



How One Local Corporation Enhances Community Relations: *Bringing Corporations and Local Communities Together*

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Community service has become an important part of the public relations strategies many Fortune 500 companies. Even small businesses have begun to realize the value of supporting community need by providing paid time during employees' regular work schedule so that employees can perform volunteer activities. Corporate sponsored volunteerism is a mutually beneficial relationship, matching community need with a company's mission, employee skills, and technical resources.

Cardiac Monitoring Systems (CMS), a division of Philips Medical Systems, Inc. headquartered in Andover, Massachusetts, has implemented a community relations program, demonstrating best practices in working with local non-profit organizations while benefiting the local community as well as the division of Philips and its employees. The program at Philips has become a model for other corporations and therefore we feature here the innovative efforts at Philips. We hope that other corporations will learn from this model as they set up their own programs. And nonprofits can learn this information to better understand corporate partners.

For the community archives I have interviewed Kathy Roger, CMS Community Relations Manager at length. She has provided a wealth of information that we can all use to improve partnerships.

"Philips Medical Systems in Andover is committed to making a positive social contribution. We believe in giving back to the community through our philanthropic and community outreach activities. We have identified two emphasis areas that drive our community relations efforts: math & science education and healthcare," says Kathy Rogers, Philips Community Relations Manager.

"The primary components of our community relation's efforts are our Community Contributions Program, the Philips-Sponsored Youth Explorations In Science (YES) Program, Employee Volunteerism, Employee Sponsorship, Gift Matching, Workplace Giving (United Way), and the Scholarship Program." If a community service agency wanted to approach Philips for employee volunteers, their mission would have to be consistent with emphasis on healthcare or math & science education. "We tend to look more favorably upon requests that are either close to our site or are in an area where the majority of our employees live," said Kathy.

In 2003 alone, CMS made many gifts to Lowell-based nonprofit groups, including:

- \$10,000 worth of new HP LasterJet Printers to Lowell public Schools, via the United Way's Gift In Kind Program
- \$8,000 to UMass Lowell to be lead sponsor of the 2003 Women in Science and Engineering Career Day
- \$2,000 to Bailey International School to support "Bailey Engineering and Construction" for the 2003/2004 School Year
- \$1,000 to Bailey International School to purchase materials to build rockets for 97 fourth-grade students
- \$250 to the M/ A-Com Mobile Food Pantry to help provide Thanksgiving food for their clients

Paid Time Off For Employee Volunteerism

Paid time off for employee volunteerism at CMS is one hour per week or up to four hours per month, with manager approval. For example, CMS donates approximately 96 hours per year to the M/ A-Com Mobile Food Pantry by allowing two employees to spend four hours each month delivering groceries to clients in Lowell. With the value of one volunteer hour being \$16.54, that time is valued at almost \$1,600. As another example, CMS expects to sponsor an MCAS refresher for all fourth-grade students in Lowell Public Schools.

"Obviously employees can get involved in any type of volunteer activity of their choosing on their own time," says Kathy. For example, Cardiac Monitoring Systems (a division of Philips Medical Systems) will sponsor its employees \$50 when they participate in a fundraising event after work hours, such as a walk-a-thon, bike-a-thon, etc. Sponsorship is limited to \$500 per event. To obtain a sponsorship, the employee must simply fax a copy of his or her sponsor sheet, including the recipient organization's name, address & phone number, to the Community Relations Department.

"However, if they want to take advantage of the paid time off policy, they are required to participate in a company-sponsored event (such as the Day of Caring, softball tournament to benefit United Way, Philips-sponsored after-school science program) or choose an activity that is consistent with our community relation's emphasis areas, which are math & science education and healthcare." Employees simply fill out a volunteer registration form for their managers and Community Relations Management approval (appendix A, [Volunteer Registration Form.doc.](#))

"I would say our best practice is the CMS-sponsored Youth Explorations in Science (YES) program. The reason I chose the YES program is that it doesn't

simply involve Philips throwing money around. We engage employee volunteers in the program, which further demonstrates the company's commitment to science education," says Kathy. The YES program is a series of hands-on science experiments that gives students (primarily grades 3-5) the opportunity to learn life, physical, and earth sciences through hands-on experiments led by employee volunteers. The program is aimed at creating enthusiasm for the sciences, wonderment in the world, and social and personal growth for elementary school-aged children. YES stimulates children's enthusiasm for science while promoting scientific investigation and a sense of wonder in the world around them.

The YES Program

The basic formula of YES consists of a small club setting in which four children and one adult or young adult (such as a high school or college student) are engaged in a hands-on science experiment or project. Projects draw from a variety of scientific disciplines and generate many questions focused on both scientific content and methodology. The atmosphere is casual, social, and emphasizes fun, while fully engaging the children in learning experiences. Children take their projects home after each session, where they may repeat the experiments or explain their scientific creations to family and friends.

Projects might include building electronic circuit games, balloon-powered cars, or terrariums. Students might investigate the food web using owl pellets, solve crimes using paper chromatography, or experiment with flotation and density. They might explore the science of light and reflection as they build their periscopes or explore the physics of sound as they build thumb pianos.

The program does not require a formal classroom or school setting. The program can bring science education to students in non-traditional settings, such as hospital pediatric wards, boys and girls clubs, and community centers — at no cost to parents, teachers, or the host organizations.

The program is structured to take place on a weekly or biweekly basis (if in a school setting, YES is usually arranged as an after-school program). Volunteers are given a kit that contains detailed instructions, diagrams, and materials to build or complete that week's experiment. All of the necessary materials and tools are provided. Instructions include questions that volunteers may use to stimulate inquiry and some answers that provide selected scientific content. Each box or kit contains materials for four children.

The adult or young adult leader does not have to be a scientist or even have a technical background to lead their student team. The experiments and instructions are designed for the "layperson," thus not limiting volunteer participation. In fact, because the volunteer's role is to facilitate explorations into science and guide the children by virtue

of their experiences, non-scientists are capable of exploring the unknown with the children, and in fact, in some ways their natural curiosity adds value to the science experiments.

Youth Explorations in Science is fun. The program encourages teamwork and provides children with a sense of belonging in an environment that promotes creativity and develops self-esteem while helping children develop cooperative learning skills through group interaction. Students are confident to work and learn at their own pace. And, students take great pride in the successful completion of each week's project.

Community Contributions Programs

Math and science education is pretty clear-cut; healthcare is a bit more broad, and intentionally so. As Kathy states “we loosely define it as any program that focuses on improving the physical and mental health and well being of those most vulnerable in the community. So this would include just about any health & human services agency, hospitals, clinics, etc.”

CMS will also provide Cardiac and Monitoring Systems equipment and cash to organizations that support their community relations focus areas. Further details of the Community Contributions Program attached (appendix C, [Community Contributions Prog.doc.](#))

As mentioned Philips emphasizes the importance of education as one of the community efforts. Accordingly, Philips Electronics North America sponsors the Matching Gift Program. The program encourages employees to make donations to educational institutions and Philips will match the gift, from a minimum of \$10 to a maximum of \$1,000 in a calendar year (appendix D, [matching_gift_form.pdf.](#))

“Frankly, the organizations that come to us are enough to keep me busy. Plus, we have a pretty small local giving budget, so once we consider all the requests that come to us, there's not much need for me to seek out places to give money or equipment to since most of the money is gone. I do, on occasion, make initial contact if the organization is compelling. For example, I stumbled across some information about Boston Healthcare For The Homeless. They're the type of organization we want to fund, so I approached them and encouraged them to seek support from Philips,” says Kathy.

Working in Partnership with the United Way

And the organizations do come to CMS. One of the primary partnerships developed by the CMS community outreach program is with the local United Way. “On any given day, your gift may be used to give a child a healthy start in

life, help a struggling teenager, send a visiting nurse to the home of an elderly person, or shelter a family in need,” says Kathy. Philips sites across the U.S., through employees' caring participation during the annual United Way campaign, help make things better in communities and in people's lives by supporting United Way organizations and member agencies. This year's United Way campaign for the Andover site was October 20 – 31, 2003.

Employees simply fill out a form designating their allocated amount and they become qualified for additional prizes (appendix E, [UW_pledge form.pdf](#).)



“Implementing a United Way campaign allows Philips to run a single, unified campaign that is more cost-effective than several agency-specific campaigns throughout the year. It also enables employees to make contributions via payroll deduction” (appendix F, [United Way.doc](#).)

The program is designed to encourage employees to make contributions to the United Way. Philips will match each employee gift up to \$3000 while awarding various prizes during the campaign. Employees also help to raise money during the campaign. The first ever Philips softball tournament was held this year to benefit the United Way. Over \$1100 was raised, and Philips matched it dollar for dollar. “United Way is the critical link between those who can help and those who need help,” says Kathy.

Volunteer Matching

I've “also made the initial contact with some local science-related programs. Time permitting, I scan through the volunteer database at volunteermatch.org. If I notice something that is local, consistent with our community relation’s emphasis areas, and doesn't require a lot of time, I'll throw it out there and see if employees bite,” say Kathy.

And employees do bite on the opportunity to help our local communities. Philips has recently partnered with Habitat for Humanity for “Philips Builds 2003,” a project designed to sustain efforts by the community to build homes through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Recent projects have included homes in Boston (appendix G, [Habitat for Humanity.doc](#).) Gardner, Lowell, and Haverhill, for a total of 10 Philips’ builds in 2003! Once the build dates are

determined, Kathy distributes an email to the Philips Andover employees with the information, questions and answers, and registration form (appendix H, Habitat Reg Form. Doc) for employee volunteerism.

Seeking Out Beneficiaries

Kathy typically seeks out the beneficiaries of our Giving Tree and food drive efforts as well. For the past few years, the YWCA of Greater Lawrence and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children have been the recipients of the Giving Tree. Donations often outweigh the identified recipients, as employees' overwhelming generosity is even more evident during the holiday season.

“Our local community relations' efforts are rooted in our HP [Hewlett Packard] heritage, so it's difficult to say exactly when things got started (Philips Medicals Systems, Inc. purchased Hewlett Packard's medical division spring 2000.) Let's just say we've been engaged in the community for a long, long time,” says Kathy.

Unfortunately, because all of the Philips businesses "do their own thing" when it comes to community relations, there is no external website for information specific to the Philips Andover philanthropic and community outreach activities. Many of the *current* documents are attached herein. A press release on the launch of Philips first sustainability report is also attached (appendix I, Philips Sustainability Report.doc.)

For further details about Royal Philips Electronics (NYSE:PHG, AEX: PHI), Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and their corporate sustainability efforts go to www.philips.com/sustainability or click [here to download the PDF file](#) for a full copy of the Sustainability Report.