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Kellogg Company senior executives at a United Way Day of Caring event.

The Obama administration has already identified early childcare as a primary health-care concern and is encouraging contributions from the private sector. "The federal government acknowledges that we can't continue to pour money into government programs that continue to lose money," says Scott Shirai, NFP's chief development officer. "Successful programs like NFP have proven they can reduce the cost of government programs for the poor, from food stamps, medical care at the state and

county level, and government-subsidized medical care facilities. That makes us optimistic that there will be money to further expand evidence-based programs like this."

Another effective new model is finding innovative ways to encourage organizations large and small to get more involved in their communities and share the burden of social responsibility. Marci Koblenz, co-founder and president of Chicago-based **Center for Companies That Care**, believes that businesses can be profitable while strengthening their local communities

their communities, creating a total amount of 2.54 million volunteers engaged through the United Way. "Based on anecdotal evidence, we've been experiencing a marked growth in volunteerism, but that trend began at least a year ago," says Sal Fabens, director of public relations for United Way of America. "Even before the economic downturn deepened, we had been finding a growing trend in people wanting to be more involved in making a difference—not just giving a donation, but truly being engaged in the work."

United Way's new engagement portal, live-united.org, provides potential donors an easily accessible opportunity to volunteer. In addition, more than 100 communities support United Way Women's Leadership Councils. With more than 30,000 members nationwide, the women raise funds, volunteer and lend their support for 2-1-1, a 3-digit dialing number for people who want to volunteer or receive assistance ranging from food, shelter, clothing and mortgage or rent assistance to mental health counseling.

Volunteerism is especially important during a time when donations in general are declining. Many United Way corporate partners and their employees are doing what they can to make up for the shortfall, increasing both their commitment to volunteerism while actually increasing their contributions. For example, Eli Lilly and Co., General Mills, Inc., Kellogg Co. and Wells Fargo & Co. increased their overall campaign contributions anywhere from half a million to more than \$2.5 million additional dollars.

INNOVATIVE CHARITY MODELS

One of the newer charity models is the **Nurse-Family Partnership**, a 30-year-old Denver-based organization dedicated to helping young mothers during pregnancy through the first two years of the child's life. Each mother is partnered with a registered nurse who counsels her in healthy prenatal practices, including improving diets, reducing the use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal substances, and arranging regular doctor visits. Typically, the nurse visits occur between two and four times a month.

Two years ago, \$50 million in grants from five major foundations enabled the organization to vastly expand their services. NFP is currently serving clients in 28 states. Since 1996, they have served more than 94,000 families, and are currently serving more than 16,000 families on any given day.



A nurse from Nurse-Family Partnership makes a housecall to a first-time mom.

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and helping employees attain their personal and professional goals. Their code of conduct, called "10 Characteristics of Companies That Care," is designed to help companies fulfill their social responsibility objectives. The companies that meet all 10 characteristics are recognized annually on the Companies That Care Honor Roll.



All smiles at Lake Forest Graduate School of Management's "Saturn Health Break" event.

"Big companies typically have a corporate social responsibility staff, but small and mid-size companies don't—even though they have the same desire, if not more, to be involved in the community," explains Koblenz. "Unfortunately, they don't always have the resources to make it happen. We

make it easier for them to become more involved in their communities in a socially responsible way." One of their initiatives is a mentorship program called AIM High, which pairs inner-city high school students with corporate mentors. The goal of the program is to increase the percentage of Chicago public high school students who go on to graduate from college. Currently that is just six percent.

"One of our premier founding values as a company is that we want to give back to the communities that we do business with, but that is a challenge for a lot of organizations who want to remain as lean as possible," explains Loren Ahlgren, vice president of Enterprise Fleet Management, a division of Enterprise Rent-A-Car. "We are busy renting vehicles and yet we very much want to be involved in supporting the local communities we serve. Companies That Care helps us find ways to help."

Another organization on their Honor Roll is Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, a small nonprofit that promotes its culture and positive work environment in order to

attract top talent for its staff. Lake Forest participates in the AIM High mentorship program and in Companies That Care's Terrific Tales, a program where organizations donate books to local elementary schools. "Our mission is helping people improve their lives through education, so this is a perfect match for us," says Suzanne Coonan, vice president of human resources at Lake Forest Graduate School of Management. "Being involved with Companies That Care has not only made us better internally, but it has made us learn how to be more socially responsible to the external world. It is not just about us, it is about giving back to the broader community as well—and this is an easy way for us to get involved." ■

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