34. PMIWDC: High Impact Community Leaders

0:00:01 Andy Walker: Hi there. I'm Andy Walker, your vice chair and COO for PMI WDC 2016. At the beginning of this year, we started our planning process as we always do, which typically has us reflecting back at the things that we've done well, maybe could've done better, as well as looking forward to the future. And we found ourselves thinking, it was time to take a deeper look inside, to think about what is it that we want to be known for and how can we go about making that real. And we embarked on a journey that took us to May, where we had our annual board training and we went through a core values and branding exercise, where we got inputs from another external organization. And the culmination of that was us selecting high impact community leaders.

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0:00:52 AW: I tell you, we were locked in a room for four hours. We started off with two dozen ideas for what our core values could be. It swelled and ballooned to maybe 40 to 60 ideas, and we ended up within four hours with our mission accomplished of selecting this. It worked out better than we could've possibly imagined and more importantly it embodied what we think we are and we want to be known as a community.

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0:01:20 S2: As I look across this room, having met a few of you but not all of you, I already know because of your roles maybe or your responsibilities, you're already leaders.

0:01:30 S3: When I think of a community leader, I think of the person who goes in and asks some of the harder questions and has some of the harder more difficult conversations that maybe not everyone has the courage to go and have. Someone who goes and leads and has those conversations to take it and bring it to a constructive result that improves either the organization or your organization's position.

0:01:52 S4: PMs have a great combination of skills, including organizational skills. But they also have a heart to help and they have a heart to bring people together, which is what we need to do.

0:02:03 S5: The objective would be for us to share our project management knowledge, to help further the nonprofit's mission.

0:02:10 S2: So, the value of military veterans in the workforce, particularly as project managers, is they're leaders, they're very mission focused, that's what you need to manage a project. It is for someone to see the goal and what do we got to do to get there, and move heaven and earth to do it.

0:02:26 S6: Really, I want to get our 444 partners and a lot of their staff in a room with a whole bunch of project managers.

0:02:35 S?: The term high impact community leader to me really is all about the high impact part. And if you think about it, we as project managers are the only profession, the only discipline that exists for the sole reason of changing something for the better. Our whole discipline is around

taking something that didn't exist and creating it and making sure it was more valuable than everything that went into it. That's impact. That's how we're going to change the world, improve the world, advance humankind. Every high impact field you think of is project-centric, and we PMs don't often realize how high impact we are.

0:03:11 S?: From the Washington DC chapter of the Project Management Institute, this is PM Point of View, the podcast that looks at project management from all the angles. Here's your host, Kendall Lott.

0:03:22 Kendall Lott: Hello, project managers and welcome to our special edition of the Project Management Point of View. In this episode, we feature the PMI Washington DC chapter with its more than 10,000 members, and examine its recently adopted values proposition. That is, that its members be high impact community leaders. This is a chapter with over 200 volunteers and a 40+ person dual board structure. Large isn't always best, as moving from idea to execution can be cumbersome, and the board took on the challenge this year. So the purpose of this episode is twofold. The first is to talk about the values the board defined and how that can take flight with the communities we serve. And the second is to share with those of you who are members of chapters or perhaps even board members, the first steps this chapter took to start making its values an active part of the chapter.

0:04:09 Kendall Lott: In our quest to capture what the chapter was aiming for, we recorded many, many voices at three events during the year. At the 2016 Annual Symposium held in September; the Values workshop, where members had a chance to hammer out some practical actionable ideas that would reflect the chapter values; and the second annual Volunteer Fair. The fair brought together over 100 project managers, representatives of more than a dozen local nonprofits, all 12 vice presidents of the chapter, and students of project management from local universities. We hope that by eavesdropping on the events and hearing the excitement and energy of the attendees and speakers, you'll be inspired to do something similar in your chapter - defining your values as PMs and as a chapter and then making it real for your membership and your community. Our first milestone, the Values Workshop, where 2016 vice president of programs, Uma Hiremagalur, got chapter executive leadership and a professional strategy facilitator to work with over 100 members through an activation exercise. Here's Uma.

0:05:05 Uma Hiremagalur: I think it was two, three months ago, we met as a board and we talked about our strengths, our weaknesses, the strategy for PMI WDC as a chapter, and where do we want to go from here. What do we want to be known for? What do we want to stand for? This is a 10,000 member chapter. So we met as a board and we coined this phrase, "High impact community leaders." So what we want to do today as part of the workshop is give us your story, give us that 60 second sound bite of what a high impact community leader means to you.

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0:05:43 S?: I think a high impact community leader is someone who understands the social aspects of their community, someone who's able to see people as individuals with shared collective ideas and aspirations.

0:05:56 S?: It's all about leadership and putting your 200% in, even if you don't see the rewards immediately.

0:06:02 S?: A leader who makes a continuous difference, a difference that resonates with the community for a long time.

0:06:09 S?: Coalescing around someone that has a vision and can explain that in terms that appeal to their self-interest, both individual and the community will go ahead and generate action.

0:06:23 S?: Involving others also, motivating others to also do the same.

0:06:27 S?: Those intangible things like trust and empathy.

0:06:30 S?: Teaching people skills that they can use in a lot of other situations.

[music]

0:06:40 Kendall Lott: I found a moment to chat with the immediate past president of PMI WDC, Elizabeth McQueen, about our chapter values and the efforts to live up to them.

0:06:48 Elizabeth McQueen: We are about to next month hold our second annual Volunteer Fair. We have begun a Healthcare Project Management Special Interest Group. So we partnered last year with the Healthcare Association where we had a dual-track education session to cross-pollinate PMs who want to get into the healthcare industry with healthcare professionals who might want to become PMs or learn about project management. We also sponsored a cycling team for a grueling bike ride to raise funds and awareness for programs that support Healing Our Heroes. We are also starting up, speaking of military, a new leadership series starting in October, where we'll have a series of leadership and educational workshops geared toward helping active, retired and former military professionals capitalize on their proven leadership skills to transition from a military career to a project management career.

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0:07:46 Kendall Lott: The realization that the military experience lends itself well to the PM profession is gaining more and more traction. In fact earlier this year, PM Point of View dedicated a podcast, Podcast 26, to the topic Military Transition: Joining the Ranks of Project Management. The leadership series that Elizabeth mentioned, Bringing Veterans into the PM World, is PMI WDC's response to a nationwide initiative of PMI, initially triggered by members of the Tampa Bay chapter over a year ago. At the symposium in September, Lisa Iannuzzi, 2016 vice president of Professional Alliances and Tim Dalhouse, a former Marine Corps master gunnery sergeant who is now a PM trainer, gave an inspiring presentation, Project Hero Restart, a call to action for the PM community and one that represents the values the chapter espouses.

0:08:31 Lisa Iannuzi: And for those of you that have been in the military or that have a military member in your family, you know that the boot camp they go to is a very structured environment. But when they leave, the only training that they're given is a one-week Transition Assistance Program, which is a great program, but it doesn't prepare them for the business world, doesn't prepare them for what's ahead.

[music]

0:08:55 Tim Dalhouse: I was a master gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps and I was at the pinnacle of my career. I couldn't get anymore, that's as high as I could go. And I thought I was somebody. I was very proud of myself, and people do what I say, they're very respectful to me. And when I got out of the Marine Corps, I realized very quickly that, "Hey, it's not that way." Nobody knows what all the stripes mean and they don't respect you for that. Why should we hire you? The rank doesn't mean anything to them. In the military, we all have a job skill. I was an avionics chief, so I had dealt with aircraft electronics and I had done recruiting duty, I had done human resource stuff, a lot of different things. And when I retired, I had an MBA degree. But ultimately, my last couple of years in the Marine Corps was doing nothing but managing people and so I thought I was very well-prepared to get out. After I got out, I realized that wasn't necessarily the case and I really struggled for about two years right after I got out trying to find my place.

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0:09:57 Tim Dalhouse: I actually started finding out about what project management was. The people around me mentored me into it. They said, "Hey, go get that PMP and we can make you project manager because that's what we require." I took a boot camp, went and took the test, passed, and the next thing you know, I was in charge of a project, and it really fit. I felt good. My skill set matched, and my sense of accomplishment was there. And I was leading a team, so I was back in my niche. I actually found a home as a project manager and that's what I train people to do now. But I kind of stumbled into it. I didn't have anyone that showed me how, and that's what we're talking about now, is how maybe we can help veterans see that, instead of stumbling around for a couple of years.

[music]

0:10:39 Tim Dalhouse: PMI is a part of the Joining Forces Initiative, anybody heard of that? The White House Administration? Trying to, this is my layman's terminology, trying to round up all the different organizations around the country, try to have cohesive effort towards helping veterans. And so PMI's trying to be a part of that and it's establishing programs in local chapters to help veterans come into project management. We're kicking that off here.

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0:11:08 Lisa Ianuzzi: This is the first year that PMIWDC actually has a military outreach program. It's something that the headquarters at PMI is really trying to help push out to all the chapters. One of the things that we're currently doing, and I have a couple of volunteers on my committee already, we are reaching out to the various bases that the folks who are running the TAPS Program and trying to provide opportunities where we can go in as civilians and present project management as an option for a career. The other thing we're also going to be doing is establishing the mentoring program. We're going to be looking for mentees and mentors, who are interested in mentoring military personnel.

0:11:51 Tim Dalhouse: If you're a civilian, you've never even been in the military, you're what they're trying to be now. They're trying to assimilate into this environment. You know better than anybody. So you can still help. They need you to tell them your career path, what you did to be successful, and what they can do to be successful.

[music]

0:12:15 S?: I can only consider myself a leader if I elevate somebody to the same level where I am, and then equip them with the skills to elevate others.

0:12:23 S?: So we pick a project that we want to help them in, and it's about helping them through that project, and then giving them those skills to advance other projects.

0:12:32 S?: Trying to put voices where voices need to be heard. That's impact.

0:12:36 S?: To help people achieve things that they didn't know necessarily they could do, before you got involved.

0:12:44 S?: An individual who motivates people to attain their dreams. I like what Walt Disney said, "If you dream it, you can do it."

0:12:56 S?: My definition of a high-impact community leader is someone who inspires and motivates others to get engaged in a cause that helps humankind.

[music]

0:13:17 Kendall Lott: We designed the Values Workshop to bring the board members directly into an active engagement with the membership. And we took advantage of that to speak with Kevin Roney, a 2016 Director at large, and rising 2017 Chief Operating Officer of the chapter.

0:13:31 Kendall Lott: Tonight, we move out past the board, and now we go to our membership. What is it you hope to see out of that from a values perspective?

0:13:39 Kevin Roney: What we're looking for is the people to understand that they can grow. We have these values and we can incorporate what they believe are important in that process to gain additional volunteers and really volunteer leaders, is what we really need. We can't reach the larger perspective of the community and make a greater impact without those volunteers and that's what we need. And if we really want to move on this path of being high-impact community leaders, which by the way, we're not defining it as a specific thing. It is a multifaceted opportunity, whether it's in your workplace, whether it's in your community, whether it's in your family to do that. But it takes effort and it takes people for us to accomplish that. So what we want to demonstrate through this process, I'm hoping, is that people see that their values align with our values, and that by coming and being a volunteer they can take those values to the community, to the larger practice of the profession, to their workplace and demonstrate them and be impactful.

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0:14:51 Kendall Lott: The grand facilitator of our Values Workshop was Miles Miller, a two-time best-selling author and radio host to the show, Miles of Success. He has over 30 years experience in the project management field across multiple industries including retail, defense, state and federal government, and recently hospitality. He is the CEO and founder of four training and development companies doing business internationally in 123 countries. I had a chance to speak with him before

the workshop began.

0:15:18 Miles Miller: I think it's a great thing that your chapter has done to go back and revisit why are we who we are? What do we do? What's our importance in the world? And all those things. And I think that's good for any organization to do, but tonight we're going to take it to the next level, which is okay, now we have these core values. How do we put them into action? How do we turn those core values into real, measurable things that we can look at and say, "Yes, this aligns with our core values"?

0:15:44 Kendall Lott: How will you operate that with them? It sounds like you're doing some sort of group work?

0:15:48 Miles Miller: Well it's a two-stage approach. Tonight we're going to do two sessions. In our first session, we want to do what most people are very familiar with, which is a brain-storming session to say, "Okay, now that we know what our core values are, what are some things that we could do in our communities that we serve being the largest chapter in the world to make a difference using these core values?" And so, that's the first session, kind of a brainstorming session, more of a strategic approach to things. Second session, after a small break, is all about building on that strategy or strategies or those brainstorming ideas to actually think about, "Well, what are our first steps? Who do we need to contact? What's going to happen in the next 30, 60, 90-day window to move things forward?"

0:16:31 Miles Miller: I think that ultimately that's the goal here for our members to be able to do things and to think about ideas that they'd like to see done, and then take it to the next step and say, "Well as chapter, is this something we can do?" And of course you know as well as I, the more people that you can get involved in something, the more that you can accomplish. If only one person's doing it, it gets very challenging to accomplish a whole lot. Certainly they can make an impact, but imagine the difference between one person, versus 10 people, versus 100 people, versus a 1,000 people.

0:17:01 Kendall Lott: So they're talking about being high-impact community leaders?

0:17:04 Miles Miller: Yes.

0:17:05 Kendall Lott: So they're clearly wanting an outcome there. It's a role, it's a place, and this idea of leadership, and they know where - in the areas that we work. But they're talking about an outcome in there?

0:17:14 Miles Miller: Yeah.

0:17:15 Kendall Lott: How does that strike you as a value system? And is there more we need to develop out of that, or how will that work?

0:17:21 Miles Miller: Well, I think, as I mentioned briefly earlier, core values become your foundation from which you build things onto.

0:17:28 Kendall Lott: Yeah.

0:17:29 Miles Miller: So it drives your mission, your vision, your purpose for being.

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0:17:35 S?: Without further ado, please join me in welcoming Mr. Miles [0:17:39] �ю.

[applause]

0:17:43 Miles Miller: Good evening.

0:17:44 The Audience: Good evening.

0:17:44 Miles Miller: Thank you. I know you've been working all day but we're gonna have something I'm told is a little different tonight. You heard this was a quote unquote, wait for it, "Workshop." Yes. So we're gonna do some work tonight, and I'm glad to be here because I know as an organization you have some new board leadership, which is awesome. You have some new core values that you're gonna be building off of. And tonight we are gonna take some time to have you together in small groups develop some ideas around what you can do to impact the world that you are a part of.

[music]

0:18:31 Miles Miller: These three categories are going to be our focus for tonight. One being how do we impact our community? I'm sure that many of the people in your communities already know of your existence, and I wonder if they know or have experienced the impact of your chapter in the communities that you serve, whether you live in those communities, whether you work in those communities. The other aspect here is the organizational aspect. A lot of people when they're in an organization, they often think about, "We need to be strategic and we need to be tactical. But when do we need to do that and when do we make those plans?" Well you're at the right beginning of that right now. You've just elected new leadership. You just made a new set of core values. Now is the perfect opportunity to take advantage of that and decide organizationally how will we impact, maybe not just your members, but also how are you going to impact the community.

0:19:38 Miles Miller: So as you get together in your groups and you're thinking about, "What can we do?" be thinking both, "What can we do in the next three to six months short term to make a difference. And what can we do in the next year or more to make a difference in our community and in our organization as it aligns with our core values." So I'm gonna ask each of the leaders to go out into the audience and pick at least five to six random people, and then have them take their chairs with them and go to one of these areas on the wall. There's five over there, there's five over here, with you as the leader and I will give you your next direction.

[music]

0:20:31 Miles Miller: So what's the objective? What are you doing this for? Who benefits from this? And then the last part is expected outcomes.

0:20:41 Kendall Lott: The programs team and I eavesdropped, with their permission, on the nine breakout teams to hear how they tackled the assignment.

0:20:47 S?: I think we can write down Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Sister Little Sister, and I think we're talking about city, county government. And that's probably good targets, at least initially.

0:21:06 S?: I was thinking they were looking more so that we'd be contributing our project management skills.

0:21:11 S?: So something like, I feel like a homeless shelter would have something like a clothing drive or a food drive where they do need the entire project organized and put together.

0:21:24 S?: I'm no longer on the board of a nonprofit but I was. And I definitely saw the need there, where they could definitely use the expertise and the knowledge to help better organize and focus, just approach the problem from a little more structured way.

0:21:48 Kendall Lott: So what's the objective you're working here?

0:21:51 S?: So it's working with underprivileged students or first generation college students, or students who want to go to college who don't know that system of how to apply for schools, or assess their options and what test scores, and grades, and extracurriculars are going to take to make that application and actually succeed in college and really helping them navigate that system, and understand the structure when they don't have that background or the support from their families.

0:22:24 Kendall Lott: If you were going to do that from a chapter perspective, what would be a target as in a metric about what we could do as a chapter? What would that look like?

0:22:34 S?: Maybe pick a particular school, like in DC that has a very low graduation rate, and come up with metrics in terms of trying to improve the number of children that make it through each grade, the number of children that graduate, and college scholarship money those students receive.

0:22:56 S?: There's also a program that I worked with. It's called, "You're Up" where they brought in young kids, or college age kids and they do six months of community college, and then they do a six month internship to help them get some of their skills, which some of the kids do really well with and some of the kids, it's just too much of a stretch, but they also may need somebody to partner with.

0:23:20 S?: That's a great idea.

[music]

0:23:24 S?: Traditionally we wanted to create change for neighbors in the community. We wanted to do that through a food drive, or partnering with food banks, a farmer's market, Habitat for Humanity, and increasing the quality of life for our community.

[music]

0:23:39 S?: The idea was to collaborate with partners, specifically reaching out to nonprofits who have a need for project management but not necessarily the knowledge or the expertise. And the

outcomes we seek from that would be to give back to the community and also building our personal brand and the brand of PMI.

[music]

0:24:00 S?: You're not a leader unless you have followers. Whether we're volunteering or we're working in the workplace, as long as we're using our toolset, there's a certain cache that comes from leading by example. I'm a Girl Scout leader and I do a lot of stuff with our parent-teacher organization, and project management sort of spills over into all of that because they're the tools that we have in our tool chests and you can't help but employ them.

[music]

0:24:33 Kendall Lott: After the breakout sessions, each group presented their top ideas to all the attendees.

0:24:37 S?: And our last idea was the plain language PMBOK. Who wouldn't want that? [laughter] So our objective with this was to bring it to the masses, but in a language that the masses understand. And our outcome would be that it would be promoting tools and skills, building our brand, and also becoming go-to resource.

[applause]

0:25:10 S?: The second idea is developing either small or virtual communities of practice. And here the idea is to find a way of expanding our influence beyond the 10,000 folks that are PMI WDC members. So, the ways we could do that are multiple. It could be establishing small communities who practice in companies. It could be small, geographically-based meet-ups at coffee shops or whatever. It could also be establishing virtual presence for... Here just words with people posting ideas. It can also be establishing mentor-mentee relationships between folks that have ??? and are just interested in helping others. It can be based on industry. It can also be based on topics of interest. Expected outcomes are increasing engagement and increasing potentially the membership, and increasing the quality of the work that we have.

0:26:08 S?: So we have two ideas. The first is to expand the representation of the technical PDUs. So we know that this area is very IT-focused, but we also have project managers from different groups. So the objective is to have more variety of low-cost PDUs, and the expected outcome would be an increase in retention of membership, and the measurement we were going to do or the goal is 10% increase in the offerings of PDUs, particularly we're thinking webinars and podcasts. The big one that we felt should count as two was we wanted to pick a project to show what implementing the PMBOK can do for a cause or an issue. And the issue we decided to take on was fix the Metro.

[laughter]

0:27:10 Kendall Lott: For those of you not familiar with the metro system in Washington DC and the surrounding area, suffice it to say that it's an old system with massive cultural and infrastructural challenges.

0:27:22 S?: So, that was our big goal. And our objective was to improve the Metro customer

experience.

0:27:31 Miles Miller: OK give them a hand. Nice work.

[applause]

[music]

0:27:43 S?: Our first goal is to using project management, help support the arts. And we looked at, as the objective, as to take the power of our skeleton of project management and assist in another organization. So sort of an assist role to a primary organization to enhance cultural outreach by executing projects and disseminating the art of project management.

0:28:06 Miles Miller: Give them a hand. Nice job.

[applause]

0:28:10 S?: So we have two others. One is support local schools to recognize project management as a core skill. So the objective is to assist students by targeting student clubs and school programs and learning project management principles by planning and executing projects. The expected outcome actually is the curriculum that any of our members could use to execute completed projects that show the value of project management and highlight future student leaders and future project managers.

0:28:44 S?: We too were looking at volunteering with schools and one of the things that we wanted to do in volunteering was to provide on the website a method that people could come and ask for support from us on an ongoing basis so that we could offer PM services to the community instead of annually on an ongoing basis or on an ad hoc basis.

0:29:17 Miles Miller: Excellent. Give them a hand.

[applause]

[music]

0:29:27 Kendall Lott: Here we are on the other side of the workshop. We had some goals, had some stuff trying to work in the room. So, what did you observe? How'd it go?

0:29:36 Miles Miller: Well I saw a lot of great ideas, a lot of engagement, a lot of thoughts. And interestingly enough, with all the ideas conveyed by all the different groups, very little of them were similar. And some both internal and external perspectives that they can look at focusing on whether it's internally as a group, as an organization, or externally, how they can impact their community. So in a span of less than two hours, an amazing amount of work got done and a lot of good discussion and interaction as well.

[music]

0:30:12 Kendall Lott: PMI WDC's second annual Volunteer Fair took place on October 17, 2016 at

a hotel in Falls Church, Virginia. It was a lively event. The attendees were able to meet with non-profits to sign up for skills-based or other volunteering opportunities. University students of project management mingled with PMs, networking and learning about project management from the experts. Plus, there was a cash bar, a book store, and a sumptuous buffet dinner. In just two hours, over 250 positions were filled at the Volunteer Fair. Once again, VP of programs, Uma Hiremagalur, and her amazing all-volunteer programs team made it happen. Knowing her audience, she opened the event with a specific focus on the value of volunteerism and its relationship to the PM skills triangle and the PM knowledge areas.

0:31:01 Uma Hiremagalur: That is our main thing, is to help you build skills around the PMI talent triangle. That's our very first one. The second one is giving back to the community. And we made it a little bit easy for you, so you don't have to go and find those different initiatives, the different missions. We brought 15 nonprofits who are here in the room with various different missions and visions and they are trying to do some good in the community for different constituents. So this is your opportunity here to give back to the community, find out what you're passionate about, talk to the nonprofits in the room, find out what they do, and sign up for different volunteer opportunities that they have. Do all of you remember all the 10 knowledge areas? Most of us are either PMPs in the room or aspiring to be PMPs. So you have these skills already. And the nonprofits need this, so here are a diverse set of nonprofits that we have here today. So let's give them one more round of applause. Thank you for registering.

[applause]

[music]

0:32:11 Kendall Lott: I wandered through the bustling ballroom speaking to representatives of nonprofits as well as universities.

0:32:18 S?: I'm Derek Reinhard, I'm the executive director of Deeper Missions a charity that's based in Virginia. And our mission is to bring sustainable infrastructure to schools in Africa. The idea is that it shouldn't be unhealthy to go to school, and so we partner with very needy schools to improve the health of their water system, their sanitation system and bringing solar electricity so they're not at risk with respiratory illness from smoky lighting and stuff.

0:32:51 Kendall Lott: So you're here recruiting volunteers tonight.

0:32:55 S?: Yes. And I'm a chapter member myself, a PMP. And I certainly appreciate the profession and what really drew me to this, and I just went nuts when I heard you were having a volunteer fair because I know project managers. I know they are passionate about doing work well, being organized, being standardized. And that's the sort of thing our organization, it's all volunteer and we only have a dozen really active members, and yet we're doing this work in Africa. And so I saw project managers from this chapter in particular to be able to take our organization to the next level because I know project managers are leaders, they're self-starters, they're organized, they're planners and we need all those sorts of things added to how we conduct the operations of our organization as well as help us plan and execute those projects that we do in Africa.

[music]

0:33:57 S?: Hi, my name's Jay Coakley. I'm running Ellie's Hats, which I founded in 2014. Ellie's Hats mission that we started out donating hats to children with cancer. We've branched off and another part of our mission is raising awareness. Another part of our mission is supporting hospitals and facilities that treat pediatric cancer patients. I feel with people that are here tonight, they want to volunteer. So they're here to find something to volunteer for. And I think if people would realize that they could just do a small piece of a puzzle for a nonprofit organization, you get a lot of people helping with that puzzle, you can actually put the puzzle together. I'm a teacher, I'm not a businessperson so people who can help guide me or offer some ideas of how to put a project together or lead a project can be very valuable. If they could help consult with me for free. I can't afford to have a Deloitte or an organization come in and consult. But if someone could do something like that, just once a month, "Hey Jay where are you? What do you need help with or have you been doing this?" Kinda keep me on the right path.

[music]

0:35:16 S?: My name is Olgay Kimaja(?) and I come from Special Olympics International. The mission of our organization is to provide opportunities for inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities using sports as the medium. We are looking for project managers to help us with a lot of various needs. Our movement is global. It works in 170 countries and our needs are vast in project management. We're over $100 million per year organization so we obviously face a lot of challenges. The value of this event for us is to help us do our job well and help us deliver the promise, not only to donors but most importantly to athletes globally.

0:36:03 Kendall Lott: How do PMs help with that? What is it about Project Management that can help there?

0:36:07 S?: Project Managers ensure that the work is done according to our plans, according to our objectives, according to our budget. It seems boring, but it's not. It's the foundation of Special Olympics work done well.

[music]

0:36:32 S?: My name's David Joy, from the Project Management Center For Excellence at the University of Maryland. And we believe that being a project manager, part of that role is giving back to the community, and that's why we sponsor this event.

0:36:46 S?: My name is Agnes Socrates, and I am the Director of MS in Project Management at the George Washington University. We are offering a very vigorous curriculum that caters to top-level executive student body. We do expect our students to volunteer. We want to bring our students to this event to get involved, get engaged, and get some fresh insights into a PM profession, learn about new tools as part of our ongoing commitment to support the Project Management Institute because it's our belief that PMI is doing a great job in terms of promoting the PM profession.

0:37:33 S?: I am Ray Johnson. I'm with the School of Continuing and Professional studies at the University of Virginia. And the reason why we are here today is because project management is an important skillset. It is something that is valuable to everyday life. If you think about it, you pretty much can apply the project management processes, and work flows, and thought processes to any facet of life.

[music]

0:38:08 S?: Hi, I'm Angela Cromwell. I'm with The Training Source and our mission is to provide superior training and related services using innovative methodologies and technology to meet individual, community, and workplace development needs. We see PMs as valuable because they understand and recognize the importance of seeing projects through, and outcomes. We are an outcome based program, so for us they're very valuable because they understand that there are targets, there are goals, there are outcomes that need to be met, and that fits in perfectly with what we do.

0:38:46 S?: My name is Dawn Gannon. I am the Deputy Executive Director for the Academy For Eating Disorders. We are the professional association for those professionals who do serve the eating disorder community, which is believe it or not, over 30 million Americans. The PMPs actually they're trained to find the best, most effective way to do something with as little waste as possible. They are strategic thinkers. They don't think inside the box, they think outside the box. And we need help with that. We have a very small staff and we just need people to help us put together a strategic plan on different aspects such as marketing or outreach or website. That's what we need, and we really appreciate the opportunity to do this because it's valuable to the PMP as well, because they learn about the eating disorder community which people really don't know. It helps us bring awareness to another community entirely.

0:39:51 S?: My name is Carly Smith. I am a membership specialist with the Girl Scout Council of the nation's capital. I'm here today to recruit some new Girl Scout volunteers in the area. I find that the project management community is a great population of people who we can tap into to encourage to be Girl Scout leaders. There's all kinds of major projects that happen in the Girl Scouts that require a lot of teamwork and a lot of management skills.

0:40:25 S?: My name is Marybeth Leaf, I'm with Project Management For Change and our signature event, Project Management Day of Service. We are here gathering recruits for our signature event and encouraging people to participate in the support organization, Project Management For Change, to participate in putting on the event. The event itself is an opportunity for project managers to provide pro bono service to nonprofit organizations, employing their project management skills and helping them solve problems.

[music]

0:41:09 Kendall Lott: A lot of the success of this year's fair was due to diligent preparation, studying the lessons learned from last year's event, and implementing new strategies. I had a debriefing session with Uma about how she designed and ran the event. She laid out what challenges she faced and how she approached the project of the Volunteer Fair.

I wanted to ask you about the volunteer fair specifically right now. The specific way that this was handled, as a method of getting high impact leadership going.

0:41:36 Uma Hiremagalur: The real objective of the volunteer fair was tri-fold. One is the professional development for our own members and is just to build skills around the PMI talent triangle, whether it's around leadership, strategic business, or technical project management skills.

The second is to give back to the community that we live in. To find a cause that we're passionate about and then becoming a community leader. And the third one is the chapter talent growth. We have elections every year, and we keep asking for people to step up and become leaders in the chapter and help make our chapter better. But how are we going to do that if we don't talk more about it and be more transparent about how we run our own chapter. We are a 10,000 member chapter and want to get new blood, new people to come in, offer their ideas and help make us a better and a more fun chapter to be a part of.

0:42:33 Kendall Lott: And I think one of my experiences as well, and you must be facing it, is just to run the operation. So much of it is volunteer-driven. So if there are not people willing to give some hours in somewhere during the year, nothing happens.

0:42:45 Uma Hiremagalur: Right. So everything, whether it's the Government's Board or the Operation's Board or any event, it's volunteer-driven. So it's important for us to find how much time and what are our members interested in volunteering for and then being able to engage them and keep them continually engaged through a year with different projects and opportunities to help them grow.

[music]

0:43:13 Kendall Lott: So when you look at that from a design perspective and you're looking at the year before and you're getting ready to go into it this year, what did you feel like you needed to do?

0:43:20 Uma Hiremagalur: You need a project manager, you need a backup project manager, whether you call them backup or you call them a deputy. We actually have two project managers who are helping lead it so they could be backup of each other. And then I had a liaison for the non-profits, and then also backing that person up was our VP of Professional Alliances whose primary goal is to actually engage with different community partners, whether they're non-profits, corporations. And then we also had a liaison for our operational areas who could help all our operational areas to put together their list of volunteer requirements, put together the job descriptions, put together how many hours, and then help come up with the final tote board that we could have for the event and kind of use that as our metrics to what we have achieved.

0:44:12 Uma Hiremagalur: You're always going to need an exec sponsor who is going to be the one person who has an eye on the budget, who has an eye that's working with your marketing team, who's working with the PR team of the chapter, making sure that all the announcements are going out, that they're actually going out and getting other sponsorships to come in. You're going to need also to make sure that you're very well coordinated, that if you have a VP of Educational Alliances that they are reaching out into the community, local universities and schools, to see what kind of sponsorships that they can bring in. And also if they can provide any sponsorships so their students could attend for free like the way Georgetown did this year.

[music]

0:45:00 Kendall Lott: What was your lead time and when did this thing happen?

0:45:01 Uma Hiremagalur: I think we started in about June for the October event. We started talking to nonprofits, trying to engage and see who wanted to be there, trying to fix our price point

as to what we wanted to charge the attendees, what we wanted to charge the non-profits, there was all that price strategy that we had to do. Then we had to work with universities to see how we could get students to come in.

0:45:24 Kendall Lott: What's that all about? Tell me about the students. That's a different approach.

0:45:29 Uma Hiremagalur: So a lot of my thinking this year has been about... We have a lot of members but we only have a small percentage of members that revolve in and out of our various events. But we have a huge percentage of our population that don't show up for any event. So I was trying to understand is, who are they and what do they want, and how can we get them to come in. And at the same time, how can we help promote the profession of Project Management. So the young students, the universities, who are taking classes on project management, to be able to bring them in and work them into this community of professional project managers who are our members. So get the two groups talking and give the students something to look forward to help them network and build those networks and relationships as they are in school studying it, so that when they step out into the world looking for jobs they already know a whole lot of people in various industries across the DC Metro area.

[music]

0:46:34 Kendall Lott: What schools did you get and how many students were able to come?

0:46:37 Uma Hiremagalur: So our biggest school population that showed up was Georgetown University. We had 25 students that showed up. We also had a lot of students come from George Washington University who acted as Volunteer of the Day. They were helping us with any of the Volunteer of the Day event activities.

0:46:56 Kendall Lott: So they were staffing it?

0:46:57 Uma Hiremagalur: They were staffing it. We also had UMD come in.

0:47:00 Kendall Lott: Which is?

0:47:02 Uma Hiremagalur: University of Maryland. So they were also in the room helping out.

0:47:05 Kendall Lott: I'm remembering the year before. It seems like, I remember being impressed we had students then, but it was like five.

0:47:10 Uma Hiremagalur: Right. So...

0:47:11 Kendall Lott: Now you brought in 25 from one school and...

0:47:13 Uma Hiremagalur: Right. So this year, other than the GW students helping as staffing the event as you pointed out, we also had a mentor-mentee table. And so we had three students that were sitting there very similar to what we had done last year. And we got them to get advice from our different members who came to attend the event. And they were supposed to give every student and write in their book pieces of advice, take-aways, anything to do, not to do, something to watch

out for as they become PMPs. And so they walked away with a book of advice at the end of the day.

[music]

0:47:54 Kendall Lott: And the non-profit list was pretty incredible too, as I remember.

0:47:58 Uma Hiremagalur: Yeah. It was a pretty diverse list. We're very, very humbled with everybody that decided to show up and bring in their volunteer opportunities. We signed up, I think there were over 150 people that signed up across these different nonprofits and I have some testimonials that they e-mailed me. They're very, very grateful, A, for the opportunity and B, they said this was the best, well-organized event that they had ever been to for recruiting volunteers. They were very happy the way they were engaged and the way that they had the feedback and the loop for engagement and the signup list that we e-mailed them afterwards. So they were very happy with the entire process.

0:48:40 Kendall Lott: What's that about, the sign up list?

0:48:43 Uma Hiremagalur: So this was a learning from last year where we had everybody do their own sign ups and some of them lost it.

0:48:50 Kendall Lott: So be clear, each table that was recruiting volunteers would sign up the people, offer a position to do something for an hour or a position in their … whatever.

0:48:58 Uma Hiremagalur: Sure. Whatever they had time slots.

0:49:00 Kendall Lott: And then, somehow they didn't make it back to the non-profit headquarters?

0:49:02 Uma Hiremagalur: Well somehow the people that were representative at the table, whether they were the operational areas or the non-profit, somewhere along the way between the Fairview Marriott and their offices it disappeared somewhere. Some even lost it the day of the event. People walked away with the list from their table. So there was all kinds of issues with that, so we took care of that. We had it on the table and I had row monitors for every row watching it. And the minute I said, "Event is over" those row monitors, those GW volunteers were instructed to go and snatch away every single signup sheet from every table.

0:49:39 Kendall Lott: So let's get this right. The students picked up the signup sheets because your point is you can consolidate that?

0:49:45 Uma Hiremagalur: So, my main thing when I was talking to them about the flow of the event and what is the outcome I wanted to be is one is the sign-up and the second one is to engage and follow-up. So the way we engage our volunteers is to make sure that whoever has expressed an interest you call them, you contact them within the next week. You thank them for their interest, the volunteer opportunity with the organization and then close the loop on that. Whether it is doing an interview, whether the nonprofit has their own background check or whatever they need to do to validate a volunteer to join their organization then they take it forward from there. So, it's kind of making sure A, there is an interest expressed, B, you go engage them and then follow up and continually follow up and make sure that that volunteer is engaged for your activity.

0:50:40 Kendall: Because that's where the gap happens on volunteerism.

0:50:42 Uma Hiremagalur: Right. And that's what we noticed last year. We had a huge turnout and we had so many signups and yet at the end of the day I had many people say that, "Oh, but we didn't end up filling a lot of the volunteer positions." And when I went back through my sheets and I remembered the numbers being so high and I was like, how long was it before you contacted them? They'd be like oh no, we wanted them to contact us. So the onus has to be on the person that is recruiting to make sure you take that interest because the volunteers already expressed their interest, they have signed their name, they've given you their contact. Now it's up to you to take that and close that loop.

[music]

0:51:25 Uma Hiremagalur: We wanted the room to be full of activity and buzzing around and so we had to figure out a way to get people to move from one table to the other. So we had 15 non-profit tables, we had our 12 operational area tables.

0:51:37 Kendall Lott: Because you were recruiting both for the community and for our own operations, right?

0:51:40 Uma Hiremagalur: Correct. Correct. And then we also had all our sponsors and then we had our own marketplace and bookstore. So we wanted to make sure that the attendees got a good flavor of everything that was happening and had an opportunity to go from table to table and make those conversations and connections with everyone. And when I looked at how many signups they all had they all had a good average of signups and I didn't hear any one non-profit say oh nobody stopped by my table. So the design worked.

0:52:10 Kendall Lott: So the whole thing was two hours. You were in and out in two hours. You took care of business with that.

0:52:14 Uma Hiremagalur: Right. We're project managers, one thing we have to manage is time, right? [chuckle] So…always very respectful of people's time.

[music]

0:52:26 Kendall Lott: Had you done documentation of the lessons learned from a Project Manager perspective or was that a conversation? How did you connect last year to this year and how are you set up as guidance for this year and going forward?

0:52:36 Uma Hiremagalur: There is a playbook with everything that we did last year and so put together a PMO and gave them the playbook from last year with the caveat that we're going to make it bigger and better and everything that we do differently this year, let's document it as we're doing it. So every template we create, every letter that we send out everything that we do, we understand a process, we do it better, let's document it. Somebody is going to be running it next year, let's make it easy for them. So my project manager was tasked with, that was his deliverable for him at the end of the Volunteer Fair is to collect everything, lessons learned, voice of volunteer, voice of nonprofits, voice of all the leaders and participants.

0:53:24 Kendall Lott: So what does that mean voice of volunteer? That was something you'd done the year before as well.

0:53:28 Uma Hiremagalur: I call it my VOV. It's from my days of quality management, trying to understand the voice of customer. How do we make improvements? How do we know what we are doing well and how do we know what our customer wants is getting that voice of customer.

0:53:44 Kendall Lott: Foundations of quality management striking even at the board level. Beautiful.

0:53:49 Uma Hiremagalur: It's not just the end product. It's not the end nonprofit that we're serving. To me my customer is my volunteer, right? If I have a happy volunteer, if I have an engaged volunteer they will do amazing things.

0:54:02 Kendall Lott: So this is good news for people who are listening that are part of chapters and part of boards. Your volunteers are your customer, they're not just your workforce. You have to make it where they are able to work, happy to work and simply... I didn't think of it that way, they're partaking of the product which is the chapter service.

0:54:19 Uma Hiremagalur: Right and it's engaging your customer to build a product that we need, right? Wouldn't it be awesome if your customer could be part of your design team and actually help you design what they want? So the voice of volunteer have been doing this in ripples through the years as the VP of programs to get feedback and also understand why do you volunteer, what is the joy you get out of it and what is the benefit to you? So it's okay to say this is something that I want to help with my professional development. I want to learn a new skill, I want to be able to add marketing, I want to learn to do budgeting better. So it's about giving them the different opportunities and understanding what they want.

0:55:08 Uma Hiremagalur: I wanted to speak project management language the way we project managers understand it. So I went back to the ethics of a project manager. It's something that we all sign when we become a PMP. It talks about being responsible, respectful, fair and honest and between our knowledge area skills and the ethics that we've all signed up as professionals, I feel we are a very very valuable asset for any nonprofit. So I think what I want to do next year is literally call our nonprofits and understand exactly what skills they look for. Do they look for somebody in schedule management, do they look for somebody with planning skills, do they look for somebody in risk management?

[music]

0:55:57 Uma Hiremagalur: From the feedback we got, they were all very happy that they had talked to professional project managers. In fact we had some of them say, "We didn't know that we could get so many ideas from project managers."

0:56:09 Kendall Lott: There's a punchline right there for the profession isn't it? It's more than running a Gantt chart.

0:56:15 Uma Hiremagalur: Yeah.

0:56:15 Kendall Lott: Or thinking through planning. It's getting ideas, it's being thoughtful about execution and design.

0:56:20 Uma Hiremagalur: Exactly and there's also a little plug in for membership. They were like "Well, I think I need to become a member of this chapter. There's just so many people that we can talk to and get ideas" and I'm like "Yup, we have events all along the year." I even had one of the ladies say "This is so cool and I didn't realize with project management I could do so much, I think I'm going to go get my PMP." To me, I look at the Volunteer Fair as one of the ways we can be a high impact community leader. The Volunteer Fair itself was a one place within our chapter members engaging them and pushing them forward and saying you already have these skill sets, go use it and help somebody else take their mission forward.

0:57:09 Kendall Lott: Here's what I learned: Chapter strategic planning and values definition can drive real changes in how we engage with membership whatever values your organization defines but it takes well-designed follow on that is actionable. I was struck by the idea that, "Wouldn't it be awesome if your customer was part of your design team?" That's how we can engage with membership. Leaders define the vision and the approach but the collaboration among the leaders, teams, and customers is what brings change. It brings project completion. So PMs there's no excuse. Opportunities to impact your communities are everywhere. I hope this episode has inspired you to get out and make the world a better place whether it's working with veterans, pitching in for a local food drive, assisting disadvantaged youth or volunteering for your PMI chapter, you have the tools to make a difference.

0:57:57: Thanks to PMIWDC, the volunteers, the board members and the hundreds of participating members, high-impact community leaders, all. Also thanks to Andy Walker, Elizabeth McQueen, and Kevin Roney for their focus and sharing on the chapters' values and to Miles Miller for his excellent facilitation and thoughts on the values workshop. Thanks to Lisa Ianuzzi and Tim Dalhouse on their transition military excerpt. We also want to recognize the non-profit leaders who spoke in support of the values. We appreciate their attendance and participation. And of course special thanks to Uma Hiremagalur, Vice President of programs and 2017 Director at large of the chapter for her invaluable contributions, developing the concept for this episode, designing and executing two of the events covered in the podcast and conducting intensive interviews to narrate the chapters' efforts to bring the DC area PM membership in line with its values as high impact community leaders.

0:58:50 S?: Our theme music was composed by Molly Flannery, used with permission. Additional original music by Gary Fieldman, Rich Greenblatt, and Lionel Liles. Post production performed at Empowered Strategies and Technical and web support provided by Potomac Management Resources.

0:59:06 Kendall Lott: PMPs who have listened to this complete podcast may submit a PDU claim one PDU in the talent triangle technical project management with the project management institute's CCR system. Go to CCRS, select education and then online or digital medium and enter provider code C046, the Washington, DC chapter and the title PMPOV 0034: High Impact Community Leaders. If any other chapter would like to sponsor a portion of an episode or tell us a story of your chapters and the impact your members have in your communities, please go to our Facebook page PM Point of view and leave ideas and contact information. Or you can go to pmiwdc.org/contact and leave a comment and of course you may contact me directly on LinkedIn. I'm your host Kendall

Lott and until next time, keep it in scope and get it done.

1:00:00 S?: This podcast is a Final Milestone production, distributed by PMIWDC.