestones in the journey for civil and human rights, I cannot help but pause and honor all within CSR who have helped shape communities across our country. Leaders at CVC member companies continue to be critical voices in our community as we work to, not only move Atlanta forward, but also bring forth the reality of a community that reflects the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we continue the work, knowing that Atlanta influences everything, we honor these leaders and simply say THANK YOU!



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Doing Good: Sustainability and Disaster Relief

Sustainability continues to be an important facet of corporate social responsibility programs. From making long-term commitments to reducing impacts on the environment to being the first to respond when climate disasters strike, CVC members are stepping in to make a significant difference in the future of our planet.

IHG Hotels & Resorts is known for its wide-ranging sustainability initiatives. The company has a 46 percent carbon reduction target as part of its Journey to Tomorrow 10-year responsible business plan. One of its more recent programs is bringing select IHG hotels a community solar offering that includes Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions by accessing renewable energy through solar panels built near a hotel's community. The program, in partnership with community solar solutions company Ampion, supports the development of new local solar power projects and allows hotels to receive both Green-e certified RECs and a discount on their regular electricity bill. The community solar offering is currently active for hotels across Illinois, Maine and Maryland, with more states to follow.

"We are excited to offer IHG-branded hotel owners an innovative solution to help them reduce their carbon emissions at the property level. IHG's community solar offering, in collaboration with Ampion, is a win-win for hotel owners due to its cost savings, zero capital expenditure and environmental benefits," says Townsend Bailey, head of corporate responsibility, IHG Americas Region. "This offering is just one of the many ways we're driving progress toward IHG's sustainability commitments, which includes reducing our energy use and carbon emissions in line with climate science."

Along with many other businesses, Gas South is part of the Drawdown Georgia Business Compact, a statewide business consortium aimed at achieving net zero carbon emission in Georgia by 2050.

One of Gas South's newest initiatives surrounding this partnership involves a Carbon Reduction Challenge through Georgia Tech.

"We asked if there were any summer interns who wanted to work on this Drawdown Georgia project with Georgia Tech," says Carley Stephens, Gas South manager of community affairs. "It's a sustainability project and competition. Any student can apply to be part of this Carbon Challenge and they work to highlight how a company is going to reduce their carbon footprint and then they are eligible to win a prize."

Two of Gas South's summer interns are working with CarbonSense Technologies to monitor Gas South's light usage, employee travel and more to calculate the company's carbon footprint and suggest ways to reduce it.

With climate change contributing to more natural disasters, providing relief to communities that are affected remains a top agenda item for Amazon, which has a Disaster Relief Hub located just outside of metro Atlanta in Union City. The 20,000-cubic-foot fulfillment center space supports more than 10 relief organizations, including Save the Children, the American Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Medical Corps, World Central Kitchen, SBP USA, MedShare, All Hands and Hearts and others. Opened in 2021, the hub is set up to quickly distribute disaster relief kits to communities in and outside the U.S. when disaster strikes. Since 2017, Amazon has donated more than 23 million relief items to support people impacted by over 108 disasters

around the world.

Sage is also stepping up to aid in disaster relief. In June, the Sage Foundation announced a partnership with CARE International UK, a global humanitarian organization delivering emergency relief and long-term development projects across the world. The Sage Foundation is providing \$224,000 to support global relief efforts for natural disasters and humanitarian crises. The partnership will run for a year with the potential to be extended. Any event causing detrimental social impact will be eligible for support, from hurricanes and earthquakes to war or terrorist attack.

"Disaster relief is an important part of Sage Foundation's commitment to underserved

communities. The initiatives we have developed so far have gathered great momentum, but this partnership will allow us to supercharge our efforts and shape a more inclusive approach to relief by pinpointing the areas that need our help most," says Cadence Willis, vice president of Sage Foundation.

Since 2015, Sage Foundation's work has been divided amongst various relief partners, requiring additional coordination and administrative burdens to ensure disasters were responded to effectively. With CARE International UK as its sole partner, Sage Foundation can now monitor, evaluate and respond to crises across the world more effectively, scaling and simplifying its disaster

relief response.

"I am looking forward to developing a meaningful partnership that will go straight to the heart of what we do—to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice," says Laura Griffin, director of fundraising, partnerships and communications, CARE International UK. "As the world faces more extreme weather, humanitarian disasters and conflict, it is critical that everyone responds to the devastating impact these crises are having on communities. Our partnership will ensure that critical emergency response is delivered where it's needed the most; to vulnerable groups like women and girls who in disasters are disproportionately affected." ▲



MORNING NEWS


4:30 TO 7AM

Congratulations to all the 2023 Impact Award Nominees!

The Growing Expectations of CSR

The pandemic shook up the way the typical workplace operates. Since then, some companies have gone back to traditional office models, but many are working in a hybrid style which means company culture has changed, and in some cases suffered. With it, employee engagement has taken a hit. Volunteering is now being seen by many business leaders as a tool for employee connection. As a result, CSR professionals are being expected to not only strategize, execute and measure philanthropic efforts, but are also being tasked with strengthening corporate culture.

“Our companies and leaders are looking to us to help get people back in the office or together and strengthen the corporate culture in this remote/hybrid environment,” says Carley Stephens, manager of community affairs at Gas South. “In 2021, we had four team grants or employee-led volunteer events. In 2022, we had 12 and in 2023 alone, we have had over 20. Leaders are relying on volunteer events to get their people together because they cannot make the case that a meeting needs to be in-person when it was virtual for the past two years.”

But to get employees out of their home office, companies have to make the volunteering experience worth their while, says Jami Buck-Vance, Invesco social impact communications director.

“If you're going to make people get out of their workout pants, and their flip flops ... you're going to have to make it something that they're excited to go to. It can't just be,

‘we require you to be in the office three days a week to make our culture amazing’ because that's going to make people resentful,” Buck-Vance says. “You have to make it meaningful and a great experience where they get to meet other people from all different departments that can help them with their job.”

Amazon expanded its footprint in Georgia during the pandemic so most of the local employees were hired at a time when working from home was the norm. The company has a workforce exceeding 30,000 individuals across the state, encompassing metropolitan Atlanta and regions such as Savannah, Macon and Augusta.

“Volunteerism is the powerful force that unites us, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the company,” says Terreta Rodgers, head of community affairs for Amazon’s Atlanta region. “Despite our team being spread across various cities, community engagement has been the bridge that connects us to our local employees. Sharing these meaningful activities through our internal communication channels has not only amplified our efforts, but also inspired a growing number of individuals to join in.”

Bringing employees from different business units together for volunteer efforts has also had benefits from the business perspective, encouraging collaboration and helping get feedback from facility employees that live and work in a variety of communities.

“While we may not be able physically reach



every community, our volunteer engagements enable me to connect with colleagues and members of the community to gather invaluable feedback on the pressing matters they hold dear,” says Rodgers. “Our approach involves conducting listening sessions with community partners and policymakers, facilitating a dialogue that guides us toward meaningful areas of engagement.”

Companies are also launching new programs.

In 2022, Floor & Decor started a Volunteer Time Off (VTO) program to foster community engagement opportunities with its associates.

The company also created a Caring through Service program to impact local communities.

“Beginning MLK Day until the end of Q3, associates nationwide were encouraged to volunteer in their local communities to make a difference,” says Tiffany Coakley, brand manager at Floor & Decor. “Associates used their VTO benefit to complete individual or team volunteer projects. In addition, associates could submit those organizations for a one-time Floor & Decor grant to amplify their impact.”

» Continued on page 11



True Hospitality for Good

We congratulate the nominees and winners of this year's CVC of Atlanta IMPACT Awards.

And we're proud of the more than 1,500 IHG community champions helping to improve lives across our vibrant city.



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Katy Elder, vice president, corporate insights, at Points of Light, shares her thoughts on employee engagement and the changing role of CSR professionals.

How does volunteering serve as a tool for employee engagement?

Volunteering serves as a powerful tool for engagement by fostering a sense of unity and connection among employees, even those with diverse opinions and lived experiences. Through participation in volunteer activities, employees are provided with a platform for interaction, promoting team building and breaking down organizational silos. This not only enhances interpersonal relationships and builds skills, but also contributes to increased pride in their employer, commitment and heightened job satisfaction. And that nurtures a sense of belonging within the workforce.

In light of changing corporate cultures following the pandemic, why is corporate volunteering particularly important now?

While volunteering plays a significant role in positively impacting corporate culture, holistic community engagement is just as important to a company's social impact strategy. It's particularly important now for a number of reasons. It can play an integral role in connecting employees who felt isolated during the pandemic. As companies navigate their return-to-office strategies, community engagement is an approach to galvanize employees and re-connect them to corporate purpose and values. It also continues to be a critical way of bringing employees together in a virtual setting.

How has the role of the CSR professional changed as a result of volunteering playing a bigger role in corporate culture?

Social Impact used to be viewed as a goodwill gesture or the "nice-thing-to-do." But now these initiatives have become a key part of business strategy, requiring CSR professionals to advocate for and shape them as integral to business. This shift has elevated CSR leader status within organizations, securing them a place at the senior leadership table where they contribute expertise to decisions about community engagement, values alignment and responding to critical issues impacting their stakeholders. At the same time, the heightened emphasis on corporate citizenship has been propelled by escalating demands from both employees and consumers for meaningful societal engagement. The scope of their work has broadened, encompassing the diverse ways employees are interested in taking action, which means more intricate strategizing, partnership cultivation and resource optimization. Amidst these transformations, CSR leaders face intensified internal pressures, managing burnout while grappling with potential budget constraints and workforce changes. In this context, collaboration and peer-to-peer learning become paramount. Organizations like the CVC of Atlanta and Points of Light offer CSR leaders' opportunities to learn from and lean on one another and collectively navigate the evolving landscape of corporate social responsibility. ▲

“As companies navigate their return-to-office strategies, community engagement is an approach to galvanize employees and re-connect them to corporate purpose and values.”

KATY ELDER



What are some changes companies are making to better promote the volunteer culture?

With an increased focus on equity, companies are connecting the dots between community engagement and their diversity, inclusion and belonging strategies. Employee Resource Groups often have a goal around community engagement and provide opportunities for members to work together in support of a cause or community. More companies are actively involving employees at various levels in determining the direction and focus of social impact initiatives, amplifying their sense of ownership and investment in these initiatives. In that same vein, more companies are equipping and empowering employees themselves to lead change by appointing these local leaders as ambassadors of their social impact strategy.

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AI Potential

Artificial technology seems to be everywhere you turn these days. In the nonprofit world, grant writers are using AI to make their process simpler and even the CVC used AI to help develop this year's IMPACT nomination form. Many CVC member companies are no strangers to AI in their general business practices and it seems only a matter of time before it seeps into CSR efforts. Going forward, corporate citizenship leaders may be looking to AI to streamline processes and data gathering, which could help free them up for other important parts of their multi-faceted roles.

IHG Hotels & Resorts is utilizing AI and other technology to reduce food waste and support local communities. When hotels are left with excess food unexpectedly, IHG finds partners who can help to not only reduce food waste, but also address hunger. One of these partners is Winnow that uses AI to measure hotel's food waste and provide data on what food is being wasted, so that the kitchen teams can order more efficiently, sales teams can guide customers better with data on what is eaten and what isn't, and the hotels can save money and lower their carbon footprint by sending less to the landfill. IHG is the first global hotel company to use this technology which helps hotels achieve a 30% reduction in food waste through the use of an intelligent camera, smart scales and AI-based smart meter technology.

IHG also works with another Atlanta-based company, Goodr, to collect hotels' food waste,



and through connectivity in logistics apps like Uber Eats and DoorDash, get uneaten food delivered to local community organizations tackling food insecurity. Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia is the first IHG hotel brand to use the service, diverting roughly 1,200 pounds of food waste from landfills via Goodr last year. The partnership has been so successful that IHG recently expanded it to

properties across the U.S.

"The hotel's get great data that helps them to make better decisions in ordering, and they also have an easy way to get food that might otherwise end up in landfills into the mouths of those in need," says Geneva Hall-Shelton, senior manager, corporate responsibility, global community impact, IHG Hotels & Resorts.

Amazon uses AI in many of its business practices. The company is also focused on helping develop the next generation of AI professionals and recently hosted a Day of AI with Amazon Future Engineers and MIT to do just that—providing educators and students with the AI literacy to start to navigate today's AI-driven world.

"It was truly about empowering educators to



GENEROSITY MATTERS

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teach AI," says Terreta Rodgers, head of community affairs for Amazon's Atlanta region. "They were given access to slide decks, lesson plans, worksheets, videos, and other resources needed to explore the world of AI. Moreover, we established the AWS Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) Scholarship program, in collaboration with Udacity, to help underserved and underrepresented high school and college students learn foundational ML concepts to prepare them for careers in AI and ML."

Carley Stephens, manager of community affairs at Gas South, hopes that one day AI can facilitate data gathering to help companies better understand community issues and where help is needed. If AI technologies can streamline annual community impact reports, ESG reports and metrics in the future, companies may be able to better understand where their focus is needed.

"I'm hoping we can leverage technology to gather really great data around the communities that we're serving to better understand the issues and how we make a real impact there instead of guessing," Stephens says.

Often, nonprofits use different metrics to measure impact, which can present a challenge, Stephens says. Using AI to get a clearer picture of these metrics and how corporations are making a difference would free up CSR professionals to focus on other important facets of their roles.

"I hope that then there's more accountability and more focus from the professionals like ourselves, on really mobilizing our people and uplifting the culture of our companies so that we can better collaborate and work together," Stephens says. ▲

Charting an AI Path

Sage, which has a dedicated AI team, is taking a "bold, cautious optimism" approach to the technology. To ease the transition to using AI, the software company has created internal platforms that enable their programmers to integrate AI capabilities across the product portfolio. Colleagues are encouraged to follow along with discussion groups so they can learn the latest about the technology. Here, the company's chief technology officer, Aaron Harris shares his insights into AI.

Tell me what you do and how it relates to the use of AI?

I'm Sage's chief technology Officer, responsible for establishing our overall technology strategy. AI is central to our efforts to innovate on behalf

of small and medium-sized business (SMBs) and nonprofit organizations around the world.

How do you foresee AI being beneficial to communities and organizations now and in the future?

AI has the potential to make organizations far more efficient and productive by automating the routine, low-value work that is, nevertheless, unavoidable. Organizations able to hand this work off to AI are able to focus employees on higher-value, more strategic work. AI also helps humans make better, more informed decisions through its ability to analyze vast amounts of data. At Sage, we believe enabling this transformation for SMBs and nonprofits will naturally strengthen the communities they serve.

How is AI already being used to aid organizations with corporate social responsibility?

We use AI to evaluate massive amounts of data captured from an organization's purchasing activity to not only estimate direct and indirect carbon emissions, but also to identify opportunities to operate more sustainably.

Anything else you'd like to add that relates to nonprofits?

Organizations must take care to deploy AI free from human bias. While AI has huge potential to strengthen communities, it can harm communities by magnifying divisive biases. Always ensure AI work has human oversight.



AARON HARRIS
Chief Technology Officer
Sage

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"all the children
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GAS SOUTH

Health Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering does much more than help the community being served. Volunteers tout significant health benefits from giving back, from physical and mental to emotional. Here, three CVC members share how volunteering has helped them and their organizations.

1. **What do you consider to be the biggest health benefits of volunteering?**
2. **How has volunteering benefited your health personally?**
3. **How would you say volunteering helps the overall culture of a company/organization, particularly in light of the shift to hybrid work environments?**
4. **Anything else you'd like to add?**

MICHELE BLONDHEIM, APRIO, DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. **What do you consider to be the biggest health benefits of volunteering?**

There are so many positive health benefits to volunteering. Whether you're lowering your blood pressure through active movement—think tree planting or meal packing—or lowering stress levels with activities like walking dogs at an animal shelter or reading books to young children. For me, one of the biggest health benefits is in the mental health space—feeling a sense of purpose as a way of managing everyday stress or depression.

2. **How has volunteering benefited your health personally?**

Volunteering brings me joy. It's a part of my personal life, as much as it is a part of my professional life. I'm on several nonprofit boards and advisory committees, and volunteer with organizations throughout the year. One big benefit that really makes a significant impact, is how volunteering allows families to create a positive impact (and make memories) together. My family—husband, boys and mom—often join me and proudly wear the Aprio volunteer t-shirt too. #afamilythatvolunteerstogether

3. **How would you say volunteering helps the overall culture of a company/organization, particularly in light of the shift to hybrid work environments?**

Volunteering absolutely helps the overall culture of a company. From firm-wide volunteer campaigns like Earth @ Aprio and IMPACT Week, to individual volunteer opportunities through board work and mentoring, it's important to encourage and enable your team members to become and stay involved. We lean into our hybrid work environment and have built and provided programs that have both virtual and in-person opportunities. Best of both.

4. **Anything else you'd like to add?**

I often talk about the win-win-win of impact—think company, employee and community at large. From a company's point of view, workplace volunteering positively affects the

bottom line (and we have the data to prove it) with brand loyalty, reduced employee turnover and increased revenue. From an employee's point of view, workplace volunteering positively affects company culture, strengthens relationships and creates purpose driven opportunities for engagement. And when you think about how workplace volunteering positively affects the community at large, think about the increased awareness and the needed skills and infrastructure nonprofits gain from active volunteers, it's a win-win-win all-round.

STACY WEENICK, OPEN HAND ATLANTA, SENIOR MANAGER OF CORPORATE AND FAITH PARTNERSHIPS

1. **What do you consider to be the biggest health benefits of volunteering?**

Research clearly shows that volunteering is good for overall health. Volunteering with Open Hand keeps people moving physically and keeps them thinking as they do their part to support Open Hand's mission to serve. Social connection and feeling a sense of purpose are also key benefits of volunteerism. Working together in support of a common goal is uplifting for everyone, and the sense of community felt on the Open Hand meal-packing line or when loading meals to be delivered is undeniable.

2. **How has volunteering benefited your health personally?**

Volunteers are vital in Open Hand's meal-packing and delivery operations, ensuring that more than 5,000 meals are prepared, packaged and delivered almost every day. We believe that everyone deserves access to adequate nutrition. At the most basic level, by providing regular access to healthy foods and nutrition education to our clients, Open Hand is recognizing and fulfilling the need of Georgia's nutritionally at-risk population to live healthier, more dignified lives. We absolutely could not fulfill our mission without the thousands of volunteers who come through Open Hand's doors every year. From helping prepare our health-promoting, medically tailored meals in our kitchens, to connecting with our clients through meal delivery, volunteers help show that food is medicine and food is love.

3. **How would you say volunteering helps the overall culture of a company/organization, particularly in light of the shift to hybrid work environments?**

Corporate volunteer days promote togetherness and team building and help foster a sense of social responsibility. Volunteering with your team—your "work family"—serves to strengthen bonds and helps connect with the community. Corporate groups seem to truly enjoy the time they spend together at Open Hand and we encourage them to include breakfast before their shift or lunch/happy hour after. Offering additional opportunities to connect with each other when so many are working from home adds to the feeling of team building. Employees who receive PTO for their volunteer hours also appreciate that added reward and are more likely to volunteer on a regular basis.

JASMINE COCKFIELD, CSR PROFESSIONAL

1. **What do you consider to be the biggest health benefits of volunteering?**

Volunteering allows employees to leave the desk whether at the office or at home and get active. Employees can build a home together, support a disaster relief clean-up effort or participate in a local run/walk. All of these opportunities not only allow for a physical health benefit, but for an emotional and mental health benefit as well.



MICHELE BLONDHEIM
Director Corporate Social Responsibility
Aprio



JASMINE COCKFIELD
CSR Professional



STACY WEENICK
Senior Manager of Corporate
and Faith Partnerships
Open Hand Atlanta

MODERATOR



JERRY TRAVERS
Problem Manger and Manager for
My Environment
Bank of America

2. **How has volunteering benefited your health personally?**

Volunteering aka giving back has helped my mental health tremendously. Whenever I am able to give back to a local community event in an effort to support children, the elderly, disabled adults or anyone in need it has been an intrinsic benefit I can't put into words.

3. **How would you say volunteering helps the overall culture of a company/organization, particularly in light of the shift to hybrid work environments?**

I once heard a quote that said: "We are the most connected society in the history of the planet yet the most disconnected." Volunteering helps us to learn more about our communities and co-workers. I've seen executives meet an employee they may have never connected with at a volunteer event. I've seen interns get full-time offers at volunteer events. Overall, company culture and corporate citizenship (when aligned) make for a powerful force of nature. ▲

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Based on direct feedback from employees, Veritiv recently re-imagined its CSR program. In May 2023, the packaging company launched its Veritiv Connect Online (VCO) website to streamline the process of volunteering so employees could create their own opportunities for causes meaningful to them, give back to existing nonprofit partners and read CSR-related news. To date, employees have volunteered 1,760 hours through 66 opportunities including 637 unique employee engagements. Veritiv also matches every dollar donated up to \$10,000 per employee per year and gives employees \$10 for every hour they volunteer to donate to a nonprofit of their choice. This benefit is designed to encourage all employees to participate, regardless of their ability to make

personal donations.

Volunteerism is also encouraged through Veritiv's active senior leadership team, which advocates for volunteer opportunities and serves alongside their employees. Senior leaders have volunteered by making swimming safety kits, maintaining and planting trees, mentoring middle schoolers and building furniture with employees.

"Their actions serve as an encouraging example to employees that may be hesitant to volunteer due to the optics of 'being away from your desk.' As a result, our employees have been more actively engaged at both volunteer events and work," says Kat Reynolds, Veritiv manager of community relations. "These initiatives are the pathways in which

we leverage volunteerism at Veritiv to better engage our workforce. These actions significantly contribute to our award-winning culture."

Dematic has engaged its employees through a community outreach program that includes FIRST Robotics as a corporate nonprofit partner since 2008. FIRST develops the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills of the next generation and Dematic engineers are part of a worldwide network of mentors who guide and support students as they pursue robotics competitions at the middle and high school level.

Dematic expanded its partnership with FIRST in 2019 by providing financial support to teams where its employees were actively engaged and to encourage more mentors and volunteers. In 5 years, Dematic has invested close to \$250,000 in local team grants and student scholarships. And, within the last year, Dematic volunteers have spent more than 2,600 hours providing guidance and mentorships to students preparing for competitions and careers in STEM.

"At Dematic, we take pride in our long-standing commitments to the communities where we work and live. We provide time off for our employees to volunteer and offer community donation programs. Our commitment to supporting a culture of giving continues to make positive impacts across the organization. These efforts start at the top, and I'm proud to be part of a company where our leaders set the example," says Jenny Ferrell, vice president of human resources, Dematic Americas.

"The people that volunteer are going to feel way more invested in the company, they're going to be proud of where they work."

JAMI BUCK-VANCE

If you can get employees out of their home or high-rise office, the benefits to company culture are many, from getting employees to know each other and building trust and respect in an organization to developing culture champions.

"The people that volunteer are going to feel way more invested in the company, they're going to be proud of where they work," says Buck-Vance. "That's the difference. It's driving it internally, externally and it's all connected."▲

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