



## **VOLUNTEER DAYS AT WORK**

### **By: CATHY DOBRYNSKI, CPA, CGMA**

Last week, we had our annual Community Service Day at Conner Ash. I signed up for this day - it's a no brainer: free lunch and a half day out of the office not doing work. But is there more to it? Why would Conner Ash coordinate and offer this Community Service Day at the expense of billable hours?

I had my own ideas behind the value of service but I googled the subject of company volunteer days and found some interesting articles. Two of the most common reasons cited for offering such days were 'corporate responsibility' and 'community reputation'. Per the articles, as companies developed their volunteer days, they discovered that service days also benefited their staff development programs through improved leadership and skills development as well as team building. They also saw increased loyalty and retention by staff members that participated in the company volunteer days.

Perhaps the most impactful benefits of company volunteer days are:

- "Participants may find that the giving of themselves to the public good may result in a more solidified view of self and purpose...
- People gain the most from their community service projects when they volunteer their time to help people they have never interacted with before. This direct contact allows people to see life from a different perspective and reevaluate their opinions of others. Many young people who get involved in community service come out with a more well-rounded worldview...
- Another benefit in participating in community service is a greater understanding and appreciation for diversity. ...community service work can assist people in realizing that those they are helping and working with are no different from themselves...
- Learning to understand the needs and motivations of others, especially those who live different lives from our own, is an important part of living a productive life. This leads to a view of humanity that can help a person stay free of biased opinions of others and can lead to a more diverse and ultimately more productive and thought provoking life."

(source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_service))

At Conner Ash, our service days are chosen by a different employee each year which allows us to be exposed to different areas since each person has their own individual area of focus. For instance, last year we helped a preschool by putting together food baskets, cleaning up their outside grounds, organizing their art supplies, moving furniture, etc. This year, we worked in a garden that was



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operated by an elementary school. As you can see, neither of these areas would fall into a normal CPA's work day and I think all of us that participated could vouch for the benefits cited above. So if your company doesn't have a Community Service Day, you may want to start one. It doesn't have to be elaborate - ours is just a 1/2 day once per year. This half day provides more employee development than any seminar could provide.

If you are looking for a firm with a commitment to the community, please contact [Cathy Dobrynski, CPA, CGMA](mailto:cdobrynski@connerash.com), or one of our other Account Managers at (314) 205-2510 or via email [cdobrynski@connerash.com](mailto:cdobrynski@connerash.com).