

GrantStream Quarterly

Sharing knowledge, insights and experience

Special Holiday Edition

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WHETHER IT MAKES you want to smile in anticipation or grind your teeth in aggravation, 'tis that frenzied, jolly season that draws yet another year to a close. Almost inevitably, we will at some point catch ourselves looking back on 2009 and reflecting on our personal developments and professional accomplishments. Many companies experienced significant changes this year, and many Community Involvement departments were left scrambling to reorganize priorities and scale back their programs, all the while maintaining strong relationships with community stakeholders. In this season of reflection, it is a good time to assess where your programs stand, what resources – financial and human – are available to you, and where you'd like to take your programs in 2010 and beyond. Here's a **practical and simple suggestion for your**

review: on a piece of paper, list your current programs, projects or initiatives down the left margin, and think, in light of your objectives, do you want to grow this project, maintain it or abandon it? Coming back to work after the holidays with a high level plan in place for the New Year will make it a lot easier to overcome the fog that a steady diet of eggnog and turkey leftovers can put you in.

In this issue, we talk about the **trends we foresee for Community Involvement in 2010**, suggest a few **holiday gift ideas for the socially conscious**, and take you behind the **scenes into the fascinating lives of two more GrantStream employees.**

As always, on behalf of the ever-growing team at GrantStream, we wish you and yours a happy holiday season and a bright start to a new decade! ✨

CLAUDIA GARCIA

Buon Natale Kuwa na Krismasi njema Srochdestoorn Kristoorn Weselych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

Notes from our Co-Presidents

An end-of-year message from Matthew and Richard

2009 has been a year to remember, for good and bad. The global recession hit everyone, some worse than others. No doubt each of us knows someone who lost a job, including those in the field of community involvement. To those impacted most severely, we wish you all the best for a brighter and happier new year.

Despite its many negatives, 2009 also had its shining moments. We heard from many clients that their CI programs adapted and responded well to emerging community needs and they saw firsthand the powerful impact of their company's support and involvement. We salute you and your fellow CI professionals for making a real difference.

At GrantStream, we were fortunate to have another strong year, thanks to our long established clients as well as the ones who joined us in 2009. Last year at this time we promised you that we would work harder to respond to your needs and

strive to deliver even better value and improved client support. Our outstanding team of employees really stepped up to this challenge and we would not be where we are today without their commitment, enthusiasm and drive. However, quality and service are a journey, not a destination. We know we still have lots of room for improvement.

As always, it is both your constructive criticism as well as your generous praise that inspires us to continue to improve our products and services. We truly appreciate your business and continued loyalty. Many thanks!

We hope you will take time to relax over the holidays (as we intend to) and we wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year! ✨

MATTHEW AND RICHARD



Socially Responsible Gift Ideas

Start a pay-it-forward chain of goodwill with Boom

Boom! cards Bring on the thoughtfulness with an "intentional act of kindness kit." Boom Boom! cards encourage people to carry out thoughtful actions, like buying a stranger a coffee or picking up litter. These acts are paid forward when the cards are passed along to others to do the same. You can even track your card online to see what acts of kindness you might have inspired for other people.

Contribute to the fight against AIDS with Product (RED)

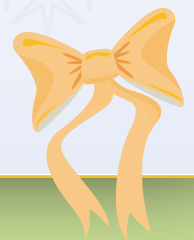
Created by U2 frontman, Bono, and American activist and politician, Bobby Shriver, Product (RED) is a hip cause marketing program that raises funds to **fight AIDS in Africa**. Purchase trendy products from companies like Nike, GAP Inc., and Apple that carry the (RED) label, and a portion of the cost is donated to the cause.

Adopt an animal from the World Wildlife Fund

For as little as \$25, you can give someone the gift of a symbolic **adoption of an endangered animal**. Your gift helps conservation efforts around the world – and depending on the amount of your donation, your recipient could receive an adoption certificate, a photo of their adopted animal, and a cuddly plush to keep and remind them of your generosity.

Change a life for someone halfway around the world with a Kiva micro-loan

With a gift certificate from Kiva, you can encourage someone to get involved in the transformative business of micro-loans. \$25 can make a world of difference for the entrepreneur you choose to fund, whose businesses allow them to provide a sustainable livelihood for themselves, their families and their communities.



Trends in Community Involvement: A View to 2010

As companies continue to adjust to uncertain times and scarce resources, Community Involvement must adapt as well. Here are a few trends we've been seeing recently that will likely continue into 2010 and beyond:

Leveraging existing assets and relationships:

Instead of putting hard work into developing new assets and new relationships, **look to existing tools and connections** at your disposal. Ask questions such as: Can we repackage and repurpose existing resources to gain new benefit from them? Can we establish new initiatives with our current partners, or grow an existing initiative that has untapped potential?

Move toward Signature Programs:

In a 2008 survey by [LBG Associates](#) in the U.S., almost 80% of respondents said they currently had a signature program in place or were currently considering one. But here's some important advice: don't rush into creating a true signature program for your company without **careful planning and strategic analysis** — signature programs must be rooted in the hearts and minds of your employees and your communities in order to be meaningful and successful. If you're not sure where to start, GrantStream can help you with the process of choosing and developing of your program.

More Measurement & Reporting

More companies are putting out formal reports specifically about their community involvement activities. While facts and figures are an essential (and often easy) form of transparency, there is nothing like **the power of stories** to bring the message home most effectively. Tell your stories in a compelling manner, and speak about the impact your activities have on the lives of real people. This is what resonates with audiences inside and outside your four walls.

Higher levels of Employee Volunteerism

In 2009, a survey by the [LBG Research Institute](#) (the non-profit research arm of LBG Associates) found that 84% of companies were **encouraging volunteerism** as a way to offset a decrease in charitable giving. Connect with your local volunteer centre or United Way to find out where your employees' efforts can have the most impact, and then recruit staff to help out in these specific areas.

Increasing communication activities around Community Involvement programs:

Your employees won't feel good about your fine programs if they don't know about them. And externally, leveraging your various initiatives creates favourable exposure for your company, which builds your corporate brand and reputation. Companies are finding **new ways to tell their stories** and exploring **new media channels** to reach audiences that they may not have been able to touch before. Consider starting a community involvement blog targeting specific communities important to your company. Promote your blog through local channels and employees and encourage dialogue on relevant social issues and activities.

If you need help evaluating and adjusting your department's priorities, speak to [Richard](#) to find out how our Consulting team can lend a hand.



The Inside Scoop

A peek into the lives of GrantStream staff



Mihajlo (pronounced me-HIGH-low) **Corovic**, known as Mike around the office, is also known for his peculiar sense of eyebrow-raising humour that often leaves people shaking their heads in amusement and/or confusion. Although his culinary experiments would tempt anyone to question his judgment (Nutella and tomato sandwich, anyone?), his creativity translates into a valuable skill as a Software Developer. Mike can always be counted on to come up with new ways to

improve processes and products, possibly a result of his Software Engineering background. Mike currently heads up GrantStream's own Community Involvement committee, and in the evenings, he keeps himself busy studying part-time toward an MBA at McMaster University, specializing in Management of Innovation and New Technology. On his down time, Mike most enjoys catching up on episodes of The Office or cheering on The Toronto Raptors during games.



If you've ever called to request a custom report on your community giving, **Virgil Rucsandescu**, Crystal Reports Developer, is our man behind the scenes working the databases to come up with that ever-important tool for analysis. Virgil studied Computer Science back in his native Romania, going on to develop the original database for Dacia Felix, Romania's very first private bank. In fact, Virgil is so skilled with databases, it is said that he can take one

look at our developers' database code and make it 300% faster within about 10 seconds! When he's not busy crunching data, he can often be heard cleaning his keyboard with a conspicuously noisy can of "air-spray". Virgil and his wife recently bought a house in Oakville, Ontario and are excited to spend their holidays making it into a home.

Lending a hand to disadvantaged families for the Holidays

Our employees chose once again this year to participate in the **Halton Women's Place Holiday Hamper Program**. Women who leave abusive homes often find the holidays a particularly tough time to get through as they adjust to change and strive to provide for their children on their own. The Halton Women's Place ensures that all the families who have recently used their services enjoy their holidays, and GrantStream employees are always happy to make a difference with our contributions.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.



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