

Northwestern Memorial Cares

For years, employees from the Northwestern Memorial family have dedicated both time and money to helping make our community a better place, and this year is no exception. Nearly 600 employees signed up to volunteer for the 17th annual Chicago Cares Serve-a-thon that took place on June 12, 2010, and nearly 600 employees spent their time off to clean up Chicago schools. More people volunteered from Northwestern Memorial than from any other corporate sponsor – and that’s no small accomplishment.

Investing in the Community

Daniel Derman, Vice President, Operations, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, thinks it’s great that so many of our employees are always willing to pitch in and give. “It’s about getting people involved in the community and the time commitment people make. We are celebrating the investment our people are making in the community,” says Derman. “We feel so strongly about Chicago Cares that participants in the serve-a-thon are recognized as donors to our employee campaign.”

“You have to make it easy for people,” says Derman, “and the Chicago Cares organization has the type of infrastructure that makes volunteering easy. When you show up on the day of the serve-a-thon, everything is organized and all of the supplies are provided. Chicago Cares also provides transportation. All you have to do is work.” And work they do.

Getting to Work

This year, Northwestern Memorial had enough volunteers to tackle three public schools within the city of Chicago. They painted classrooms, cleaned up outside and landscaped the grounds. And some of those with a more artistic flair helped paint murals to brighten up the hallways and classrooms.

Derman and Stephen Falk, President, Northwestern Memorial Foundation, agree that one thing that’s nice about this serve-a-thon is that it gives immediate gratification to the people working hard to help. Volunteers show up, work five hours and actually feel the results of their work on the same day. With thousands and thousands of volunteers, real, tangible differences are made.

According to Falk, it’s also quite rewarding when the principals at the schools tell the volunteers how grateful they are for the hard work and dedication. One principal told him that he was very impressed that Northwestern Memorial employees, many of whom spend their lives and careers helping others, would make such a commitment to the larger community of Chicago. “It was a positive message we sent,” says Falk.

Our Dedication Rewarded

In addition to having the satisfaction of knowing we’ve made a real, untold difference in the lives of many Chicago public school students and staff, we’ve been recognized for our volunteerism. On Friday, September 10, 2010, Leslie Bluhm, one of the founders of Chicago Cares, presented the award to Dean Harrison for being the largest corporate participant this year. The trophy will be on display on the second floor between Feinberg and Galter Pavilions.

When you’re in the hospital next, whether you’re an employee or a visitor, take a walk by that trophy and think about what it means. It’s a symbol of a spirit of giving and a reminder that offering your time and talent to help others really does matter.

