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Day of Service Event Provides Pro Bono Expertise for Nonprofits Volunteers Help Companies in Need

On Martin Luther King Day, a national day of service in the United States, representatives from five PMI chapters based in the Washington, D.C. area participated in a Project Management Day of Service (PMDoS) ScopeAthon to provide pro

bono project management services to nearly 100 nonprofit organizations. Led by Executive Director Kendall Lott, PMP, past chair of the PMI Washington, DC Chapter, the five chapters (representing more than 18,000 chapter members) chartered a Program Management Office

By the Numbers

100 nonprofits received pro bono project management services

400 project management volunteers donated their time and expertise

5 PMI chapters were involved



From left, Orlando Figueredo, vice president, federal services, Hewlett-Packard; Kendall Lott, PMP, executive director, PMDoS; Penny Pritzker, U.S. Secretary of Commerce; Liz Hamburg, CEO, Taproot Foundation; Laura Barnard, PMP, executive PMO director, PMDoS; Max Skolnik, executive director, Taproot Foundation; Georgia Gillette, vice president, corporate initiatives and lead catalyst, A Billion +Change.

(PMO) to manage this event in partnership with the Taproot Foundation, which links business talent to organizations working to improve society.

Mr. Lott said the ScopeAthon aimed to "give project managers the opportunity to provide their professional skills and their talents directly to nonprofits." U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker was a speaker at the event.

Often faced with tight budgets and limited resources, many nonprofits are in need of professional help in defining and scoping projects, project planning and overall strategy development. During the PMDoS ScopeAthon, dedicated volunteer

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project managers donated their time and specialized project management expertise to the organizations that are doing so much to improve the quality of life for individuals in and around the Washington metropolitan area. In each consultation session, PMI's project management subject matter experts met individually with representatives of the participating nonprofit companies to review prepared "problem statements," identify potential roadblocks, and create actionable, customized project plans to serve as blueprints for business sustainability.

It was an event of unprecedented scale. Nearly 100 nonprofits received pro bono project management services to help scope out critical problems. Four hundred project management volunteers from all five participating PMI chapters donated their time and effort to serve those who help others.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to offer project management services directly to nonprofit organizations on such an unprecedented scale," said Laura

Barnard, PMP, executive PMO director, PMDoS and vice president, marketing of the PMI Washington, DC Chapter. "It's especially fitting that this event took place on Martin Luther King Day, when many are reaching out and donating their time to others in need."

As experienced project professionals, Ms. Barnard and her colleagues have tasked themselves with dispelling the notion of the "accidental" project manager: "By making the Project Management Day of Service a reality, we hope to create a model that will help generate demand for similar outreach events around the world, and redefine project management as the 'intentional' profession."

Making a Difference and Getting! It! Done!

Ken Leslie, founder of VeteransMatter.org, had nothing but good things to say on his blog about PMDoS: "You know how on any kind of 'go help someone days,' companies go rake leaves to help people? Not these guys: They want to

have a permanent impact. What they are going to do is pick 200 nonprofits and then project managers of PMI will help the nonprofit [plan] a project that the nonprofit actually needs. How cool is that?! I want to work with them to help expand to other communities where they have chapters."

And reflecting on the effort to make this happen, Ms. Barnard noted the fact that the event was "run by an all-volunteer 40 person PMO with no funding (we did define a budget and then months later managed to come in WAY under budget), no clearly defined scope (initially) and not much more than a dream to raise the profile of the project management profession by making a difference in our local community. The event managed to get White House and U.S. Secretary of Commerce attention in its first year! That is the story of how Project Managers can Get. It. Done!"

Learn more about this event at www.pm-dos.net.

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