



## Corporate Giving

### Meadowlands businesses raise the bar on partnering with community causes

“We believe that so many of us are lucky to have what we have. We have to give back to the community that needs our help.”

Lea Anne Welsh, chief operating officer,  
Korman Communities and  
Brand President of AVE Living

This past summer, people of all ages and from all walks of life participated in what became known as the Ice Bucket Challenge, an Internet video phenomenon which raised nearly \$20 million for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease. Since July 29 when the challenge began, the ALS Association has received more than \$115 million in donations, from individuals, corporations and businesses who opened their checkbooks for this charitable cause.

While this unique fundraising effort turned out to be a huge success, philanthropic giving is much more than making monetary donations. According to a recent survey by America’s Charities, companies recognize that giving is also about “creating

fully integrated opportunities to engage employees” to help nonprofit fundraising initiatives.

#### ‘We Have to Give Back’

Philanthropic giving is nothing new to corporations and businesses in the Meadowlands region, which for many years have been active participants in a wide range of charitable giving initiatives.

“We believe that so many of us are lucky to have what we have. We have to give back to the community that needs our help,” said Lea Anne Welsh, chief operating officer, Korman Communities and Brand President of AVE Living, just one of the Meadowlands region companies that regularly participate in charitable giving efforts.

“Why does the company become involved? Our feeling is that it’s our responsibility to be involved in all of our communities and to do what we can to make them a better place. As part of our mission statement says, ‘We strive to support our communities by making a positive impact on the organizations and neighborhoods within our market.’ So it is extremely important to give back to the community—we are a large part of every community and it is imperative that we strive to make those communities better.”

R. A. Jones, senior vice president for Boiling Springs Savings Bank

Welsh said that “team members,” as she referred to AVE’s employees, participate in a variety of fundraising events throughout the year.

“We have somewhat of a captive audience,” said Welsh, explaining that AVE Living offers furnished extended-stay accommodations in three New Jersey locations for business travelers and folks in transition, among others. “The response from our teams as well as residents is overwhelming. People really do want to give.”

Among the initiatives are holiday toy drives and food drives held in the AVE property lobbies, Welsh said. Last year, the company was very active in the pre-Super Bowl coat drive, which was part of a larger giving initiative in the Meadowlands region.

These and other efforts are coordinated by the company’s community director, Welsh said.

“Our team members talk it up and create a sense of community among the residents,” she said. “It’s very rewarding.”

Last year, employees at one company location even “adopted” a local family for the holidays, offering gifts, food and other necessities, Welsh noted.

Employees, including Welsh, also donate their time and raise moneys for nation-wide charitable fundraisers, such as the Breast Cancer Walk and American Heart Association Walk, held in Clifton and Union County respectively.

Welsh added that for the past eight years, team members of AVE’s parent company, Korman Communities, also took part in the annual MS Bike Ride.

“It’s fun to participate,” said Welsh, who was among this year’s cyclists. “But it’s also so important that we help however we can.”

### Year-Round Giving

In celebration of its 175th anniversary, Provident Bank launched a year-long charity campaign to give back to the community.

“It was the company’s way of saying ‘thanks,’” said Diana Braga, public relations and corporate donations manager with Provident Bank, which has branches throughout the Meadowlands region. “Our company tag line is ‘Commitment you can count on,’ and we strive to make that a reality in everything we do.”

Braga explained that each month, beginning this past February, Provident Bank recognized in some way a different charity or nonprofit organization. For instance, donations were collected in February for the American Heart Association’s Go Red campaign, which raises awareness about heart disease in women. May’s efforts went to Pet Adoption Month and in September employees were asked to donate the dollar amount that they would typically spend on lunch to raise moneys for Table-to-Table, a community-based food rescue program that collects prepared and perishable food that would otherwise be wasted and delivers it to organizations serving the hungry in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Passaic counties.

“Our employees also give of their time and talents, which is just as important in many ways,” Braga said. In March, employee volunteers worked with students in rebuilding efforts for those affected by Superstorm Sandy. “Two years later, many people are still feeling the aftermath of the storm. We teamed up with NJIT and received a wonderful response to the call for help.”

Other giving initiatives included collecting donations of items for Operation Shoe Box, which compiles care packages for our

nation’s military troops and collecting school supplies and distributing them to organizations that provide for children in need.

Employees are also encouraged to seek out their own ways of giving.

“We have employees throughout New Jersey so they often choose to work with a charity that is close to their homes or more convenient for them,” Braga said, noting that employees are compensated with paid time off for their volunteer efforts.

A coat drive in November and a toy drive in December are planned.

“It’s been a year-long campaign and we’re very proud of our people who pitched in,” Braga said, noting that their efforts are often shared by the people they serve.

“We never solicit to customers because most of what we do is employee-based,” she said. “But customers do get involved sometimes and they’re happy to help.”

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### Company-Wide Participation

R. A. Jones, senior vice president for Boiling Springs Savings Bank, said philanthropic giving involves employees at all levels of the company.

“All vice presidents are expected to be involved with a non-profit organization in our area and to actively support non-profit events,” said Jones. “And all branch managers are members of a service organization in their respective communities.”

Jones explained that Boiling Springs’ cornerstone program is its Community Alliance Program (CAP).

“This is a program we began in mid-2006 whereby we give donations to non-profits based on the number of their supporters who bank with us,” Jones said. “In the eight years since we began the program, we have donated almost \$1.8 million. There are currently almost 350 nonprofits that belong to the CAP.”

The largest CAP member currently receives donations of almost \$30,000 a year from the program. For 2014 Boiling Springs will be donating more than \$400,000 to CAP organizations, he said.

“The way CAP works is that the nonprofit will encourage their supporters to designate BSSB accounts to benefit the nonprofit. So when accounts are designated we give a (pre-determined percentage) donation to the non-

profit based on the average balance (in the accounts)” Jones said.

Boiling Springs Savings Bank also supports local organizations by sponsoring events, such as local runs; sponsor local teams; support a local tricky tray; buy tickets to events; cash support; etc.

Besides a substantial marketing department budget for these items, each branch has its own budget to support local groups, Jones said.

“We have a donations committee that has a budget that is a percentage of the bank’s net profits. This committee donates larger amounts to organizations in our area.

“Our company tag line is ‘Commitment you can count on,’ and we strive to make that a reality in everything we do.”

Diana Braga, public relations and corporate donations manager with Provident Bank

Organizations apply for grants and donations which are determined by the committee,” Jones said.

These moneys are donated to local organizations such as Children’s Aid and Family Services, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Chilton Medical Center Pediatric Clinic, NewBridge Services; Volunteer Center of Bergen County, Center for Food Action and others in the region.

Employees volunteer to work at different projects including helping homeowners fix up their homes with Rebuilding Together and the development of a community garden by the Volunteer Center. Employees also went door-to-door in various towns distributing relief information in the days and weeks after Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on so many communities in the area.

“Why does the company become involved? Our feeling is that it our responsibility to be involved in all of our communities and to do what we can to make them a better place,” said Jones. “As part of our mission statement says, ‘We strive to support our communities by making a positive impact on the organizations and neighborhoods within our market.’ So it is extremely important to give back to the community—we are a large part of every community and it is imperative that we strive to make those communities better.”

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Mark Brodie, President of MIB Mediaworks

### Gifts In Kind

As an alternative to monetary donations, philanthropic giving also is measured in offerings of resources, use of facilities or property, services or other means of support.

Mark Brodie, President of MIB Mediaworks in Little Falls, New Jersey, said as the owner of a small business, he understands the concept of this type of giving, often referred to as 'gifts-in-kind.' He also recognizes the financial limitations many would-be donors often face.

"Many of my clients are also small businesses or nonprofits, and I know how hard it is to make a go of it," said Brodie, whose company is a full service video production and media consulting firm. "From a business perspective, though, it's sometimes tough to

determine how much to give or where to give, so I do what I can when possible. Often that happens by way of donating my services."

Brodie said he enjoys donating his time or doing pro bono work as his way of giving back.

"I can't always write the big check but I try to work with a lot of volunteer organizations and non-profits," he said. "I like helping people out and the reward for me is that I 'get it back' in spades by knowing that I did my share even in a small way."

Among Brodie's recent efforts was his volunteer work with the Big Game 5K "One Run, Many Lives Touched," held before last year's Super Bowl. The 3.1 mile race, held at the Westfield Garden State Plaza Mall in Paramus, New Jersey, kicked off Super Bowl

week in the tri-state area. More than \$60,000 was raised for participating nonprofits include the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Maria Fareri Children's Hospital, Children's Aid and Family Services, Adler Aphasia Center, Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bergen County, Hawthorne and Northwest NJ.

Brodie put together the wrap-up video of the day's events, which was a great success.

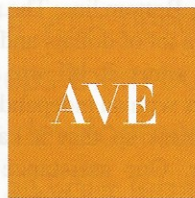
"Putting the race together was a lot of work for everyone who volunteered," said Brodie, "but it was a lot of fun and for such a good cause. I was happy to be part of it." ❧

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