

Corporate Giving

With the holiday season upon us, a number of organizations are focusing efforts on programs that give back to the community. Included in those are Wells Fargo, a leading provider of banking and financial services, and Swiss American, a nationwide distributor of imported and domestic cheeses and specialty foods. Jim Nawrocki, spokesperson for [Wells Fargo](#), and AJ Rosenberg, senior director of business innovation for [Swiss American](#), share how and why their organizations are giving back to the community.

How is your organization giving back to the community?

Nawrocki: Wells Fargo has a strong tradition of giving back to the community through our corporate giving, and through the financial contributions and volunteer time donated by our team members. In 2012, Wells Fargo donated a total of \$315.8 million to 19,500 nonprofits supporting a wide array of causes. We believe that these contributions support organizations that are helping build strong, healthy communities by bringing vital support and services to those in need. In addition to our planned giving, Wells Fargo also supports communities during unexpected events, like natural disasters.

Rosenberg: We do a number of things during the holiday season to give back to the community. We have done food drives, sent products to soldiers overseas, and this year we are getting ready to do Operation Food Search and also Ronald McDonald House for the holidays. We also do a variety of different things throughout the year. One of those is an internship program for Mission St. Louis' Jobs for Life, which equips men who have had criminal convictions, or are otherwise at risk to become leaders in their workplace, community and families.

In what ways do your employees participate in this giving?

Nawrocki: Each year our team members donate to the nonprofits and causes of their choice; they do so directly, throughout the year, and during our annual Community Support and United Way Campaign. In 2013, our team members donated a total of \$89 million to nonprofits – that total includes the \$64.9 million that team members pledged during the annual giving campaign. In addition to financial contributions, our team members are heavily involved in donating their volunteer time to community nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity and thousands of others. In September of 2013 alone, our team members logged 315,000 volunteer hours.

How has this impacted those within your organization?

Rosenberg: We have had two employees that have stepped up and said “hey, I know some of these people,” or “this resonates with my story,” and they’d like to give back. So we’ve inspired them to give back to the Jobs for Life program. We have also hired one of the graduates from the program who has been inspired to continue to tell his story. So every time we have a new internship group, he spends a couple of minutes talking to them about what the program has meant for him and how it has been a positive life experience. Since completing the program he has been able to get an apartment and a car and now has a stable life.

How has this impacted those you have served?

Rosenberg: Because we bring the men onsite during the Jobs for Life internship program, they obtain a number of transferrable skills that can help them to find future employment. For some, we also offer full-time positions once the program is complete and if we don't have full-time positions available, we provide them with references. I think the program also builds self-esteem and confidence for a lot of these guys. Because coming into this they think "oh, well I have this number of bad decisions, or this conviction or I am still engaging in some kind of a court mandated program. Who is ever going to give me a chance?" So the fact that we open our doors and we treat them like everybody else, it gives them the confidence in knowing that there are employers out there willing to overlook some of the issues that they've had and give them a chance.

Nawrocki: It's difficult to measure the full impact of our contributions, because the story is told not just in dollar amounts, but in the lives that have been changed for the better through the work of the thousands of nonprofits we support, and the work of our team members as they volunteer their time and talent and resources in their communities. Our donations help promote financial education; they help schools and students around the country; they help clean up the environment; they help build new homes for the disadvantaged; and they make it possible for thousands of community groups continue the good, and in many cases, life-sustaining, work they're doing in our communities.