



2008 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 14, 2008

Complete this form and attach to your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one)

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Gol. V. E. Committee

Jurisdiction where program originated: Fishers, Indiana

Jurisdiction population: 66,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2007 to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia, September 2008. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Gary A. Hoff

Title: Town Manager Jurisdiction: Fishers, Indiana

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of person who should be contacted with questions regarding the nomination:

Sarah Bittman

Title of nominator: Communications Director Jurisdiction of nominator: Fishers, Indiana

Street address: One Municipal Drive

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The Town of Fishers' G.I.V.E. (Generosity, Involvement, and Volunteerism by Employees) committee was organized following a deadly tornado that swept through Southern Indiana in November 2005, killing 25 Hoosiers and devastating nearly 500 homes. At the time, it was the most devastating tornado in the United States in more than five years. The response from the community was swift and dramatic; the local Red Cross later stated that tornado financial donations and volunteer hours were among the highest in their memory.

Staff members of the Town of Fishers were among the many that wanted to help. To assist their Southern neighbors, staff quickly organized a raffle. Businesses, community members, and employees donated to the tune of \$2,000.

Since becoming Town Manager in March 2005, Gary A. Huff emphasized the importance of town employees giving back to the community. Not long before the Southern Indiana tornado, staff held a bake sale benefiting victims of Hurricane Katrina. Huff realized that while employees were embracing his philosophy of giving back, the efforts needed organization. There was no umbrella agency to respond to tragic events, identify local charitable causes and broadcast information across the Town. Huff suggested that employees form a committee that fostered partnership with community charitable groups; soon after, G.I.V.E. was established.

G.I.V.E.'s acronym speaks for itself: Employees generously volunteer their time and energy by getting directly involved in community partnership, outreach, and support. Prior to the 2005 tornado, many employees were volunteering time and resources but they had no infrastructure in place to tap into the assistance of more than 350 co-workers. Without inter-department communication and organization, many charitable events were

limited to just a few employees in one department. The establishment of G.I.V.E. allowed employees to reach out to the entire network of Town staff and community members; thus increasing the potential participants and impact of their efforts.

In order for the program to truly benefit the community, G.I.V.E. knew it was essential to get input from all town staff. The group recruited all levels of staff members, from laborers to executive management. It made representation from each department in the Town a priority. The committee decided to meet monthly to plan structured charitable involvement such as fundraising and food drives. But if a disaster or emergency occurred, the committee would mobilize quickly to respond.

Implementation costs were minimal due to the existing infrastructure of employees and low start-up fees. The committee purchased items for events such as plastic containers for food drives, obstacle courses for festivals, and pizza parties for prize-winners. To offset significant expenses, the committee would partner with businesses and community groups for sponsorships.

Since its inception, the G.I.V.E. committee has seen tangible results from its partnerships with charitable groups. The committee has donated time and resources to a variety of charitable organizations both in the community and nation-wide.

G.I.V.E. assists the Fishers Police Department in its annual Catch and Release program where police officers identify troubled youth and mentor them through fishing outings throughout the summer. The committee sponsors the event by purchasing tackle boxes and fishing supplies for the participants.

One successful fundraising effort capitalizes on the Town's well-attended summer festival celebrating Independence Day. The committee sponsors a popular children's

obstacle course. Proceeds from the event are used to sponsor local children suffering from illnesses and injuries.

The committee regularly conducts food drives to benefit local food pantries. One year, donations equaled \$4,000 of non-perishables.

The committee assisted the Make a Wish Foundation in their annual Walk-for-Wishes event that raised \$53,000 in 2006 and \$80,000 in 2007. Held at the Town Hall Complex, the event raises money for children with life-threatening illnesses.

During the holiday season, the G.I.V.E. committee sponsors needy children throughout the community. In 2007, the committee collected 12 bins of toys and \$500 for local children. It also gathered food items for World Hope, a charitable group that serves needy children throughout the world.

G.I.V.E. took advantage of the Indianapolis Colts popularity during the Super Bowl season by allowing employees to pay to wear jeans and Colts gear to work. The proceeds of the effort helped support Chaucie's Place, a facility that provides a child-friendly, home-like environment where a single, comprehensive investigative interview can take place in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect.

To support the Hamilton County Healthy Families organization, the Town sponsored a pie-in-the-face tournament. Employees purchased tickets and bought the right to throw pies in their supervisor's faces. The event raised more than \$700 for the organization.

G.I.V.E. has been very successful in organizing blood drives several times throughout the year in partnership with the Indiana Blood Center; to date, donations by town staff and community members have impacted over 1,000 lives.

Since its inception, the G.I.V.E. committee experienced both challenges and successes. Many committee members point to the sense of accomplishment they feel when an initiative is finished successfully and the disappointment they experience if an effort does not succeed. These feelings reflect G.I.V.E. members' drive and desire to give back to the community they love.

Through the organization of various fundraisers and charitable events, the G.I.V.E. committee has the opportunity to experiment with motivational strategies and approaches. One successful strategy is to create friendly competition by breaking up into groups or teams and offering small prizes to winning groups. By combining competition and rewards, the committee sees greater results in its efforts. Initiatives that involve group collaboration are consistently more effective than individual efforts—an approach that goes to the heart of G.I.V.E.

The committee exposes town staff to the important lessons of organization, event planning, and team dynamics. Some committee member's job requirements prevent them from working in teams to complete initiatives. As an alternative, the G.I.V.E. experience helps to expand their professional aptitude and level of service to the Town.

By allowing employees to work collaboratively, not only does the committee see greater results for its individual efforts, but the town also sees greater teamwork across departments. The organizational structure of G.I.V.E. fosters communication between all levels of employment. Committee members say they have a better understanding of the activities of their co-workers. Improved communication allows for improved efficiency in operations and improved services to Town residents.

Committee members claim they not only have a better understanding of how their town government operates, but also have a much better understanding of their community's needs. While Fishers, Indiana is affluent compared to other communities in the state, G.I.V.E. realizes there are still many charitable causes that need supporting. Within the community are needy families, children that have suffered abuse and neglect, and individuals suffering from life-threatening injuries.

G.I.V.E. members know that as town employees, they have the ability to greatly improve residents' quality of life through the services the Town provides. Through G.I.V.E. they realize employees can do even more than their jobs require.

One G.I.V.E. member who works as a public works inspector said, "Many times even our smallest efforts make a difference and the point is that anything we can do whether great or small still matters and adds up."

G.I.V.E.'s volunteers know just that as they continue to strive to provide quality service to their neighbors and friends, not only in their work as municipal employees, but through small amounts of Generosity and Involvement.