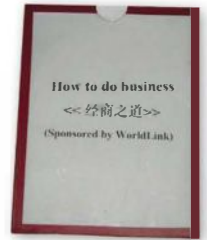


Getting more than you give



Drake's 7 Dees focuses on helping neighbors—in its own backyard and abroad. BY MARISA PALMIERI

For Drake Snodgrass, owner and CEO of Drake's 7 Dees, corporate giving has three vital components: employees, community and self-improvement. It's his vision to weave all three together to benefit everyone involved. Thus far, he's had impressive results.

Why is service such a focus for Drake's? "We do it, first of all, because I believe in giving back and helping people," Snodgrass says. "We do find, though, that there's a

huge benefit for our company and the people who are part of our company in doing things for others out of love."

Opportunity to make a difference has presented itself over the last decade and a half, as the Portland, Ore., neighborhood where Drake's has been located for more than 50 years has experienced decline. Once a safe area to raise a family, it has since faced crime, drugs and gang-related activities. Wanting to be a part of the solution, Snodgrass has gotten involved with two nearby organizations, the Good News Community Health Center and the Salvation Army, which are working to provide free or low-cost resources for community members.

"The Good News Community Health Center is having a huge impact on the community," Snodgrass says of the 5-year-old, volunteer-run nonprofit clinic that's provided medical, mental and oral health care for nearly 4,000 uninsured people per year. Patients pay just \$10 per visit. The company helped design and install the clinic's landscaping, and Snodgrass has served on, as



Drake Snodgrass (center in blue) with Chinese business ethics students. Above right: a workbook created by Snodgrass and other ethics instructors.

we'll pay our people to do it, and they understand the company's donating their time," he says. "But people experience that feeling, and the company gains more in employee dedication and loyalty than it would ever take in wages to help out a nonprofit."

Similarly, Snodgrass says giving back breeds more giving back. "We all do things, whether we like to admit it or not, that are motivated by the feeling you get from doing it," he says. "It's such a great feeling that you do more of it."

For businesses looking for a way to begin a stewardship effort, Snodgrass says you just have to believe it's the right thing to do and find an opportunity.

You often gain useful business skills, he adds, such as learning how to run a meeting, observing how people interact and gaining the opportunity to "get the heck out of your own business and come back fresh."

He adds, "It doesn't take much time, and you'll find you get more from giving than you ever give." LM

well as chaired, the board.

"We've helped grow it from the beginning to what it is today," he says, adding that the healing garden his firm created for the facility's mental health patients was a particularly special project.

Snodgrass also has served on and chaired the board of the Salvation Army of Gresham, Ore. The organization provides services for 60 kids daily.

Inspiring others

Many Drake's employees give back on their own, whether through their church or another community effort, Snodgrass says with pride.

"Many times we'll do something as a company and

AT A GLANCE

Company: Drake's 7 Dees
Headquarters: Portland, Ore.
CEO: Drake Snodgrass

SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Good News Community Health Center**—company provides ongoing landscape maintenance and installation services, such as creating a healing garden. As a board member and chair, Snodgrass expanded the volunteer board and purchased a facility.

▶ **Salvation Army of Gresham, Ore.**—as a board member and chair, Snodgrass led a capital campaign that raised more than \$1 million and built a new facility.

▶ **China business ethics mission trips**—from 2005-2008 Snodgrass recruited and led three annual trips of professionals to teach business ethics to multinational corporations' middle management teams and college graduates.

Landscape Management is the media sponsor of the Professional Landscape Network's (PLANET) Community Stewardship Award. We'll feature each of the program's winners January through June. For more information or to read about the other winners, visit landcarenetwork.org/awards/communityaward or landscapemanagement.net/givingback.

A good habit

Knowing there's always someone in need has driven a Florida company to participate in an array of service efforts. BY CASEY PAYTON

Katy Harrell, vice president of Southeastern Outdoor Management, believes you don't have to look far to find someone in greater need than yourself. That's why the Panama City, Fla.-based firm makes a habit of volunteering.

One of Southeastern's primary efforts is Habitat for

Humanity. Building a home for a family is the type of project where you get a "direct and immediate sense of reward," Harrell says. "You don't always have the opportunity to see the final result and the impact that your time and service make, but with Habitat for Humanity, you do. It's incredibly gratifying."

Of the many service opportunities Southeastern has been part of, Harrell says the design and installation of a memorial at Surfside Middle School was among the most rewarding. Harrell's mother, the school principal, asked Southeastern to design a courtyard that would celebrate the life of Mary Lynn May, a teacher who lost her battle with cancer. Soon, the plan for the Mary Lynn May Memorial Courtyard was launched. The design included paver step stones, a fountain, plants and benches. And the teachers and students themselves raised the funds to buy the fountain and benches.

"We organized a work day with volunteers and staff to install the courtyard," says

Harrell. "We saw it from concept to completion and were honored to use our talents and resources for such an amazing cause."

In today's day and age, Harrell says she knows many companies are operating with less—less equipment, less manpower and often less revenue.

That reality may make some choose to forego community service work. But there's always a way, she says.

"If you're short on time, then pick a project you can get your spouse and kids involved in so you're not taking away from family time by

doing volunteer work in your free time," she suggests. "Or, if you're a small company, pick a small project. There's always a way you can help."

Southeastern's intent is never to perform stewardship to receive recognition, but rather for the personal satisfaction of knowing it gave to others who are less fortunate, Harrell says. However, the company's discovered that people do take notice, and it can drive new business.

"Twice we've actually received landscape jobs for a new business or residence because one of the organizers had seen us participating in service projects and felt they wanted to do business with a company that was community-service minded," she says. "Most importantly, recognize that whatever you choose doesn't have to be a long-term time or monetary commitment to make a big impact," she says. LM

AT A GLANCE

Company: Southeastern Outdoor Management
Headquarters: Panama City, Fla.
President: David Chapman
Vice President: Katy Harrell

SELECT PROJECT LISTING:

▶ **Habitat for Humanity**—provides landscape construction drawings, materials, labor and equipment. In 2011-2012 alone, provided resources for three projects and donated plant materials to be sold to raise money for building materials.

▶ **Surfside Middle School**—designed and installed the Mary Lynn May Memorial Courtyard; also provided equipment and labor for football field aeration and school ground plant installation and irrigation services.

▶ **Bay County, Fla., Middle and High Schools**—provides equipment, labor and plant materials for ball field clean-ups.

▶ **R. L. Turner baseball program**—provides equipment, labor and plant materials for ball field clean-ups.



Three Southeastern staff members pitch in at one of the firm's Habitat for Humanity projects last fall.

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