

## Strengthen Partnership through Authentic Volunteering Q&A

**From the corporate side, what is the best way to start the conversation about partnership with a nonprofit? What strategies or suggestions do you have for organizations to make the transition from one-off volunteer opportunities to working towards ongoing, deep relationships?**

Leah: From the corporate side it is important to understand what you are looking for in a strategic partnership. What is your vision and what are your goals? Is there an employee engagement aspect to those goals for the partnership? Do you have location parameters or target cause area? Getting all of this as clear as you can for your corporate strategy and your program will lead to a stronger partnership. You'll be able to speak with nonprofits and learn from them if they are going to be able to work with you. You will be better setup to have the conversation with the nonprofit to find out if you both can work together to reach your goals.

Wendy: We may be initially contacted by one facet of a large company, for example the leader of an employee resource group reaching out about a volunteer opportunity. We find that the partnership conversation starts to grow and evolve as we learn about other opportunities to work with the marketing department or work with HR on more formalized employee engagement initiatives. So, we are engaging at multiple different touchpoints with companies and it is helpful to understand the company's internal processes to start to develop that multi-pronged relationship. The partnerships that have been most productive and lasted the longest have been the ones where we both understand how different parts of our organizations start to fit together. We can start to achieve goals at all levels when we're working together and within those different tiers of the company.

### **When do you need the most volunteers?**

Wendy: We depend upon volunteers to deliver our services every day within our affiliates, with the specifics of need being determined at the local level. Typically, we don't have as many opportunities for large group activations outside of major events, but consistent engagement over time is hugely beneficial.

Vinsen: Our volunteer needs vary depending upon special events throughout the year, but our biggest need for volunteers is actually daily, so we may deliver meals to over 4,000 people across San Antonio.

### **How do you use Blackbaud's NPOconnect platform and how does this work with the CSRconnect side? Has this made your life easier.**

YourCause: We just published an article [Benefits of NPOconnect](#) article that talks about the connection to CSRconnect.

Wendy: Unfortunately, we do not currently use this platform either, but I will share this information to explore further.

Vinsen: We do not use Blackbaud's NPOconnect platform. Perhaps we should look into it!

