

Community Toolkit

- **Business Support for Youth Programs**
- Creating an Education Program and Hiring Youth Outreach Staff
 - Creating Youth Recognition Awards/Scholarships
 - Developing a Youth Training/Leadership Program
 - Involving Young People in the Election Process
 - Mentoring Students and Visiting Schools
 - Setting up Internship Programs
- Working with Youth to Address Specific Community Issues or Needs
 - Youth Philanthropy
- Youth on School, Municipal, and Advisory Boards / Councils

The Maine Department of Education's
Citizenship Education Task Force

and

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS



2006

It is important that businesses help support the community that they live and work in. Not only does this strengthen the community and help them build connections with its people, but it also sets an example for young people to follow. Through business support, young adults learn the value of giving back to their community and begin to develop philanthropic habits.

A 2002 report by the Independent Sector, a non-profit representing thousands of other non-profits across the country, illustrates a direct connection between the impact of youth service on the giving and volunteering habits of young adults. *Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service* found that adults who engaged in volunteering as a youth give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began their philanthropy later in life: 44% of adults volunteer and 2/3rd's of these volunteers began volunteering when they were young. Independent Sector president and CEO Sara Melendez concluded, "If we are to ensure that our communities have the volunteer and philanthropic resources for the future, we must start to instill the values of service in our young people today."¹

Below are a few examples of how some businesses in Maine are reaching out to support programs for their community's young people.

Teens Who Care Award

The Teens Who Care Award is presented to Maine high school students based on their academic and community-based extra curricular achievements. Students are nominated by community members to receive \$1,000 scholarships, funded by Nelnet Superloan of Maine. According to a statement from the site by Laurie Curtis, Vice President at Nelnet, "Without exception, these teens demonstrate the highest level of compassion and work ethic and have earned the highest respect of their community." A diverse panel of judges review the nomination forms. The 2005 judges were Suzanne Olson, executive director of the Maine Children's Museum; Bill Vickerson, partner at Levenson, Vickerson, Beneman and member of the Children's Leadership Council (United Way of Greater Portland); Lynn Weisz, vice president of marketing and communications for United Way of Greater Portland; Shawn Yardley, city of Bangor's director of health and welfare; Charlene Belanger, community relations director, WCSH 6/WLBZ 2; and Steve Thaxton, president and general manager, WCSH 6. Recipients attend an award banquet where they receive their awards and then each are featured in 30-second clips shown on Channel 6 that give them statewide recognition for their achievements.

Read with ME

Read with ME is a statewide *Maine Reads* program aimed at improving literacy and reading skills among Maine's students. Through *Read with ME*, every kindergartner in the state has the opportunity to receive a book bag, which includes a selected book as well as literacy information including an activities sheet, and a bookmark developed by the Maine Department of Education. Schools have been provided with videos (captioned versions available) about reading aloud produced by Maine Public Broadcasting.

¹ Independent Sector, "Engaging Youth Report Demonstrates the Lifelong Impact of Youth Service," 20 November 2002

Each year the *Read with ME* book bags feature a different book written or illustrated by a Maine resident. For the year 2005-6, the featured book is *Down to the Sea with Mr. McGee*, which is written and illustrated by Camden resident Chris Van Dusen.

For the past six years, *Read with ME* has reached more than 18,000 kindergarten students in Maine annually. The Maine Army National Guard and Verizon technicians help to deliver the books together with more than fifty volunteers. All of the books and information are provided at no cost to the schools or students. *Read with ME* is made possible by Verizon. Through their support of Maine Reads, the umbrella literacy organization, the Verizon Foundation has supported Read with ME.

Verizon Reads was established in 1999, and is dedicated to the fight for a more literate America through meaningful programs that create awareness, raise funds, and encourage collaboration among literacy providers. Verizon also established a Verizon Literacy Network which acts as the resource for all literacy inquiries, linking literacy providers to the general public via the Internet, providing valuable information, and encouraging collaboration and sharing of the resources.

L.L. Bean Kids in Acadia Initiative

The L.L.Bean Kids in Acadia Initiative is part of a grant from the Maine-based company in which \$125,000 has been donated to Friends of Acadia (www.friendsofacadia.org) to facilitate and support the park's residential program. The funds will provide \$25,000 annually for five years to be used for recruiting and hiring teaching assistants for the Schoodic Education Adventure (SEA) program, establishing a student scholarship program, providing transportation assistance for schools, and offering week-long summer teacher institutes on the Schoodic campus. The L.L.Bean Kids in Acadia grant will also allow student enrollment to increase and will extend the SEA program season.

The low-cost SEA Program is also aligned with Maine State Learning Results and integrated across the curriculum. Students work with artists from the National Park Service Artist-in-Residence Program and, when possible, utilize actual scientific and cultural research taking place on site. Students practice small-group cooperation and communication skills while attending both ranger and teacher instruction. Ranger programs cover a wide variety of topics: Biological inventory of a forest; Mock archeology dig; Geology walk and bedrock geology mapping; Forest succession study; GPS mapping with computers; and Marine investigations and population study by tidal depth.

Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative

In 2004, the University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service began the Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative for youth transitioning from foster care. The state-wide initiative brings together people and resources to help make the connections youth in foster care need to achieve successful outcomes in education, employment, housing, health care, and personal / community connections. The Initiative operates through a 17-member Youth Leadership Board (both past and present foster care kids) and a 20-member Community Partnership Board made up of government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

One collaborator in the project is Bangor Savings Bank. They provide a matching savings program, called Individual Development Accounts (IDA's), for youth in foster care. John Moore of Bangor Savings Bank helped to design the savings program, "Together, we hope to develop a national model that will serve youth on a statewide basis in both rural and metropolitan communities."² Participating youth ages 16-24 can open IDA savings accounts and either a statement savings account with ATM access or a "20/20" checking account so that they can access financial services to encourage regular savings, learn appropriate use of electronic and transaction banking tools, and develop a wise use of credit. Bangor Savings Bank also provides cash management and deposit account services through any Maine financial institution so that the program can be delivered statewide. Through this initiative, Bangor Savings Bank hopes to help Maine continue to strengthen community connections for youth in foster care.

² John Moore, "Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative," Bangor Magazine, Bangor Savings Bank, Winter 2005.

Ideas and Suggestions for Implementation

(See also ideas and suggestions in “Youth Philanthropy” section of Community Toolkit for a recap of how to encourage philanthropy in youth)

Banks are probably the most familiar with corporate giving. In 1977 Congress enacted the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). This was intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, consistent with safe and sound banking operations.

For the rest of the corporate world, the Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy (CECP) was launched in 1999. CECP is the only international forum of business CEOs and Chairpersons pursuing a mission exclusively focused on corporate philanthropy. John M. Bridgeland, CEO of Civic Enterprises and Teaching Fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, provides some great insight into corporate giving in CECP’s winter 2005 newsletter:

“...a culture of service and citizenship ultimately depends upon leadership from the institutions we occupy – workplaces, schools, houses of worship, non-profits and the foundations that support them. Americans cite the demands of the workplace as one of their biggest obstacles to performing more volunteer service. Businesses are helping to change this.

More than 800 CEOs representing 5 million employees have joined a new movement called “Business Strengthening America” (BSA) and are making institutional changes in their policies and practices to support a culture of service. Companies provide paid leave and transportation to: mobilize thousands of employees to read to children in the public schools; support non-profits in which their employees volunteer so they can maximize their investment; deploy seniors in assisted living facilities to tutor disadvantaged children; use technology to better track, recognize, and encourage employee service; and formally change corporate policies to ensure these efforts are sustained. Such efforts strengthen communities, boost employee morale and productivity, and enhance the financial success of businesses.

The corporate and philanthropic sectors can do even more. Just as corporations have improved financial accountability, firms should become

committed to civic accountability. Some companies are beginning to take a snapshot of their civic engagement – an assessment or audit to track their progress, much as they do with financial audits. This is a first step in maximizing their service efforts to ensure they adopt innovative policies and practices across their business units. Local Chambers of Commerce should be enlisted to recruit businesses in their local communities to join BSA and to mobilize their workforce and resources to effectively support their customers’ communities. Non-profits should open their doors to more corporate volunteers and mentors who can help disadvantaged children do better in school and the workforce.

Foundations interested in service and civic engagement should share information with one another about their grantmaking and collaborate to support promising efforts. The new consortium of foundations attempting to do this, called Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE), is an excellent start. . .

Service to others strengthens communities, enriches our own lives, and embodies what it means to be an American. With enhanced corporate and philanthropic leadership, we can strengthen a culture of service and citizenship that will last for decades to come.”

Case Study Resources

Teens Who Care Award

WLBZ 2 (Bangor) /WCSH6 (Portland)

<http://www.wcsh6.com>

<http://www.wlbz2.com>

Connie Cushing

Read With ME. Volunteer

PO Box 45

Sumner, ME 04292

207 388-2574

nidoba@megalink.net

<http://www.mainereads.org/>

Cynthia Ocel

L.L. Bean Kids in Acadia

Acadia National Park

P.O. Box 177

Bar Harbor, ME 04609

207-288-8822

Cynthia_Ocel@nps.gov

<http://www.nps.gov/acad/eeweb/programs/scaprogram.htm>

Marty Zanghi

Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative

Muskie School, USM

400 Congress St., Box 15010

Portland, ME 04112

207-780-5867

martyz@usm.maine.edu

http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/m_view_project.jsp?id=2928

Additional Resources

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream

The Scoopers Making Change Program offers young people, employed in scoop shops throughout the U.S. and Canada, the opportunity to further their understanding of effective strategies for positive social change. The program targets community-minded youth (ages 17 - 21). Participants in this week-long program will explore innovative ways businesses and individuals address community needs and solve social problems. The program provides young people with the knowledge, inspiration and confidence they need to be agents of positive social change in their communities. Scoopers Making Change participants will receive a grant of up to \$1,000 to support their project.

http://www.benandjerrys.com/scoop_shops/ss_social_mission/scoopers_making_change/index.cfm

Business Strengthening America

In June 2002, a diverse group of business leaders came together to create Business Strengthening America (BSA) a self-directed, multi-year, peer-to-peer effort to engage thousands of America's business leaders in a campaign to encourage civic engagement and service. <http://www.bsanetwork.org/>

The CARE Act & Charitable Giving Act

The CARE Act (S. 1780) was introduced in the Senate on September 28, 2005. The Charitable Giving Act (H.R. 3908) was introduced in the House on September 27, 2005. This legislation would provide new tax incentives for charitable contributions, rework existing federal law governing charities, and provide increased funding for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), the Compassion Capital Fund, and the Social Services Block Grant. <http://national.unitedway.org/>

Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy

The COMMITTEE TO ENCOURAGE CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY (CECP) is the only international forum of business CEOs and Chairpersons pursuing a mission exclusively focused on corporate philanthropy. Membership is reserved to CEOs and Chairpersons of the world's largest and most well-regarded corporations from a diverse and broad range of industry sectors. <http://corporatephilanthropy.org/>

Hannaford Charitable Foundation

The Hannaford Charitable Foundation provides financial support for programs and organizations with a current 501(c)(3) tax exempt status dedicated to improving the communities in the five-state area where they operate stores. Requests from worthy charities in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont that fall into four general categories: Health and welfare; Educational institutions; Civic and cultural organizations; and Other local charitable organizations. Organizations funded by the Foundation include YMCAs and YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, museums, libraries, hospital building or capital funds, as well as college and university capital or building funds.

http://www.hannaford.com/Contents/Our_Company/Community/charitableFoundation.shtml

Independent Sector

2002 Report, "Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service" finds that adults who engaged in volunteering in their youth give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began their philanthropy later in life.

<http://www.independentsector.org/>

Maine Community Foundation

The Maine Community Foundation holds more than 800 charitable funds established by donors for the benefit of communities across the state. MCF promotes active philanthropy by stewarding charitable funds and making effective grants. We help connect charitably minded citizens to nonprofit organizations working to improve the lives of Maine residents. <http://www.mainecef.org/>

Maine Council on Economic Education: Campaign for Economic Literacy

The Maine Council on Economic Education announced the recent grant of \$15,000 to its Campaign for Economic Literacy from the Verizon Foundation. The Council is a privately funded, non-profit, organization which assists Maine K-12 teachers and students to develop and use high quality programs and materials in economics.

<http://www.maineCouncil.org/verizon.shtml>

Maine Youth Camping Association

View the business member guide to search for businesses that support Maine summer camps.

<http://www.maineCamps.org/index.htm>

Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)

Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement is a community of grantmakers and donors committed to strengthening democracy by using the power, influence and resources of philanthropy to open pathways to participation.

<http://www.pacefunders.org/>

Spirit of America Awards Program

The Spirit of America® Awards program is United Way of America's highest tribute for company-wide corporate community involvement. This awards program honors exceptional commitment and investment by corporations and their employees. <http://national.unitedway.org/>