



# Community Engagement Annual Report 2020

February 18, 2021

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## Table of Contents

Letter from Leadership: Community Engagement in 2020	2
Background on Community Engagement at MPS	3
Who MPS Serves	5
Providing Impact in 2020	7
Community Engagement	7
Employee Volunteering	7
Employee Matching	7
Corporate Sponsorship and Donations	8
MPS Assists – Pro Bono Program	8
Imagination Stage	9
Shakespeare Theatre Company	10
Contact Information	11

## Letter from Leadership: Community Engagement in 2020

As Community Engagement Manager at M Powered Strategies, community service is an important value of mine as well as one I seek to cultivate within our company. Many staff members are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers or AmeriCorps alumni. Even in ordinary years, our serviced-based company culture allows us to help the communities in which we reside via pro-bono work, corporate and employee donations, and volunteering programs. But as we all know, 2020 was not an ordinary year.

The typical job of the Community Engagement Manager at MPS is to manage the community engagement programming, encourage staff participation in community service activities, and find the best way MPS as a company and employees as individuals can contribute. The many crises of 2020 made that work even more essential. Through the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crash, MPS found innovative ways to help those in need. We focused our corporate donations on getting help in the hands of people who desperately needed it as our world changed before our eyes. Over the summer, overwhelming protests against racial injustice and police brutality led MPS to focus its work on organizations like the Equal Justice Initiative and the NAACP Legal Defense fund, in order to do our small part in righting the generations of wrongs perpetrated against people of color in the United States. As the holidays came closer and we realized food insecurity was at record levels, we focused our attention on assisting food banks and other organizations who can make sure families have nutritious meals.

Community service in uncommon times means flexibility and allowing your values to guide, but not dictate, your next steps. MPS had to be aware and responsive to rapidly changing situations throughout the year, and prepared to throw well-crafted plans out the window as new circumstances came to light. As you will see in the report below, the MPS community responded passionately, outpacing previous years. Participation in virtual community service events grew, and employee donations far surpassed projections. 2020 was a year of constant challenges, but MPS was prepared to respond to calls for action.

The apocryphal phrase “may you live in interesting times” is generally considered a curse. After all, interesting times are often more challenging or stressful than peaceful and tranquil times. By any measure, we are in the midst of an interesting time right now. 2020 may be over, but MPS stands ready to serve and face the challenges ahead.

Lily Seglin, Community Engagement Manager

## Background on Community Engagement at MPS

MPS formally supports its employees and their dedication to serving the community through its Community Engagement programs. These programs allow employees time off from work to volunteer for approved organizations, as well as offer employees generous matching contributions for their personal donations to non-profit organizations.

Additionally, MPS is vested in making a sustainable impact in our community and is proud to support our employees and their interests in providing knowledge and skills to nonprofit organizations. Our Pro Bono Program utilizes the passion and expertise of our staff to build positive consulting relationships with nonprofits that provide benefits to the pro bono partner but also value to our employees, and inherently back to MPS.

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*This year, 72% of MPS full-time employees were engaged in at least one of the community engagement programs.*

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An overview on all four of our community engagement programs includes:

- **Employee Volunteering:** MPS offers our employees the opportunity to volunteer during work hours at nonprofit organizations that provide benefits to the community. We support our employees' interests in participating at self-identified volunteer opportunities that they wish to engage in and that meet program criteria. Throughout the year MPS also notifies employees of potential pre-approved volunteer opportunities and organizes corporate volunteering efforts at events such as food kitchens, clothing drives, benefit walks, and the like. We encourage our employees to take advantage of this program and volunteer at local nonprofits.
- **Employee Matching:** MPS supports the charitable donations of our employees by providing matching dollars to causes that they fund. MPS offers a 100% matching donation up to \$300 per employee, per calendar year. Additionally, MPS' Community Engagement team organizes special giving events that are geared toward a designated cause and where collective donations are then matched by the company.
- **Corporate Sponsorship and Donations:** MPS is the primary sponsor of the local Project Management Day of Service, as well as the annual Volunteer Fair, hosted by the Project Management Institute of Washington, DC. Additionally, since 2008, MPS has served as the Accessibility Sponsor for Washington, DC's Shakespeare Theatre Company.

Furthermore, every month via teams, MPS staff nominates and votes on a nonprofit to donate at least \$500 towards. These non-profits adhere to a theme of the month.

- **MPS Assists – Pro Bono Program:** The Pro Bono Program intends to maximize social and business impact to non-profits by supporting local organizations with needs aligned to our company's core competencies and employees' expertise. By sharing the company's most valuable asset, MPS consultants, we seek to transfer knowledge and skills to leadership in non-profit organizations in order to help them overcome business or operational challenges and achieve their mission.

## Who MPS Serves

In 2020, MPS served 56 organizations through our four community engagement programs. These organizations support local, national, and international causes. A breakdown of the causes that these organizations support and provide is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

*Table 1 - Breakdown of Organizations by Causes*

<b>Causes:</b>	<b># of Orgs:</b>
Arts & Theatre	6
Business & Labor	1
Education & Youth	2
Environmental & Animals	12
Health & Nutrition	14
International Causes	3
LGBTQ	1
Low-income & Homelessness	0
Military & Veterans	0
Refugee & Immigration	0
Race & Ethnicity	8
Senior Citizens	1
Women & Gender	2

The full list of organizations supported includes:

- PM4Change
- Imagination Stage
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- McLean Presbyterian Church
- George Washington University
- Smith Center for Healing and the Arts
- PAWS Chicago
- Calvary Women's Services
- Latin American Youth Services
- Village Enterprise
- Shakespeare Theatre Company
- Washington Performing Arts
- Miriam's Kitchen
- Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington (RAMW) Educated Eats
- Coronavirus Worker Relief Fund
- World Central Kitchen
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Doctors Without Borders
- American Diabetes Association
- National Kidney Foundation
- Feeding America
- Planned Parenthood

- Bright Kids Uganda USA
- WAMU
- Bread for the City
- GiveDirectly
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Fund for Wild Nature
- The Barrie School
- Meals on Wheels Chicago
- CHAI Collaborative
- The Innocence Project
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- Equal Justice Initiative
- Black Girls Code
- Black Women's Blueprint
- Feeding America
- American Red Cross
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Lucky Dog Rescue
- GiveDirectly
- GiveWell- Maximum Impact Fund
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Martha's Table
- Ben's Chili Bowl Foundation
- Meade Canine Rescue & Sanctuary
- The Foodbank of Southern California
- DC Diaper Bank
- Thrive DC
- The Conservation Fund
- The Snow Leopard Trust
- African Wildlife Foundation
- Panthera
- Latin American Youth Center
- Casa Ruby
- Coalition for Rainforest Nations
- Clean Air Fund

## Providing Impact in 2020

### Community Engagement

Through all the community engagement programs, the value of all our services donated this year is **OVER \$220,000** to 56 organizations. The biggest contributing program is MPS Assists – Pro Bono Projects, followed by Corporate Sponsorship and Donations, then Employee Matching, and finally Employee Volunteering.

MPS Staff donated over **880 HOURS OF THEIR TIME** through pro bono projects and employee volunteering. On average, each employee donated about 16 hours this year between the two community engagement programs.

In 2020, **72% OF FULL-TIME MPS EMPLOYEES WERE ENGAGED** in community engagement programs.

### Employee Volunteering

In 2020, 6 MPS employees took advantage of the employee volunteering benefit. These individuals supported 6 of the organizations listed in the previous section. Examples of the type of work these individuals provided includes:

- Leadership Mentoring
- PM Day of Service
- Working with Animals in Need

These 6 staff members **DONATED 76 HOURS OF THEIR TIME** in 2019, which is about 12 hours per individual per year. The total value of their services is about **\$7,250**.

For this year, **18% OF MPS EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME** and engaged with their community.

### Employee Matching

In 2020, 19 MPS employees donated to non-religious, non-political nonprofits of their choosing and had these donations 100% matched by MPS. Donations through our Give-A-Thon event were double matched. This year, MPS employees donated **\$7,573.45**. These donations went to 31 organizations.



8 MPS employees maxed out their employee matching benefit by having \$300 of donations matched by MPS this year.

In total, **57% OF MPS EMPLOYEES HAD AT LEAST ONE DONATION MATCHED** this year. 24% of employees utilized the full \$300 matching benefit.

## Corporate Sponsorship and Donations

In 2020, MPS donated **OVER \$106,000 TO 43 ORGANIZATIONS**. The biggest donations went towards the following organization:

- Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC) Accessibility Sponsorship
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC)
- University of California San Diego Foundation
- Project Management for Change (PM4Change)

Majority of the organizations received donations through our monthly corporate donation. Every month, MPS Community Engagement staff settles on a theme, and MPS staff are invited to nominate non-profits that fit the theme. At the end of the month, MPS staff votes on which two non-profits to receive donations of \$500 or \$1000. Through this recurring donation, we have donated to organizations that reflect a wide variety of issues that MPS staff have nominated and voted on.

MPS also put together one event in 2020, a holiday give-a-thon.

## MPS Assists – Pro Bono Program

Through our MPS Assists program, MPS consultants provide pro bono services to help nonprofit organizations achieve their goals and manage fundamental organizational needs. In 2020, MPS took on 9 pro bono projects for the following organizations:

- Imagination Stage
- Project Management for Change (PM4Change)
- CHAI Collaborative Ensemble
- Meals on Wheels Chicago
- The Snow Leopard Trust
- Shakespeare Theatre Company
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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*13 MPS staff contributed 800 hours on these projects, which equals about \$102,000 of value services to these organizations.*

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A few of our projects are described below:

### Imagination Stage

Imagination Stage is a well-established nonprofit that empowers all young people to discover their voice and identity through performing arts education and professional theatre.

Imagination Stage (IStage) sought a better understanding of its donor constituents, specifically their motivations for giving, attitudes toward return on investment (ROI), and how best to facilitate and develop fundraising. They also wanted to better understand the business landscape for Theatre for Young Artists (TYA), best practices for marketing and solicitation, and develop new outreach material for donor engagement.

The MPS team deployed eight surveys tailored to respondents across two separate segments (Low Dollar Donors and seven levels of Members). To best serve the needs of IStage Marketing and Development Departments, the questions were designed to elicit actionable business and marketing intelligence, and build on previous work MPS has done in similar market research. Questions covered demographics (“What is your household income?”), membership (“Which benefits have you been enjoying?”), customer experience (“Have you been satisfied with your experience with Imagination Stage?”), and giving (“What is the most convenient method of giving for you?”)

The survey findings demonstrated differences in demographics and donor preference between Low Dollar Donors and Members: The latter were more affluent, had fewer and younger children, and were more involved in the theatre, more receptive to IStage’s programming and mission. The findings provided a holistic view of the organization’s constituency, and set up a context for future marketing and solicitation campaigns.

MPS collected and analyzed the data to identify themes and trends, and presented a summary of the findings, along with recommendations. We also provided market analysis and comparative analysis work vis-à-vis IStage’s branding, website (particularly the donation and giving pages), and email solicitations to donors and prospective donors. This was done by examining and assessing websites and solicitation practices employed by ten other nonprofits in the TYA space, and then appraising the marketing efforts of Imagination Stage. The studies

revealed areas for improvement with respect to design and content, particularly on IStage's website.

An MPS consultant provided in-depth analysis of IStage's materials, in addition to actionable recommendations for improvement of content, both from a design and branding perspective, and with regards to effective donor solicitation.

Building on this effort, the consultant also provided the client with two marketing samples to send to donors and prospective donors: a double-sided, full-page trifold brochure, and a double-sided, post card. The materials were created in Adobe InDesign, using existing images and logos provided by IStage's Marketing and Developing Departments, along with content and design from the consultant.

The project concluded with a debrief presentation on the collective work, including a summary of the survey work, and a more in-depth discussion of the design and market analysis work.

Imagination Stage has actionable quantitative and qualitative business intelligence that they will use to better understand their constituency, both donors and prospective donors; improve their website, webpages, and email solicitations; and refine their marketing and branding to their donor base via digital and print media. MPS will follow up with Imagination Stage to ascertain whether fundraising efforts have improved following market research, analysis, and design efforts.

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*MPS Assists played an integral role in Imagination Stage's efforts to better understand their donor base and improve marketing and marketing strategy to expand and develop this constituency.*

*-Imagination Stage*

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## Shakespeare Theatre Company

Since 1970, the Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC) has presented world-class stage productions in Washington, DC. The company's mission is to ignite a dialogue that connects the universality of classic works to our shared human experience in the modern world.

The Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC) sought to better understand its ticket buyer and donor constituents, specifically their preferences and why they choose to patronize STC. This became more crucial than ever with the COVID-19 pandemic, which is severely affecting the live entertainment industry and the services they provide.

The MPS team deployed ten surveys tailored to respondents across three separate segments – Low Dollar Donors, Subscribers, and eight levels of Members. To effectively meet the needs of STC Marketing and Development Departments, the questions were designed to elicit actionable business intelligence, and build on previous work MPS had done with the client. They covered Demographics (“What is your household income?”), membership (“What benefits have you been using?”), COVID-19 (“What pandemic safeguards would you like to see?” What about alternatives to in-person theatre attendance?), and customer experience (“Have you been satisfied with your theatre experience?”). After collecting and analyzing the data to identify themes and trends, the team presented a summary of the findings, along with recommendations to STC.

The final analysis revealed notable trends. Regardless of segment or age, constituents expressed appreciation for the theatre’s quality and a particular attachment to Shakespeare’s works. Almost all respondents wanted mandatory masks, deep cleaning, and social distancing in response to COVID-19. Alternative theater experiences that were well-received by respondents included remote shows and video programming, virtual mock trials, distanced play readings, and outdoor events. In terms of membership, higher-level donors preferred activities and benefits that involve greater interaction with the theatre.

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*MPS Assists did very valuable assessment work for STC that was quickly and effectively put together and completed.*

*-Shakespeare Theatre Company*

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## Contact Information

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### **Becoming a pro bono client**

Nonprofit organizations interested in becoming a pro bono client should complete and submit the [MPS Assists application](#). Our team works diligently to review all applications and select projects for which we can provide meaningful assistance and sustainable results.