

OP³ Brings Businesses Together for the Community

Getting involved in the community is a great way for businesses to network and market themselves, all while engaging in civic responsibility. The Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP³) is the perfect place for any civic-minded business to get started.

OP³ develops partnerships between the business and local communities to address specific needs in Fairfax County. Following the theory, "over time, responsible corporate conduct and solid investment returns go hand-in-hand," businesses can invest in ways that benefit not only their bottom line, but the community surrounding them. By working with OP³, businesses enhance their brands by being seen as responsible caring organizations. Once a partnership is stable, OP³ steps aside allowing the businesses and/or agencies to manage and maintain the program on their own.

Some of OP³'s recent partnership projects include Stuff the Bus, the Collect for Kids Initiative, Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout, Empower and various programs for veterans.

Through Stuff the Bus, an annual partnership between Fairfax County's Neighborhood and Community Services, OP³, MV Transportation Inc., Shoppers Food Warehouse and Giant, area food banks received assistance in restocking their shelves for winter. With nine of 11 events completed, the partnership has already collected over 22,000 pounds of food, surpassing last year's totals by a wide margin.

The Collect for Kids Initiative brought together many non-profit organizations in an effort to collect school supplies for children in Fairfax County. With the assistance of Apple Federal Credit Union, Office Depot and Wal-Mart, as well as an established list of supplies provided by the school system, the partnership shaved over \$50,000 off their budget and served an additional 1500 students.

Operation Medicine Cabinet Cleanout takes place in the fall during "Drug Awareness Week." Members of the community can drop off their unfinished prescription drugs at local police stations. There, specially designed boxes are available for discarding the medications. Boxes are then collected and disposed of properly by the Office of Waste Management. Last year, this initiative resulted in the safe disposal of thousands of pounds of medication.

The Empower program provides a mini job corps for troubled youth. Through an eight-week class, students are trained on interview skills, resume writing, conflict resolution and more. OP³ is looking for volunteers to serve as job coaches during this time. Chamber businesses are invited and encouraged to participate. Chamber members interested in partnering with other organizations can contact OP³ or visit www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org.



A volunteer picks up donations for Stuff the Bus

