



# CQL Promotes Social Capital from Within

A Look at CQL's Social Capital Service Project



The Council on Quality  
and Leadership

*Partners in Excellence;  
Leadership for the Journey.*

## **Social Capital** is an opportunity for demonstrating reciprocity and this program can offer benefits to CQL, our employees, and the community at large.

At The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), we are committed to enhancing the quality of lives for people with disabilities. We are experts at educating organizations on ways they can integrate the people they support into Community Life<sup>SM</sup> and increase their social capital. So in 2004, we decided it was time that we evaluated our own social capital. We asked ourselves, “How can we connect others to the community if we ourselves lack the necessary experience?” We recognize that each and every staff member has something to contribute and could be a valuable resource for social capital ideas. We realized how wonderful it would be if any employee could offer personal experience to our customers. CQL made the commitment to helping our employees increase their own social capital by offering paid days off to participate in volunteer activities. We recognize that finding the time to participate in community activities can be a challenge, so offer our employees the opportunity to spend up to 10 days a year to volunteer. Although we highly encourage every employee to take advantage of this benefit, it is a voluntary activity.

What types of activities have CQL staff done with their Social Capital Service Project days? Here are some examples:

Liz Weintraub visited the **Johns Hopkins School of Public Health** to teach a class about intimate relationships with people with disabilities. She talked about marriage using her own experiences as a newlywed. Liz stressed that marriage and dating issues are the same for all people – with or without a disability.

Jim Simkins volunteered with the **Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations** to help update their Policy and Procedures manual that will be used as a model for other non-profits across the nation.

James F. Gardner has served on the **Board of Directors of the Community Assistance Network in Baltimore County, Maryland**. CAN’s mission in Baltimore County is “reduce vulnerability and promote personal growth, stability and self sufficiency among low-income residents.” The organization operates emergency relief shelters, food banks, fuel assistance and weatherization, and eviction prevention services.

**If all CQL staff participate in this program,  
we can make a contribution to our communities of \$100,000 per year.**

CQL's main office in Towson, Maryland, sent a crew to Harford County, Maryland with hammers in hand to volunteer with **Habitat for Humanity**. Melanie Fender, Shelly McLaughlin, Mary Middendorf, Cheryl Purisch and Pam Scheuermann pounded nails, framed some walls and hung drywall in a three bedroom house-to-be.

Kevin Edwards and his band, along with 70 other Texas musicians, participated in a **24 Hours of Blues** to raise funds for Our Children's Center at Irving and the Family Outreach Center. Local businesses sponsored hours during the benefit, and together they raised over \$4,000 for local Irving children's charities.

Beth Mathis accompanied a group of teenagers to a **ranch in Elgin, Texas which is home for five people with disabilities**, and also serves as a summer camp. The ranch operates several enterprises, including a tree farm and annual poinsettia sales. Beth's group did construction projects, moving and securing the trees (about 500 of them) and preparing the greenhouses to receive a shipment of poinsettias (10,000!). Beth also volunteered at the **Arc golf tournament fundraiser** for the local Arc chapter.

Jeanne Beach manned the **Arts and Crafts table at the Sunset Picnic, sponsored by The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region**. Jeanne has also been baking casseroles to feed the hungry at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Jeanne's church, in partnership with other churches and local organizations, also participates in feeding the hungry where Jeanne supplies food for brown bag lunches.

Dorothy Schroeder volunteered with the **US Forest Service through the Passport in Time program** on an archeological survey to locate possible sites of the Mineral Lake Village logging camp which existed from 1890 to 1897 near Mellen, Wisconsin. Dorothy also put her grant-writing skills to work and was awarded a state matching grant for preservation and restoration of a church cemetery which dates back to the early 1800s.

Donning their best aprons, Jim Gardner, Sylvia Nudler, Holly Morrison, Tammi Odom, Jeanne Beach and Melanie Fender sorted donated food at the **Maryland Food Bank** to give Food Bank members (soup kitchens, shelters, pantries and similar community programs) a more organized "shopping" experience.

If you are interested in learning more about developing your own Social Capital Service Project, contact [info@thecouncil.org](mailto:info@thecouncil.org), or 410.583.0060.



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