

Celebrate Philanthropy



By Debra Dion Krischke

As the Giving Guide celebrates the many non-profits in our community and the important work they do, we also celebrate the many corporations, small businesses and individuals who make such important financial contributions to their efforts. Through partnering, sponsorship or just philanthropic giving, our city is blessed with people who are not only socially conscious, but also grateful for the opportunity to give back.

Cause Marketing is a term that may have only been around for a few years, but philanthropy is timeless. From the old money of the region's well-known founding families to the new face of philanthropy, we continue a fine tradition of caring and sharing with people less fortunate than ourselves. To

quote President Obama: "What is required of us now is new era of responsibility. A recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly."

In this economic "re-set," non-profits need everyone's support more than ever. Consumers are ready and willing to support and purchase from companies that link their products to a "need" greater than themselves. Smart corporations and small business owners figure out how to market and brand to causes that resonate for themselves and their loyal customers. Cause Branding is a powerful vehicle that brings a company's values to life. Doing "good" is now an expected business strategy and should be a part of every company's DNA to add value for consumers, employees and the bottom line. The bar has been raised and simply providing quality products at a fair value is no longer enough.

In The Cone/Roper survey of consumer awareness and attitudes, eight of 10 consumers agreed that they had a more positive image of a

company that supports a cause they care about, so companies should be committed to a specific cause over a long period of time. If you are reading this and wondering how and where to get involved, look no further. The Business Times has a special site to assist non-profits and their needs with companies looking to help. It's that simple. Go to http://networking.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/Philanthropy_Inc_

If you are an employee, you can look to activate a large or small group of volunteers to do hands-on work. If you work at a large corporation, you can look to tie in with existing events or causes that have meaning for your employees and that help give your marketing or PR department another positive and wonderful angle to facilitate a press release. And don't forget the latest way to thank your best clients – take them to a great foodie fundraiser where you'll eat and graze on fabulous offerings while every dollar you spend will go to help a non-profit! Talk about a win/win!

And if you are one of the millions of small or micro business owners out there, all you have to do is stop wearing the many hats you most

likely wear long enough to listen to your heart. As Deepak Chopra reminds us, don't give from your core because that's finite. Give from your abundance, which is infinite. If you have money, spend it! The world is all about giving and receiving. So stay focused and grow that business until you prosper, but remember that to whom much is given, much is expected. And we, the citizens of the United States of America, and of this magnificent city of Pittsburgh, are indeed living in richness of opportunity. Our potential is limitless.

As we prepare to showcase our fair city to the economic leaders of the world, let them be reminded that Pittsburgh was rated one of the top four philanthropic cities in the United States in 2008. We not only have steel in our roots, steel in our sports, but steel in our core and our desire to do well AND to do good. We see the needs, we act from our hearts, and we give back when and where we can. We have a long legacy to uphold and clearly we have only just begun.

Debra Dion Krischke is a special event producer of events for women's initiatives.