

# A winning strategy

Promotional prize ideas help customers boost engagement, p. 6

#### **Helping hands**

Incentives help recruit volunteers, p. 19

#### Strength in numbers

Organizations unite to make an impact, p. 24





Share your ideas and *amplify* your brand's exposure  $\rangle$ 



# Recognize your difference-makers



Organizations large and small are powered by individual actions. Whether they're going above and beyond, showing incredible generosity or performing with remarkable consistency, it's important to show appreciation to team members making a difference.

In this issue of *amplify*, we'll share stories from 4imprint customers who found creative ways to applaud outstanding employees, volunteers, caregivers and more. A few examples:

• Judevine® Center for Autism is a nonprofit that provides services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Star employees are recognized each month and entered into a quarterly drawing. Winners get a branded food container and water bottle. (Cover Story, p. 6)

- Oshkosh Corporation and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin collaborate on an annual hunger relief event. T-shirts, given to more than 1,000 volunteers, show unity and double as a promotional keepsake. (Meaningful Connections, p. 24)
- Crossnore Communities for Children provides holistic child welfare services, including medical care, trauma-based therapy and enrichment activities. The nonprofit gave adoptive parents and caregivers pint glasses as a token of gratitude. (Remarkable Moment, p. 28)

We hope these customers provide inspiration as you acknowledge difference-makers in your organization.

Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO 4imprint

How do you use promo products in your organization? We'd love to hear about it. Email 4ideas@4imprint.com to share your story.

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A token of gratitude



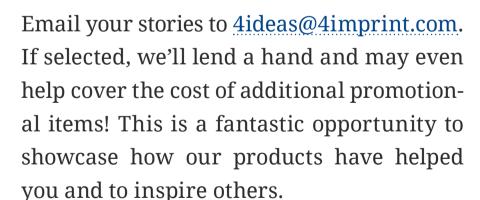
amplify offers an unmatched glimpse into real-life ways you can use promotional products to gain remarkable results.

# Share your story and amplify your exposure!

Have you used our promotional products to boost your brand? Or do you have exciting plans to do so? We'd love to hear your story and collaborate to amplify your success. As a valued 4imprint partner, you'll gain FREE marketing exposure for your brand.



Put your ideas into action



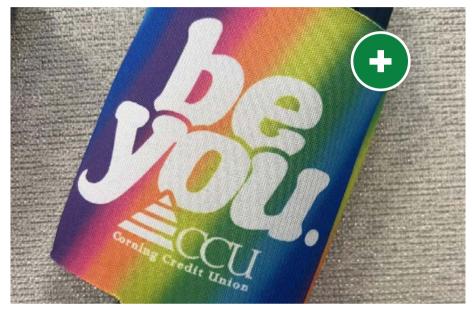
# Cheers to fun and functional swag

Serve promotional can coolers to stand out



"We recently adopted a new city logo and purchased many items to promote our brand at city festivals and events. The Diversity Can Insulator and eyeglass case have been very popular with residents and staff. We love 4imprint!"

Mary 4



"We will be handing these out at our local Pride Festival."

Tammie 🛂



"Excellent work 4imprint! These turned out better than expected! I use them for my Veteran Initiatives Program (VIP) at military hiring career fairs."

lim 4



Our team overheard these customers brag about their swag.



"The swag bags were a huge hit with our golfers, helping us make a memorable impression and build excitement around our new brand."

Kerrie 🛂



"These items will be used for our conference later this month. So far everyone that has seen them love them! Thank you so much!"

Angelica 🛂



"We are excited to use these at our upcoming trade show events!"

Ashley 4



Give 'em something they can hold on to with <u>promotional can</u> coolers.





Organizations are always looking for new ways to engage with audiences. Whether its employees, volunteers, clients or customers, tapping into individuals' competitive spirits can bring results. Judevine Center for Autism and Prime Independent Living are two organizations putting creative promotional prize ideas into action and reaping the benefits. Find out how each harnesses the psychology of winning to achieve its goals.

Judevine leveled up its employee engagement



#### A play for attention

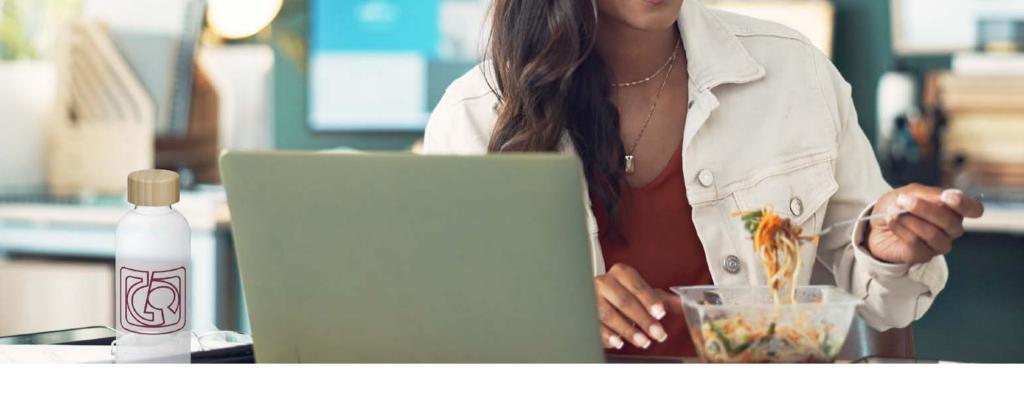
Judevine Center for Autism is a Missouri nonprofit that provides services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its employees work in multiple locations. Some are at service community portals, known as hubs, while others are regularly out in the community working one-on-one with individuals.

When Jeff Thompson joined the Judevine team as executive assistant, he launched an

internal monthly newsletter to increase engagement and foster a sense of community among statewide employees. "I think it's important for everybody to feel like a team," Thompson said. "It can be easy for an employee to just think of Judevine as the few people they see every day, but we really are about 250 people all working toward the same goal. We want employees to know one another and know about the amazing things everyone is doing."

"We want employees to know one another and know about the amazing things everyone is doing," Jeff Thompson said.

COVER STORY A winning strategy



Thompson used gamification—the practice of bringing game elements and principles into non-game contexts—to elevate engagement. Research shows a gamified work experience can boost employee engagement by 48%.

In the newsletter, each of the company's four hubs spotlights an employee of the month. Spotlighted employees are entered into a drawing to be named employee of the quarter. Quarterly winners receive a water bottle and food container with cutlery, chosen by Thompson "so employees can take their lunch to work in style."



While those stylish promo prizes are getting more eyes on the Judevine brand, employee engagement is climbing. The newsletter open rate has increased (and continues to climb each month), and every edition is a topic of conversation.



COVER STORY A winning strategy

#### Prime Independent Living found the right game plan



#### Another way games can form connections

Prime Independent Living develops and operates independent living communities for people ages 55 and older. Its newest community—Prime Carolina Coast in Conway, South Carolina—features more than 130 apartments plus amenities like a movie theater, pickleball courts and putting greens.

Debra Haywood, president of operations, used fun and games to promote the newest apartment building at the area's senior centers. Prime Independent Living hosted bingo games with promotional prizes, including tote bags, hand fans, pens and jar openers.

Each item was carefully selected. Fans, for example, prove useful in beating the South Carolina heat. And jar openers—shaped like a chef's hat—bring awareness to Prime Carolina Coast living community's on-site chef. They're also handy for older adults who have dexterity challenges. Marketing collateral accompanied each prize to give prospective residents more information.



Payson Mini Tote

Promotional products help build relationships



Twist and Chill Fan with Lanyard



Bic<sup>®</sup> Intensity Clic Gel Pen



Jar Opener -Chef's Hat







While the ultimate goal was to attract new residents, Haywood said education was an important part of the strategy. Many people don't know the difference between independent living and assisted living or skilled-nursing facilities. The collateral and in-person conversations helped clear up confusion.

"We wanted to build a relationship with the participants," Haywood said. "The senior center bingo games are the most well-attended events they have. They're fun, they're energetic and playful. And that's what it's like at Prime Independent Living—it's about living your best life."

Sponsoring a game night with fun promotional prizes can tap into our brains' dopamine reward system. Each time a person reaches a goal or earns an award, dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and satisfaction, is released.

With each "Bingo!" comes a dopamine rush encouraging participants to continue playing in hopes of winning another promo prize. Over time, this can lead to big results: "We've definitely had move-ins from the senior centers," Haywood said.

# The more you play, the more you win

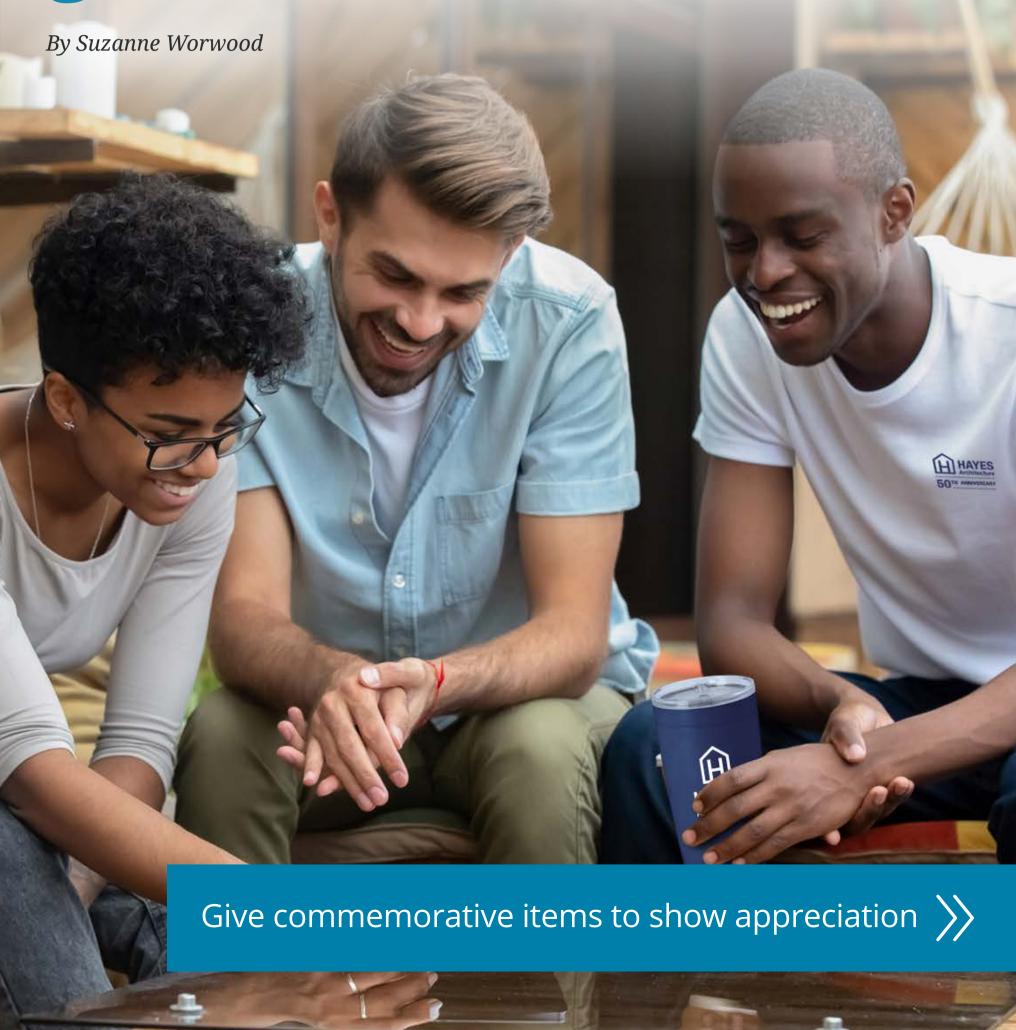
The teams at Judevine Center for Autism and Prime Independent Living have learned that when they combine fun marketing strategies with creative promotional prize ideas, their audiences respond. The results are a true win-win.

"We wanted to build a relationship with the participants," said Debra Haywood. "The senior center bingo games are the most well-attended events they have."

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A sobserved over our long-standing history, we know we're celebrating alongside countless other organizations marking their own milestone anniversaries. Business anniversary gifts help share the joy and journey with those who've helped along the way—employees, partners, customers and other supporters. Whether you're celebrating your first or 100th business anniversary, these ideas help make the memories last.

Throwing it back to the beginning

Giving retro-themed company anniversary gifts to employees is a fun way to bring a founding year to the forefront. For example, if your company's first computers took up a literal desktop, give customers the Computer Soft Keychain imprinted with your organization's founding year to mark your milestone.

Celebrate the journey with anniversary gifts Alternatively, tie into a specific decade's vibe. Organizations founded in the 1950s or 1960s can tap throwback spirit with Risky Business Sunglasses, available in a range of colors, while those that made their debut in the neon-loving 1980s can bring that founding era to life with Nylon Reflective Slap Bracelets. Distribute these retro-inspired gifts at an on-site themed party or community or industry events throughout the year.



#### PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

#### Signs of celebration

From events to headquarters to stakeholders' front yards, signage can raise awareness of your team's accomplishment. Debut a Frame-Worx Banner Stand to give exhibit attendees an engaging photo opp with outfits spanning your organization's history.

Outdoor blade signs add excitement to an event booth or open house. These attention-grabbing decorations can promote the special occasion before, during and after an event.

Employees or volunteers for a mission-driven organization might be happy to put their passion on display. Distribute <u>yard signs</u> to let the community in on big news.





## Corporate milestone gifts that tell stories

The best company anniversary gifts are more than just a logo on a product—they tell a story. Commemorate a milestone by giving Viking Vacuum Tumblers to customers enrolled in your loyalty program. Tuck full-color photos inside to highlight your organization's growth through the years.

Provide employees TaskRight® Afton Notebooks showcasing the evolution of the company's logo since its founding. Or highlight product introduction timelines on T-shirts. The result becomes an exclusive gift for anniversary bash attendees.

#### PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

#### Toast to an anniversary

Hosting a celebration gala or dinner? Mark the occasion in style. Place Napa Valley Optic Stem Flutes at each table, and toast to those who've helped your organization thrive.

Assemble business anniversary gift bags, each with a commemorative Challenge Coin. Employees, partners and clients then have a keepsake to show off at the next landmark event. Add Notepad Mouse Pads to the gift bags. Be sure to use the pads' surface area to share a message of appreciation for recipients.

#### Wearing pride on their sleeve

For some, the best company anniversary gifts are those that attract eyes day after day. That's an advantage for outerwear—like Eddie Bauer® Soft Shell Jackets. Adorn with anniversary logos and department or team visuals for a more personalized feel.

Share joy with promotional products that are memorable

# The best business anniversary celebration is yours

When it comes to honoring your organization's milestone, the best way to make it memorable is to make it feel like you. When sharing the joy, business anniversary gifts can help unite customers, employees and others who made it all happen. Happy anniversary!





*Meet the author:* 



Suzanne Worwood, with 4imprint 30 years Chief product, supply chain and sustainability officer





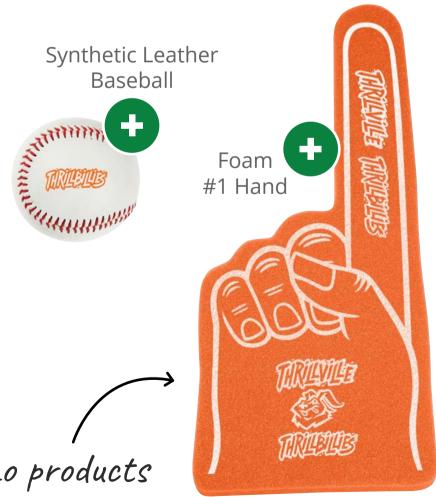


The Thrillville® Thrillbillies® are a collegiate baseball team in Marion, Illinois. It's one of 18 teams in the Prospect League®, which gives college baseball players summer competition in a professional setting while also providing family-friendly entertainment across the Midwest.

Fan engagement is taken as seriously as the bottom of the ninth at the Thrillbillies' home ballpark. The team store is no exception. Thrillville faithful buy merchandise that helps raise brand visibility in the local community. "Branded items have sold so much, we have to reorder regularly," said Jackson Wiseman, assistant general manager and director of entertainment and promotions.

This past season, <u>baseballs</u> and <u>foam</u> <u>fingers</u> were among hot-selling baseball promo items. The balls were often paired with <u>Sharpie® markers</u> for young fans to collect autographs.

"Beyond being a bestseller in the team store, the baseballs were a key feature in our 'Field of Dreams' package for youth teams who purchased group tickets and got to run onto the field with the Thrillbillies during pregame," Wiseman said. "This created a ripple effect. When other children in the stands saw the 'Field of Dreams' participants with logo baseballs, they couldn't wait to grab their own from the store."



Create fan engagement with promo products







Wiseman said the foam fingers had an immediate impact as well. The bright oversized design made them visible across the stadium, turning them into must-have items for youngsters. With fan engagement a top priority, the foam fingers waving throughout the crowd added to the fun and festive ballpark environment.

Small keepsakes, like sunglasses, keychains and stress balls, were other clutch Thrillville performers. Wiseman said their location near the checkout—ideal for last-minute add-on purchases—was a winning strategy.

For a team with just two seasons of history, the exposure from these branded baseball promo items is critical. "The merchandise gets people talking," Wiseman said. "It makes an impact. A lot of these products become like walking billboards for us. Even if it's something small, like a keychain. When somebody goes out to lunch and their buddy sees it, they ask about it. And hopefully when they ask about it, we've provided a good enough fan experience that it helps them tell that story to their buddy and it creates excitement." 4

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# Rewards to run toward

#### Branded prizes keep runners on pace

Road Runners Club of America® is an association of runners, running clubs and running events. Its Fredericksburg, Virginia, chapter—Fredericksburg Area Running Club—has more than 600 members. Knowing regular race participants amass plenty of medals, shirts and other expected items, club organizers award runners more unconventional branded prizes. Read how Fredericksburg Area Running Club earned our Swag Master status.



#### A round of applause

Fredericksburg Area Running Club organizes weekly group runs as well as a series of races. Michelle Lemke is on the series board and chooses prizes for the runners. Last year's top finishers were given embroidered backpacks, which some recipients dubbed "brag bags." Those who participated in at least seven events also earned beach towels.

#### A keepsake for keeping up

The running prizes are a way for the club to celebrate its members' dedication. The prizes also become mementos to remind recipients of a time they pushed themselves and accomplished a goal.

Lemke said she chose items people will use, not just display. "The backpacks and towels are conversation starters," she said. "People see one and ask, 'Where did you get that?' And then they get to talk about the series."





# Suthers Center volunteerism bounces back



Like many aspects of life, volunteerism changed dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Formal volunteering—the helping of others through organizations like nonprofits or food banks—dropped from 30% in 2019 to 24% in 2021. As communities recovered, many organizations took on the challenge of rebuilding their volunteer bases through hard work and creative thinking. Suthers Center for Christian Outreach and Destiny Bound Inc. are two customers that embraced the power of volunteer incentives to rejuvenate community support.



# Sparking support after a big change

The mission of Suthers Center for Christian Outreach is simple. As the primary outreach entity for St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church in Atlanta, it strives to "give what we have and do all we are able to do." What it's been able to do for years is assemble teams of volunteers to help in the community. This includes the HATS program that helps find housing for families and individuals, a part of volunteering that goes beyond providing shelter and food to community members in need.

Each Saturday, upward of 25 volunteers run a two-hour food distribution program. Using a drive-through concept, they provide bags of healthy groceries to between 800 and 900 individuals or groups. To prepare for distribution day, supporters transport more than 4 tons of food from the Atlanta Community Food Bank to the church grounds.

20 TREND Rally support

It hasn't always been this way. Before the pandemic, the food program and other community service activities were carried out at a separate location. When COVID hit, operations moved to St. Martin in the Fields, and the pantry adopted the drive-through method of food distribution. It became an efficient strategy well after social distancing was a priority, and now each year about 300 volunteers help Suthers Center with its food program and other projects.

The transition to a drive-through also opened new opportunities for volunteers. These team members now help guide parking lot traffic and keep the pickups running smoothly. Mary Jo Sibbald, executive director, bought caps to make the volunteers easier to spot during the early-morning pickups. They're also a token of gratitude for donating their time.



"The white hats are great because it makes the volunteers easier to see and identify for anyone who has a question or needs help," she said. "The volunteers like them, and I've seen people wearing them all over the community."

"The white hats are great because it makes the volunteers easier to see and identify for anyone who has a question or needs help,"

Mary Jo Sibbald said.

Thanks in part to creative strategies like these to re-engage local volunteers, the rebound in community involvement across the United States is apparent. From 2021 to 2023, formal volunteering bounced back more than 5%, the largest two-year increase since tracking began. And informal volunteering among Americans—simple actions like running errands for or lending tools to friends and neighbors—has surpassed 2019 levels. More than 54% of Americans helped others informally in 2023.

From 2021 to 2023, **formal volunteering bounced back more than 5%**, the largest two-year increase since tracking began.

Source: United States Census Bureau®

21 TREND Rally support

#### Destiny Bound builds its base with gratitude



# Encouraging others to share the love

Another organization successfully using volunteer incentives to aid in recruitment is Destiny Bound. The New York City nonprofit helps families through mentorship programs and by distributing essentials like food, diapers, socks and school supplies.

Janice Easter, president and co-founder, said with zero paid employees, volunteers empower Destiny Bound's projects. A six-person board of directors plus community partners and helpers make it all happen—from packaging and distributing goods to

loading trucks and registering individuals and families. All that work means attracting and retaining volunteers is critical. "Many hands makes the load light," Easter said.

Destiny Bound, launched in 2019, worked hard to build a base of volunteers when the pandemic began. During that time, focus shifted to helping provide personal protective equipment, like masks and sanitizer, to community members. Like many other organizations, Destiny Bound found 2020 and 2021 challenging for volunteer recruitment.





2 TREND Rally support



Years later, the organization is still working to raise awareness and add to its team of supporters. One success came last summer at its annual Operation Community Investment event, where school supplies, hygiene items and other goods are distributed. Each of the 40-plus volunteers were given two tote bags. One included personal care items, like hand lotion, foot cream, sanitizer and socks, and a personalized thank-you letter.



The second bag was for the volunteer to pass to somebody they knew who might be interested in supporting Destiny Bound. It contained a letter addressed to a potential volunteer and details about how to get involved. The hope was that a hand-delivered referral from a friend would make a difference in filling the need. And it worked. "It was a great initiative," Easter said. "Volunteers shared the second tote bags with others and in turn they reached out to us, eager to volunteer." Volunteers are the heart of Destiny Bound, helping to bridge gaps, uplift communities and create lasting change.

#### All for the greater good

The hard work of business and community leaders, marketers and others can keep the momentum going. Volunteerism, after all, helps people connect with a deeper sense of purpose. It can fill a void in people's lives, reaffirm their humanity and remind them how everyone is connected.

Suthers Center and Destiny Bound share a desire to make a difference in their communities. And to make a more meaningful impact, both have found creative ways to engage with their audiences and gain support with help from volunteer incentives. 4

Do you want to be featured in amplify? Email 4ideas@4imprint.com to share your organization's story!

4imprint partnered with Destiny Bound and sponsored the tote bags mentioned in this story.



# Corporation unites community for hunger relief

T-shirts for volunteers bring together a team of hundreds



#### shkosh Corporation found a creative way to inspire its employees and others to give back.

The Wisconsin-based industrial technology company designs and manufactures some of the world's toughest specialty and access equipment. It hosts an annual event called Feed the Body, Feed the Soul, which has a unique vibe. Hundreds of people package food for the local community while listening to live music and sporting colored T-shirts for volunteers. The event supports Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, an independent nonprofit and the largest hunger relief organization in the state of Wisconsin. At a time when one in 10 people in Wisconsin—and one in six children—face hunger, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin provides resources for nearly 400 food pantries, meal programs and shelters.

Jodie Larsen, vice president of community engagement at Oshkosh Corporation, and Liz Wollenberg, chief systems and strategy officer at Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, shared how volunteer shirts help unify hundreds of people from more than a dozen organizations working to prevent hunger.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

*Interview featuring:* 



**Jodie Larsen** Vice president of community engagement at Oshkosh Corporation



**Liz Wollenberg** Chief systems and strategy officer at Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin



### Q: What is Feed the Body, Feed the Soul?

Larsen: It's a 12-hour event where hundreds of volunteers come together to pack staple food items while enjoying live music. Last year, we welcomed over 1,000 volunteers from 14 sponsor businesses plus community members who wanted to get involved.

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin procures white and brown rice that arrives in 2,000-pound bulk sacks, so volunteers divided and packaged rice into 3-pound bags to donate to local pantries. We also featured a performance from the NEW Dueling Pianos, which brought energy and excitement. People were working hard, singing and dancing. Every year it's a lot of fun.

**Wollenberg:** This event helps get 200,000 pounds of food into the hands of our neighbors in need. That equates to about six

months of these staple products that we provide. In eight years, it has provided more than 1 million meals. It is incredible.

And while the food is super important, the event also creates a great opportunity for advocacy and education. It is a massive platform to educate volunteers about how, by packing a bag of rice, they are making a difference in someone else's day. It's also a really cool model of how organizations can come together. We use it as an example when other corporations want to help. We have this as the gold standard.



#### Q: How did the event start?

Larsen: Back in 2017, our leadership wanted to find a way to engage employees, bring them together and make a difference in our community. We knew food insecurity was a challenge we could help with, and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin was looking for volunteers. We also know music is a great way to bring people together. We paired the two concepts of staple food products feeding the body and music feeding the soul and named it Feed the Body, Feed the Soul.



## Q: How did promotional T-shirts add to the experience?

**Larsen:** They helped bring everybody in. They brought unity. We put the business sponsors on the back of the <u>shirts</u> to give them more visibility.

We chose volunteer shirts that are a nice lime green, so when anyone looked out on the packing floor it was a sea of lime green. Then long after the event, I'd be working out at the gym or I'd be out somewhere in

the community and I'd see one. It's like, hey, that's one of our past Feed the Body, Feed the Soul volunteer shirts!

### Q: Were any other promotional products involved?

Larsen: We had <u>baseball caps</u> available because volunteers have to wear PPE (personal protective equipment) on the packing floor. They all wear an apron and a hairnet or hat. The last few years we've offered hats that volunteers can buy, and then we donated the proceeds to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.







## Q: How does this event fit the mission of Oshkosh Corporation?

Larsen: We want to make a difference in people's lives—not just our team members', but our community members' as well. One of the company's core values is, "We are better together." We know that with our partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and the other companies that sponsor the event we all are better working together. If we build those relationships up, we build our community up.

### Q: How has the community responded?

**Larsen:** It's become something everybody wants to do now, which is really cool. When

we open our signups to our company sponsors, the response is immediate. About 90% of our volunteer slots are filled within a day and a half. We have to make sure the companies can bring all the people they want to, so that's a good problem to have. For the next event, we're planning to increase the amount of food we plan to pack so we can accommodate more volunteers.

Do you want to be featured in amplify? Email 4ideas@4imprint.com to share your organization's story!

4imprint partnered with Oshkosh Corporation and sponsored the T-shirts for volunteers mentioned in this story.

Volunteers drive Feed the Body, Feed the Soul. See hundreds of helpers doing their part to support neighbors in need.

WATCH VIDEO 💙



# A token of gratitude

By Cheryl Sina

# Appreciation gifts celebrate caregivers



Three cheers to caregivers! North Carolina's Crossnore Communities for Children provides holistic child welfare services, including medical care, trauma-based therapy and enrichment activities. At its annual "Because of You" dinner, adoptive parents and caregivers were showered with encouragement and recognition.



Guests of honor received promotional pint glasses—appreciation gifts to commemorate the occasion. "The glasses made a great gift. They're practical, and every time they reach for that glass, it's a reminder of the challenging but important work they do. It's a token of gratitude and a reminder that they're loved," said Angela Bollo, regional director of external relations. Appreciation gifts are a great way to show people you care. 4



*Meet the author:* 

Cheryl Sina, with 4imprint 26 years

Senior manager, community engagement and sponsorships

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