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Professional Convention Management Association



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July 21 2014

Meeting Professionals Get Serious About CSR

By Dyan Westropp



Every meeting professional works to send attendees home with something new: new knowledge, new contacts and a new enthusiasm for their day-to-day work. However, a meeting's success isn't just about what attendees take away; it's also about what they leave behind in the host destination. This year, attendees at PCMA's two main conferences have left a giant footprint of goodwill.

"Coming to a meeting should mean more than earning education credits and forging career connections," Kelly Peacy, Senior Vice President, Education and Events, PCMA, says. "It's a chance to come together to make a bigger difference."

"We have a membership base that takes corporate social responsibility very seriously," Peacy adds. "They're always looking for opportunities to contribute and care for those in need. We like to make sure they can find those opportunities at Convening Leaders and the PCMA Education Conference."

With the help of sponsors Global Experience Specialists (<http://ges.com/>) (GES), the founding and principal sponsor of the Network for the Needy program, Experient and Marriott Convention & Resort Network, PCMA attendees supported three notable causes in Boston during Convening Leaders. Some attendees volunteered sorting and cleaning supplies for more than 1,000 children at Cradles to Crayons (<http://www.cradlestocrayons.org/>), an organization that gives essential childhood items to kids from low-income families. In addition to time, PCMA donated \$7,000 to help purchase toys, books, shoes and school supplies.

SEE ALSO: [Here's What The Meetings Industry Needs To Start Promoting](https://www.pcma.org/be-in-the-know/pcma-central/convention-and-meetings-news/news-landing/2013/09/23/here-s-what-the-meetings-industry-needs-to-start-promoting) (<https://www.pcma.org/be-in-the-know/pcma-central/convention-and-meetings-news/news-landing/2013/09/23/here-s-what-the-meetings-industry-needs-to-start-promoting>)

PCMA's impact in Boston extended beyond elementary-age kids. The PCMA Education Foundation made a \$25,000 donation to College Bound Dorchester (<http://www.fdnh.org/>), an organization dedicated to helping at-risk students pursue a path toward college. The donation marked the single largest monetary gift in the history of the organization, and it's already paying off. Since Convening Leaders, three students have advanced to the Bridge to College program, and one has enrolled in Bunker Hill Community College.

Like many other metropolitan areas, Boston has sought out convention attendee volunteer opportunities to assist their homeless population. PCMA partnered with Boston Health Care for the Homeless to make sure homeless patients have access to some essentials. The drive contributed 1,724 pairs of socks and underwear to the program. Attendees also donated \$970 through the Convening Leaders online registration system.

North of the border at the more intimate PCMA Education Conference in Toronto, PCMA collected women's clothing, socks, underwear, office supplies and toiletries to help families at the Red Door Shelter (<http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/>). Many families come to the shelter to escape domestic abuse, and others have either been evicted or want to leave unsafe housing.

"Each and every one of these programs allows the attendees to contribute on a personal level to assist those in need," John Patronski, Executive Vice President, Industry Development, GES, says. "Whether giving time and talent to refurbish a care center or donating daily basic need items, each and every hour of activity and donated items is helping others."

SEE ALSO: Top 5 CSR Initiatives In The Meetings Industry (<http://pcma.org/convene-content/convene-article/2013/08/06/best-csr-initiatives>)

Are you looking to add some type of volunteering activity to your meeting? Click here (<http://www.pcma.org/convene-content/convene-article/2013/08/05/how-to-ensure-your-meetings-csr-activities-actually-make-an-impact>) to learn how to make sure it actually makes an impact.

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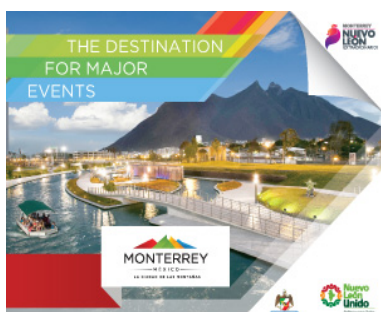
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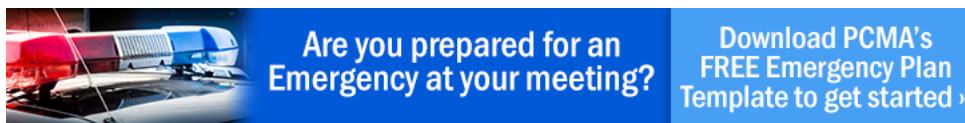
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Is your organization keeping up with the key trends that will shape the future of the face-to-face industry? Freeman has released a new report on what's next for meetings — and a quick quiz to assess whether you're ready.



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