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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

United Way's Corporate Volunteer Council members getting ready for Make a Difference Day, sponsored by Mohawk Industries. From left are Amanda Burt, United Way; Mike Stein, Hamilton Health Care System; Howard Elder, retired, J+J Flooring Group; Robert Varner, BB&T; Denise Wood, Mohawk Industries; Tim Ausmus, Shaw Industries; and Jennifer Latour, United Way.

## Many helping hands

United Way's Corporate Volunteer Council receives national nod from Points of Light

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST GEORGIA

Do you think a local organization can mobilize corporate groups to complete 204 hands-on service projects in 18 months? United Way's Corporate Volunteer Council did just that. Even cooler is the group recently won a national award recognizing its impact.

At the National Conference on Volunteering and Service, Ann Cramer, retired from leading IBM's corporate social responsibility, now a consultant with Cox & Curry, presented the United Way of Northwest Georgia's Corporate Volunteer Council (CVC) with the Points of Light 2014 Fast Start Award. Howard Elder, founding chairman of United Way's CVC and retired director of research of environmental affairs for J+J Flooring Group, was in Atlanta to accept the award.

The award recognizes a corporate volunteer council that has been established within the past three years, has a clear purpose, mobilizes volunteers related to that purpose and measures success. United Way of Northwest Georgia's CVC was selected the winner by a committee of national corporate volunteer council leaders convened by Points of Light.

The United Way of Northwest Georgia's CVC was formed in 2012 and supports, encourages and provides avenues for businesses to address education, basic needs and health issues through volunteering.

In the past 18 months, CVC members have mobilized more than 4,500 volunteers who have completed 204 hands-on projects, providing significant value to local nonprofits. In addition, the council leads Project Connect, which has recruited more than 550 new readers, tutors and mentors, and organized more than 100 parent involvement events at area schools and education nonprofits. The CVC is encouraging businesses to help nonprofits work smarter by facilitating the Nonprofit Partnership, a training consortium that provides free training.

Tim Ausmus from Shaw Industries currently serves as chair of the council. Other CVC members include Hank Blackwood, Dalton Utilities; Bill Brueckner, Shaw Industries; Brad Cummings, Tandus Centiva; Howard Elder, retired, J+J Flooring Group; Scott Grafe, Dorsett Industries; Erin Istanbulluoglu, Tandus Centiva; Mike Stein, Hamilton Health Care System; Cathy Swiney, J+J Flooring Group; and Denise Wood, Mohawk Industries.

The council provides paths to service, but the real magic happens at the companies in northwest Georgia that are taking community impact into their own hands. Amanda Burt, president of United Way of Northwest Georgia, shared, "Local corporations are the backbone of our community and United Way. When there is a need, companies are first to the plate with solutions and resources to make it happen. We are lucky to



have so many top-notch companies in northwest Georgia who have chosen United Way as their strategic partner of choice."

Meet nine companies whose employees are sustaining our community through hands-on service:

### BB&T

Can a bank be a beacon of light? Yes! For six consecutive years, Bill Davies and his team of BB&T associates have rolled up their sleeves to help during the Lighthouse Project, a company-wide community service effort held in May and June, giving associates the opportunity to live out the BB&T mission to make the communities they serve better places to live. Past projects include building a vegetable garden and donating picnic tables to the Whitfield County-Dalton Day Care Center, a United Way partner agency, and packing food boxes for hungry neighbors.

### Beaulieu Industries

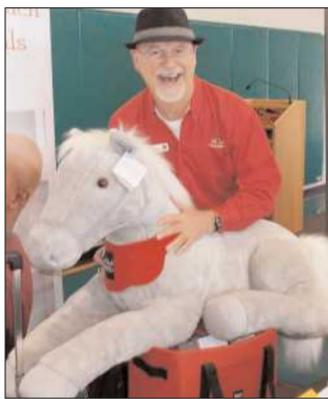
Marty Farmer and Kim Harper have been instrumental in implementing quarterly projects for Beaulieu employees. Beaulieu's last project was at the Friendship House, a United Way partner agency. Beaulieu employees volunteered during their lunch hour and had lunch with pre-k students.

### Dorsett Industries

John Adams and Scott Grafe make sure that even employers with a smaller workforce get in on the action and volunteer. Dorsett Industries, a local manufacturer of automotive carpet, mobilizes employees to participate in quarterly projects, including sorting donations at the Salvation Army and painting at Oak Haven, a second chance home for teen moms.

### Hamilton Health Care System

Hamilton Health Care System has an active employee service program led by Mike Stein, director of the Westcott Center. Recently, team members participated in a playground cleanup for United Way's newest agency, The GreenHouse, an advocacy center for abused children.



### J+J Flooring Group

Thanks to Lenora Johnson, a customer service representative with J+J Flooring Group, many children had holiday gifts last year. Johnson has been organizing a small army of co-workers with the company's volunteer program to help United Way and the Salvation Army, both during the holidays and throughout the year. Cathy Swiney, who serves on United Way's Corporate Volunteer Council, pitches in and organizes adopt-a-mile as well.

### Mohawk Industries

Mohawk Industries has made Make a Difference Day projects possible for the past 14 years. Last year, 938 people volunteered for a total of 3,154 hours, making a \$70,504 impact to the community. Thank you to Denise Wood, who serves on the CVC; Robert Webb, from the Mohawk Carpet Foundation; and the entire Mohawk team for the continued support of United Way and volunteer service. Organizations wanting to apply for a 2014 Make a Difference project grant can download an application at [ourunitedway.org/volunteer](http://ourunitedway.org/volunteer).

### Shaw Industries

Vance Bell and his leadership team have created a culture of service that is evident throughout the company. Joel Hughes and Sarah Walker led more than 900 Shaw volunteers to tackle more than 50 projects during Shaw Industries' annual Live United Week of Service this May. For the past year, two Shaw

plants have worked together to renovate a house and turn it into a transitional living shelter at the Salvation Army. Departments and plants across the company also host days and weeks of service throughout the year. Last year, 1,609 Shaw associates volunteered for 85,611 hours. In addition, they provided leadership through 113 board service roles.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**Above, Tim Ausmus, United Way Corporate Volunteer Council chair and director of global sourcing at Shaw Industries, volunteers at the Friendship House during the Shaw Live United Week of Service. At left, Joey Parrott from Wells Fargo volunteers at United Way's Economic Opportunity Expo and Culture Fest on the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.**

### Tandus Centiva

Who can log 800 hours of service in half a day? Tandus Centiva can! Every other year, the company's national sales team donates a day to United Way, with 200 associates tackling beautification projects at sites like the Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center, the Boys and Girls Club and local schools. Brad Cummings leads this effort, ensuring local needs are met during their corporate day of service.

### Wells Fargo

This year, Wells Fargo employees committed to improving financial literacy in our community by volunteering to teach classes as well as providing a \$3,000 grant to United Way. Wells Fargo employees volunteered for United Way's Economic Opportunity Expo and Culture Fest at the Mack Gaston Community Center held on the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

Companies interested in setting up an employee volunteer program or in joining the United Way's Corporate Volunteer Council can visit [ourunitedway.org/volunteer](http://ourunitedway.org/volunteer) or call (706) CAN-HELP.



## Southern exports

Part two

The American South, and in many cases Georgia, has created and marketed products that are worldwide and world-famous. There are brands like Coca-Cola and Delta Air Lines and Dalton-made carpet that can be found on any continent. Well, Delta doesn't fly to the Antarctic but I bet they have rugs on the floor there and Cokes in the fridge.

But there's more to influencing the world than having a presence in the marketplace, there is influence that becomes a part of folks' lifestyles by having a presence in their minds as well. This influence we could call "cultural" and it becomes a part of the daily routine and part of the imagination.

Our Southern culture has spread beyond the boundaries of Mr. Mason and Mr. Dixon's line and, in many cases, beyond the oceans. It's one thing to spot a Coke on the shelf of a market in Zanzibar, but it's quite another to walk in a café and see the local guys watching a Burt Reynolds car chase movie, which of course makes everybody think A) everybody in the South drives like that, and B) given a big block Dodge, they could drive like that as well. This is how culture from one place spreads to another ... it looks fun and seems doable.

### A fever dream

The Burt Reynolds movies of the mid-'70s to early '80s have left an indelible mark on world popular culture. They were definitely a fever dream of the South with their small-town sheriffs acting like Little Caesars, good 'ol boys yucking it up and having fun, and car chases that grew more crazy and cartoon-like with each new film.

Up until these movies the car chases were about, well, cars chasing cars. If a movie character was in a chase, the pursuit consisted of shots of one car going down the road and around a curve and then the exact same camera angle of the following car going on the same section of road. The film was frequently sped up to make it look like they were going faster, and sound effects of squealing tires were added. If there were a stunt, it would be of one of the cars driving off an embankment and tumbling into a ravine. And that shot of the car busting through the guardrail and plunging down a hill was often a miniature.

With the Burt Reynolds movies like "White Lightning," "Gator" and "Smokey and the Bandit," the "Southern-style" American car chase came into its own. The Steve McQueen film "Bullitt" is credited with having a breakthrough car chase, but it's basically just a couple of cars driving fast through town with the cars going

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