A New Generation of Service

Five-thousand Conference attendees filled Monday’s opening plenary, “A New Generation of Service,” returning to the city that hosted the first National Conference on Volunteering and Service in 1992. The ballroom was jam-packed with positive energy and enthusiasm as attendees enjoyed the presentation of our nation’s colors and singing of the National Anthem by the Chicago Public Schools’ Junior ROTC. President Barack Obama highlighted the great American tradition of service shining in each and every service leader in the room and encouraged all to keep striving to create change.

Former first lady Barbara Bush was joined by her grandchildren, Pierce Bush and Lauren Bush Lauren, along with other dignitaries including Dr. Jill Biden and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who stressed that it is impossible for government to reach its goals without the power of service. Actor and SixDegrees.org founder Kevin Bacon, added star power to the lineup of presenters including former U.S. Army veteran J.R. Martinez, MSNBC’s Melissa Harris-Perry and Points of Light Chairman Neil Bush.

Opening plenary attendees continued the work of the morning’s Seeds for Change service project by assembling seed packets, seedlings, implementation guides, service-learning materials and gardening supplies to create 500 “Seeds of Change: Community Garden Kits.”

Join Points of Light Corporate Institute

Now, more than ever, businesses and corporations are embracing service programs, lending their most valuable assets – the time, talent, skills and enthusiasm of their employees – to help the nonprofit sector make a difference in their communities. Yet even as many companies expand their community engagement, many don’t have the tools necessary to formalize a program.

Last fall, Points of Light brought its business-oriented services under one roof and launched the Corporate Institute as the go-to destination for companies of all sizes that want to engage their employees and customers in service to their communities.

The Corporate Institute offers a range of services to provide companies with tailored help to develop and implement innovative programming in their communities. Services involve training and consulting, mobilizing employees and customers to serve in the community, managing projects, developing recognition opportunities, technology portals and evaluating results.

For more information, come to the many business track offerings here in Chicago, or contact us at 404-879-2900 or CorporateInstitute@pointsoflight.org.

Inspiring Change Through Skills-Based Service

A Billion + Change, a growing national campaign to mobilize billions of dollars of pro bono and skills-based volunteer (SBV) services from corporate America, is bringing into sharp relief the valuable role SBV programs play in building the capacity of nonprofit organizations to meet community needs at home and around the world. In less than a year, nearly 200 companies have pledged an estimated $1.8 billion worth of time and talent to nonprofits, keeping the campaign on track to inspire 500 companies to create or expand a SBV program in their workplace by 2013.

Yesterday, campaign pledge companies like Capital One, HP, Deloitte and IBM shared the inspiration driving their SBV programs, and how they are achieving high-impact, transformative change through service at a special Pre-conference session, “Leading Service and Inspiring Change.”

PepsiCo, Kraft Foods, GlaxoSmithKline and the Advisory Board Company also discussed how their programs are addressing critical issues such as global health and education, water resource management and improving STEM education through skills-based service.

Tuesday, Pranav Kothari, managing director of Mission Measurement, will lead a dynamic conversation about innovations in business and philanthropy and how corporate innovation can spark broader social change in “Beyond Business as Usual: Leading Innovation and Driving Social Change.”

These sessions are the latest in a national tour of A Billion + Change events that will culminate in a White House Forum on June 27, at which the campaign will start to imagine the phenomenal possibilities of collective action, with 500 companies working in partnership with nonprofit professionals to change communities for the better.

To learn more about A Billion + Change and to take the pledge for free, visit: www.abillionpluschange.org.

Get more information at VolunteeringandService.org
Over the last two days, more than 170 staff and representatives from HandsOn Network Affiliates came together to network, discuss important sector trends and celebrate their collective success. An impressive lineup of presenters and speakers, including communication experts Michael Margolis and Allison Fine added to the excitement.

Margolis presented, “Reframing the Story of 21st Century Volunteer Centers,” focusing on how reframing our message is the key to reinvigoration, relevance and relationship building with our constituents. Margolis is the founder and president of Get Storied – an education, advisory and publishing company with a goal to teach the world how to think in narrative. His popular book, “Believe Me: A Storytelling Manifesto for Change-Makers and Innovators,” quickly turned him into a leading voice in the world of storytelling.

Fine shared her expertise during her presentation, “From Institutions to Social Networks,” which provided a framework for re-organizing organizations as social networks, how to use social media to power the network and how to energize your community and volunteers with this new lens. Fine is the co-author of the bestselling, “The Networked Nonprofit,” and author of the award-winning “Momentum: Igniting Social Change in the Connected Age.”

The pre-conference also included the presentation of the George W. Romney Award of Excellence to HandsOn South Alabama (HOSA). The award honors the collective success of Affiliates in making a meaningful difference through volunteering and service in their communities and across the sector. Their innovative Volunteer Guardianship Program matches trained volunteers with wards who are incarcerated, with no family and unable to make life decisions. HOSA volunteers ensure the ward has access to safe and secure housing, nutrition and medical care. In addition, HOSA has been able to build capacity for the future by securing a $100,000 grant from the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to expand volunteer mobilization across South Alabama, assisting victims of the oil spill.

America’s Sunday Supper, held at Trinity United Church of Christ, honored the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to come together to share a meal, discuss the challenges our nation faces and take action. Delores Morton, Dr. Otis Moss III, Eboo Patel, Conni Lindsey and Miranda Homeyer engaged in a lively conversation about how we can all work together to realize Dr. King’s dream of a beloved community.

Civic Accelerator Celebrates Partnership

More than 150 social entrepreneurs, impact investors and community partners came together as part of a Community Innovation Breakfast on June 19, hosted by Starbucks, to celebrate a new strategic partnership and the call to action for supporters of the Civic Accelerator, a new Points of Light and Village Capital venture.

Leadership from partner and investor Starbucks was on hand to share the news and provided a challenge for other funders to step up to match their extraordinary gift.

The Civic Accelerator is the first national startup accelerator focused on civic ventures – for-profit and nonprofit ventures that create social good and inspire, equip and mobilize individuals as part of the solution. The 12-week program will apply tools from for-profit accelerators to build an ecosystem of social entrepreneurs, impact investors and stakeholders to increase the likelihood of success for civic ventures and create real change in our communities. Social entrepreneurs accepted into this competitive program will benefit from mentoring, entrepreneur education, peer support and networking in addition to investments made across the co-hort and larger seed investments for two of the most promising solutions selected by the entrepreneurs themselves.

The team shared plans to identify other partners and funders over the summer months to prepare to launch an initial co-hort of 10 teams from around the country by the end of the year.

Scholastic’s BE BIG™ program is a national campaign that invites everyone, big and small, to take action and raise awareness for how Clifford’s BIG Ideas can make the world a better place. Visit the Scholastic booth to learn more about how you can submit your BIG Ideas through June 22 for a chance to win $10,000 in community grants.