

Volunteer News And Notes

Giving Employees A Chance To Give Back To The Community

(NAPSA)—People who volunteer often find that they get more than they give from donating their time and energy—which can inspire them to volunteer even more.

That was certainly true for Nicole Humphries, who entered the University of Chicago in 1994, intending to major in environmental engineering. Since the school did not offer this course of study, she declared chemical engineering as her major. In the spring of her freshman year, she found out about the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).

NSBE is a nonprofit organization that strives to increase the number of black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and impact the community positively. It has roughly 300 chapters on college and university campuses, 75 alumni extension chapters and 75 pre-college chapters nationwide.

After attending an NSBE conference, Humphries was able to network and get a better perspective on the engineering profession. Four months before her graduation in May 2000, she received and accepted a job offer from Verizon as a network sales engineer for the Enterprise Solutions Group.

Attributes Success to NSBE

She attributes her success to NSBE, its programs and networking atmosphere. Understanding the importance of all those resources, she decided to help young black students achieve the same level of success she has achieved through volunteer work with NSBE.

“As I went through college, I benefited from NSBE and its network of volunteers,” said Humphries. “Now it’s my turn to become a part of the volunteer network and help others freely.”

Her employer, Verizon, encourages its employees to volunteer for something they love and provides a Web address and bulletin boards to find volunteer opportunities in their community. Known as Veri-



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zon Volunteers, the program was launched in 2001 and continues to grow steadily. Employees who volunteer 50 hours or more at a nonprofit agency each year can receive a \$500 grant for up to two separate agencies. The grants are given on behalf of the employee’s volunteer service. In addition, teams of 10 or more employees who participate in a fundraising pledge-a-thon for a qualified nonprofit can get matches from the foundation for funds they raise up to \$25,000 per team. Last year, Verizon employees nationwide volunteered in 18,300 different ways through this program.

\$70 Million in Grants Awarded

Altogether, through the volunteer program and other contributions, Verizon Foundation awarded 22,000 grants totalling more than \$70 million to nonprofit agencies working to improve basic and computer literacy, enriching communities through technology and creating a skilled workforce.

The foundation uses its resources in the U.S. and abroad to develop partnerships in technology and connect them with organizations serving the needs of

diverse communities, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence and the economically and socially disadvantaged.

“The telecommunications industry has a long history of caring for the communities in which it operates,” said Susan Sullivan, director of employee volunteerism at Verizon Foundation. “We cultivate that heritage with foundation programs that encourage employees to be involved in charitable agencies in their communities.”

Humphries volunteers for the NSBE Alumni Chapter in Tampa, tutoring students in math and science, speaking to students and community leaders on technology such as DSL; giving young people an up-close view of an engineering career and helping to raise funds.

Lakisha Clark, founding chairwoman for the NSBE Alumni Chapter, says “Humphries’ dedication is second to none, all we have to do is call Nicole and she is there to help out. She is so keen on giving back to her community.”

For more information on the NSBE, visit www.nsbe.org. For more information on Verizon Foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.