



Gifts that keep on giving

ASWB's Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team unites staff, strengthens community

Candidate Services Representative Tessa Jones is enthusiastic about ASWB's Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team. "I love it! I'm a people person—giving and doing things to help people is something that I really enjoy." Jones served as chair of the team in 2015, leading ASWB's efforts to support community activities in Culpeper and the surrounding area.

Originally created in 2013, the Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team comprises ASWB employees from throughout the organization, putting the decision-making for community activities in the hands of the employees who live and work there. "We want to benefit our area," Jones says, by supporting nonprofits that make the region a better place to live and work. In 2015, the team supported numerous community agencies, including Hospice of the Piedmont, the Culpeper County Public Library, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, and Services to Abused Families (SAFE), the regional domestic violence agency.

With an annual budget of \$6,200 to distribute last year, the team takes its work very seriously. "We want to make sure we're doing the best we can with the time and resources we have," Jones says. The group meets monthly, reviewing requests from

employees, regional nonprofits, and team members themselves. Often, ASWB's support comes with more than just a financial donation. Bowling for Seniors, an annual community event to support regional services to the aging, drew five ASWB bowling teams made up of employees and their families. The teams enjoyed an afternoon of bowling and socializing for a good cause. These events "are a chance for employees and families to get together," Jones says. "You get to meet people you don't ordinarily meet," including staff members from different departments.

That interaction, whether it comes through an afternoon of bowling, walking together in the Relay for Life, or shopping for low-income seniors through the community Angel Tree, is key to ASWB's efforts to maintain a cohesive organizational culture. With more than 40 employees divided among four different buildings, ASWB has seen a great deal of growth since the Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team was formed. By working on this cross-departmental team, ASWB staff enhance their working relationships and strengthen the organization's operations.

Because of her work on the team—the due diligence done on requests, conversations with her coworkers about what the community



ASWB Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team members Tessa Jones (chair), Sylvia Christian, and Cindy Grotz. Other team members include Jessica Johnson and Pat Olinger, liaison.

needs—Jones took additional steps this year to make ASWB’s philanthropy known within the association. Culpeper is home to an annual event known as Pamper Me Pink, which promotes breast cancer awareness and raises funds to provide mammograms for women in the community. When ASWB contributed to the event in October, Jones went the extra mile to provide information in the office reception area about breast cancer and ASWB’s role in Pamper Me Pink, complete with a photo of the team in a bright pink frame. Likewise, when ASWB contributed to SAFE, the local domestic abuse agency, Jones made sure that ASWB staff had access to information about SAFE and about domestic violence in general.

The association is well served by the work that the Philanthropy and Social Affairs Team does. Not only does work in the local community make ASWB more visible to potential staff, but by supporting local organizations, ASWB strengthens the community where its employees live and work. “By giving locally, ASWB can build a healthier community for our employees, while also demonstrating the core values of the social work profession,” says CEO Mary Jo Monahan.