

# Accounting firm structures employee involvement

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The management at Reznick Group knows it can't tailor a corporate outreach program that reaches the charities most important to each employee across its 10 offices. But leaders at the national accounting, tax and business-advisory firm know for sure that helping others is important companywide.

Three years ago, as a result of strong employee interest, Reznick created a formal volunteer program. The social impact committee encourages employees' individual efforts and facilitates office-wide projects. The Charlotte office's social impact committee meets once a month to plan events and activities.

The effort benefits a host of local charities. Employees buy, prepare and serve lunch at the Men's Shelter; hold collection drives for Crisis Assistance Ministries; and collect supplies for Classroom Central, Give 2 the Troops and Pull Tabs for Charity. Employees have run in 5Ks for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the Ronald McDonald House, and have volunteered for projects targeting schools.

"Putting structure behind the effort and creating a calendar of events has given people a lot better handle on what's available to them," says Marshall Phillips, Charlotte consulting senior manager and a co-chair of Reznick's national social impact committee.

"Now the holidays don't pop up and we wonder what we are going to do. We are planning for it in May."

Since July 2009, the Charlotte office has logged more than 1,000 volunteer hours, fed 250 homeless men lunch, collected 40 pounds of toiletries and 15

large bags of clothing for Crisis Assistance Ministries and the Men's Shelter, and collected 200 pounds of school supplies and \$1,000 for Classroom Central. The firm also donated more than \$800 of snacks, hygiene products and goodies for N.C. troops deployed overseas during the holidays.

One of the firm's most popular and successful programs is modeled after the movie *Pay It Forward*. Each December, employees receive an increase in their paychecks — \$50 or so — in the hope they'll pay it forward with a contribution to individuals or organizations in need.

Phillips says some employees pool their

money for a bigger impact. Last year, a group of about 35 employees bought computers for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Activities League, which supervises athletic programs for youth. The Reznick employees surprised the league's volunteers with the donation.

The office also schedules two big events each year, including delivering turkeys at Thanksgiving and collecting funds and school supplies for Classroom Central.

Evie Victorson, Reznick's Charlotte marketing manager, says the firm's strong endorsement of charitable giving has sparked interest among employees.

"The fact that the firm is so giving of its time and financial resources to help our communities makes those within the firm want to give their time," Victorson says.

And the culture of giving has had an impact on firm operations, Phillips says.

"A while back, we were talking about a 30th anniversary party for the firm," he says. "It quickly evolved from hold-



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**Reznick Group has a formal volunteer program to channel the efforts and financial contributions of employees to help nonprofits. Beneficiaries include the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Activities League and Classroom Central.**

ing a party to each office taking the day off to go out in the community to do service projects, and that ended up being our celebration."

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Corporate  
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