



Volunteering pays off for companies - and employees

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Jay Banfield executive director of the Year Up Bay Area, shows photos the nonprofit's former students. Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle

In the spirit of the season of sharing, a growing number of American businesses appear to be doing well by doing good.

"Commitment to community is being institutionalized as a top priority throughout companies, while simultaneously increasing their revenue, recruitment and employee satisfaction," according to a survey of major U.S. corporations.

The Civic 50 survey, conducted by **Points of Light**, a volunteerism network in Atlanta, and the **National Conference on Citizenship** in Washington D.C., found a majority of S&P 500 companies have increased their civic engagement. That includes "the amount of financial and human resources applied to civic improvement; how a company's community engagement activities align with its business interests; and how broadly community engagement is supported and institutionalized within a company's policies, systems and incentives."

Six Bay Area companies were among the 50 "most community-minded companies in the nation" - in alphabetical order, **Adobe Systems, EcoLab, Gap, Hewlett-Packard, Intel** and **PG&E**. Overall rankings were not made, but Gap was tops in the consumer discretionary category, HP was first in technology and PG&E led the utilities field.

Note to employees: Performance evaluations will probably "in part be based by their participation in community work." Note to employers: "People want to work for companies that do good."

The HP employees who engaged in "company-organized, skills-based" volunteer programs, for example, had significantly higher morale than non-volunteers, according to the report. (www.ncoc.net/civic50)

Hand-in-hand: This month, **Jay Banfield**, executive director of **Year Up Bay Area**, sent a thank-you note "to all of our corporate champions, investors, internship managers, mentors and tutors" who have contributed to the group's efforts, financial and otherwise.

The San Francisco nonprofit, a branch of the nationwide Year Up organization dedicated to closing the "opportunity divide," draws on professionals from approximately 35 companies to help train non-college-educated young adults for skilled jobs in areas such as tech. So far, about 800 trainees have passed through its doors.

Corporate contributors include **Salesforce.com**, which helped launch Year Up Bay Area in 2008; **LinkedIn, Facebook, eBay** and **Mozilla**, which take on trainees as interns, a number of whom get hired full time. Non-tech partners include **JPMorgan Chase** and **Bank of the West**.

With a \$2.5 million grant from Salesforce, Year Up Bay Area is expanding its outreach in San Francisco and will have about 320 trainees - including those at a recently opened campus in San Jose - in 2014.

"These companies are incredibly important to the growth of our program," said Banfield, a former **Oracle** executive. "We know tech companies are struggling to find talent. We're helping them find it in places they may not typically look." (www.yearup.org)

Walking the walk: With the tech sector turning its attention more to philanthropy, here are a couple of recent examples from more traditional corporate givers:

-- **Wells Fargo** (which also partners with Year Up) presented a check for \$300,000 to the **Glide Foundation** this month at Glide's holiday senior social event. The San Francisco bank has given more than \$2.4 million to Glide since 1998. The church's Rev. **Cecil Williams** thanked Wells Fargo "for walking the walk and helping those in need."

In 2012, the bank awarded \$315.8 million in grants to 19,500 nonprofits nationwide, and its employees contributed more than 1.5 million volunteer hours. Among the recent grants was "a \$1 million equity equivalent investment" in **Grameen America**, enabling the microfinance nonprofit to expand its microloan services for low-income female entrepreneurs in California and Texas.

-- As part of its California State Giving Program the **Walmart Foundation** recently donated \$160,000 to four nonprofits in Silicon Valley, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, focusing on education and nutrition. Add that to the \$1.4 million the foundation gave to other Bay Area community nonprofits for similar programs this year.

"Our Parent Education Academy will now be able to educate many more Latino parents who want to help their children graduate from high school and college," said **Ron Gonzales**, CEO of the **Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley**, one of this month's recipients.

<http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/Volunteering-pays-off-for-companies-and-5098467.php>