



Community Engagement Annual Report 2021

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Letter from Leadership: Community Engagement in 2021

Serve. Change. Empower. It's a progressive statement, starting with the expected (to serve) but immediately advancing to the goal (to change, to empower). This is the motto of M Powered Strategies, it represents the work we do but also how we function as a group of creative, dynamic and, yes, service-oriented consultants. The traits required to inspire change and to empower others are the result of energy that doesn't cease at the end of a paid project, often it's driven by the desire to make a difference, and that is why MPS has continued to have such a successful Community Engagement Program throughout the years.

As a small company, we hire for culture as much as we hire for skills, and those attracted to M Powered Strategies often join our team because they want to use their skills to enact meaningful change. It's presented from Orientation onward that our consultants have the option to exercise their expertise in the Community Engagement space, but more importantly, they are empowered to select and drive initiatives that are personal to their interests. At MPS we recognize there's power in joining an organization that aims to celebrate the unique strengths of their employees, and there's opportunity in encouraging teamwork that can align to programs that are personally meaningful to our workforce. To put it simply, if an MPS-er wants to provide Pro Bono consulting to a nonprofit of their choice, they have the full bench of MPS resources at their disposal. We find there is no better way to serve, change and empower our staff than this.

2021 was a year like no other, in part because it felt like an extension of the tumultuous and unprecedented year before. We are proud to provide a robust Community Engagement Program that offers avenues of participation at every level, and to continue to inspire new and tenured employees who are committed to their Communities. We look forward to highlighting their successes in the following report.

Yours in Service,



Julianna Driskel, 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.

This year, 50% of MPS full-time employees were engaged in at least one of the community engagement programs.

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 2021, MPS served 57 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 below.

Table 1 - Breakdown of Organizations by Causes

Causes:	# of Orgs:
Activism	5
Arts & Theatre	4
Business & Labor	7
Education & Youth	8
Environmental & Animals	13
Health & Nutrition	7
Humanitarian Aid & Mental Health	4
LGBTQ	2
Refugee & Immigration	2
Senior Citizens	1
Women & Gender	4

The full list of organizations supported includes:

- Figure Skating in Harlem
- Institute for Policy Studies
- Southern Poverty Law Center
- World Central Kitchen
- Snow Leopard Trust
- CHAI Collaborative
- Black Girls Code
- PM4Change
- Global Tree Initiative
- ACLU
- Girls on the Run
- Maasai Girls Education Fund
- Shakespeare Theater Company
- Veteran Golfers Administration
- PMI Southern Maryland (PMISOMD)
- Appalachian Trail Conservation
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Clean Air Task Force
- WRAP
- Regarding Her Food (RE:Her)
- The Trevor Project
- Transgender Law Center
- WeTheProtestors, Inc
- Waterkeeper Alliance
- University of Wisconsin, Study Abroad Alumni & Friends Fund
- AAPI Women Lead
- Liberty in North Korea
- Disability Rights Maryland
- The Equal Rights Center
- Latino Student Fund
- Reading Partners
- Back on my Feet
- Wider Circle
- Good Food Institute
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- RAICES

- PMIWDC
- The Barrie School
- As You Sow
- The Humane League
- Coalition for Rainforest Nations
- Bread for the City
- So Others Might Eat
- Capital Hill Jazz Foundation
- Meade Canine Rescue & Sanctuary
- Casey Trees
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- St. Judes Hospital
- Jameson Animal Rescue Ranch
- DC Coalition for the Homeless
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Lucky Dog Animal Rescue
- No Kid Hungry
- AIDS/Life Cycle
- Aumazo Inc
- Nialmani Choices
- Capital Area Food Bank

Providing Impact in 2021

Community Engagement

Through all the community engagement programs, the value of all our services donated this year is **OVER \$155,000** to 57 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 nearly **400 HOURS OF THEIR TIME** through pro bono projects and employee volunteering. On average, each employee donated about 9 hours this year between the two community engagement programs.

In 2021, **50% OF FULL-TIME MPS EMPLOYEES WERE ENGAGED** in community engagement programs.

Employee Volunteering

In 2021, 4 MPS employees took advantage of the employee volunteering benefit. These individuals supported 5 of the organizations listed in the previous section. Examples of the type of work these individuals provided includes:

- PM4Change
- PMI Southern Maryland (PMISOMD)
- Global Tree Initiative
- Veteran Golfers Association
- Nialmani Choices

These 4 staff members **DONATED 78 HOURS OF THEIR TIME** in 2021, which is about 20 hours per individual per year. The total value of their services is about **\$7,500**.

For this year, **11% OF MPS EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME** and engaged with their community.

Employee Matching

In 2021, 13 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 **\$4,890**. These donations went to 28 organizations. In total, **30% OF MPS EMPLOYEES HAD AT LEAST ONE DONATION MATCHED** this year.

Corporate Sponsorship and Donations

In 2021, MPS donated **OVER \$74,000 TO 28 ORGANIZATIONS**. The biggest donations went towards the following organization:

- Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC) Accessibility Sponsorship
- 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 2021, 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 2021, MPS took on 7 pro bono projects for the following organizations:

- CHAI Collaborative Ensemble
- The Snow Leopard Trust
- PM4Change
- Regarding Her Food
- Wealth Reclamation Academy of Practitioners
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- PMIWDC

11 MPS staff contributed 400 hours on these projects, which equals about \$69,000 of value services to these organizations.

A few of our projects are described below:

Snow Leopard Trust

The Snow Leopard Trust is a nonprofit that works to protect the endangered cat through community-based conservation projects that are based on an improved scientific understanding of snow leopard behavior, needs, habitats and threats.

For this MPS Assists program, the Snow Leopard Trust wanted to create a memorable 40th anniversary event that not only celebrated its achievements, but also could be leveraged to increase stakeholder engagement and development opportunities. An effective event would set the Trust up to expand donor outreach, network with zoos and other organizations, and encourage social media response.

Team MPS conducted a series of stakeholder interviews to gain a better overview of the organization, its member and donor base, affiliates, and target audiences. Probing conversations with Trust employees, field staff, and board members allowed the MPS team to gain a more in-depth comprehension of the Trust's capabilities and resources, as well as their goals and vision for the 40th anniversary event. The team used the information they gathered to construct a draft of a strategic plan and presented this model "mini-plan" to the client to elicit further organizational information and feedback.

Concurrent with this effort, team members researched and analyzed industry best practices for major events and anniversaries, particularly in the nonprofit sector. They compiled this additional information, tailoring it to the Trust's 40th anniversary, and passed it on to the client, along with recommendations across multiple areas including best practices for event communications, branding, social media engagement, marketing, sales, and stakeholder engagement.

Building on the initial plan and best practices findings, as well as targeted follow-up interviews with key stakeholders, the team was able to shape the mini plan into a comprehensive strategic plan. Team MPS presented a final review to the stakeholders and facilitated a discussion of the plan. Together they hammered out a detailed outline of how the Trust could create an anniversary event that will achieve its goals and objectives. They also identified key performance indicators that could be used to measure the event's success.

The result is that The Snow Leopard Trust has a workable roadmap for planning and executing its 40th anniversary event that will achieve maximum results. The team's recommendations allow

the Trust to make full use of its existing resources and partnerships to attain the stated goals and objectives.

CHAI Collaborative Ensemble

CHAI Collaborative Ensemble is a Chicago-based collective of musicians dedicated to honoring history, advocating for new works, and engaging with communities through performances of mixed vocal and instrumental chamber music.

In 2019-2020, CHAI's ticket revenue consisted of only 16% of their total income, even though their concerts were often packed. The goal of this project was to better understand CHAI's customer base and how to engage them in digital performances during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as translate digital participation into face-to-face engagement after it is safe to attend concerts.

The MPS team worked with CHAI to review organizational materials and successful event strategies used in the past to gain a more thorough understanding of their organization, stakeholders, and customer base. Additionally, the team researched best practices that have already been developed by music performance nonprofits during Covid-19.

To better understand CHAI's customer base, Team MPS analyzed affinity organizations in the Chicago area that share a similar audience demographic and operating model. The goal was to develop a survey that would confirm or challenge preconceived assumptions about CHAI's audience profile, preferences, and performance needs, while providing actionable insights for CHAI leadership.

After the initial research, MPS drew up a project plan, with specific actions to develop and distribute the survey to CHAI stakeholders, analyze the survey results, and provide appropriate recommendations for enhanced engagement with their customers and community.

The team worked with CHAI leadership to help them craft a survey that would yield useful information. Together they implemented a targeted marketing plan to make sure they would receive a meaningful number of responses. A short (10-minute) survey, was sent to over 250 members of CHAI's customers over the holidays at the end of 2020. Upon survey close, MPS analyzed the results and briefed CHAI leadership on outcomes, developing specific recommendations to increase audience engagement and concert attendance for virtual and future in-person events.

Based on the enthusiastic response from the surveys, CHAI is doing more audience outreach on social platforms, soliciting after-performance feedback, and generally engaging more directly with their audiences.

Regarding Her Food

RE:Her, or Regarding Her Food, is a nonprofit based in Los Angeles striving to empower female restaurateurs by facilitating opportunities of connection, access, and professional growth. Its nine founding members started the organization in November 2020, given the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food and beverage restaurant industry.

Following exploratory calls to determine where support would be most useful, the team landed on the focus of strategic planning. RE:Her was facing significant growth and managing many volunteers but could benefit from guidance around clarifying scope and prioritization of efforts.

The MPS team provided a framework for identifying next steps while keeping strategy at the forefront. The collaboration consisted of four MPS consultants and three staff from RE:Her, who were founding members. Through stakeholder interviews—many of which were with other founding members—and strategic planning sessions, the team gained insights into the direction and goals of the nonprofit. MPS consultants developed a short survey, reported results, and produced a final report that may be distributed to the rest of RE:Her leadership.

RE:Her's enthusiasm and ambition allowed for productive group discussions and realistic outcomes in the form of a written plan for advancing forward.

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.