

BCBSA IMPACT REPORT 2023

OVERVIEW:

Over 200 Blue Cross Blue Shield Association employees volunteered for a Volunteer Day of Service in the D.C. metro region on October 10th. Volunteer Fairfax's BusinessLink team worked with 8 different nonprofits to develop a variety of service projects for these employees to be doing in 7 different locations. These projects spanned over 3 hours and dealt with food insecurity, beautification, gardening, youth and education, and a therapeutic riding farm. All volunteers met at Blue Cross Blue Shield Association headquarters in D.C. before being bussed out to their chosen projects.



ANTHONY BOWEN YMCA

Description: Volunteers working at the YMCA split into groups and tackled an assortment of tasks throughout the building. Volunteers baked and decorated pink cupcakes to hand out to visitors for breast cancer awareness month, revamped children's rooms and supply closets, painted sustainability and chalkboard murals, and built two standing planters for the front of the building.

Impact: The YMCA offers a wide range of programs for DC residents, one of which is their kids camp program which hosts nearly 1,000 kids throughout the year. The volunteers' hard work cleaning and reorganizing all three rooms that house the children for camp and other activities will give these kids a comfortable and inviting space to flourish. Additionally, the other beautification work the volunteers completed contributes to the functionality of the building and overall pride in it.



BREAD FOR THE CITY

Description: The BCBSA volunteers split into two groups and one group helped Bread for the City clients with an in-person shopping experience which includes shopping, bagging groceries, and restocking the pantry. The other group contributed by packing orders for Bread for the City's meal delivery service. The delivery service helps provide food for people that are not able to travel or leave their house.

Impact: Bread for the City is committed to treating their clients with the dignity and respect that all people deserve. They do this through providing many services (one of which being the food services described above). As a result of the BCBSA volunteers' work, Bread for the City had more hands for the restocking and packaging of the food. Because they had more people helping than just their staff, more food was able to be sent out and restocked than normal. Overall, there was an increase in quantity and productivity of how much food was given out, thanks to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association volunteers.



BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Description: Volunteers worked to put together 750 food bags with a handwritten note inside and 6 nutritious items for students on food assistance.

Impact: Many kids who are on free or reduced lunch programs during the week at school rely on organizations such as Blessings in a Backpack to provide food for them on the weekends. BCBSA's volunteers gave their time and effort to packing 750 bags of food to ensure that kids do not have to go hungry this school year. By providing a child with enough food to eat over the weekend and a handwritten note, each child receiving this bag is getting the message that they are valued and cared for. According to Blessings in a Backpack's surveys, kids who no longer have to go hungry on the weekends find it easier to learn at school, stay out of trouble, and feel cared for by their community. With the help of BCBSA volunteers, Blessings will continue to have the capacity to provide those food bags for students.



CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK

Description: Volunteers lended a hand to Capital Area Food Bank's Senior Bag Program by packaging food bags to be distributed monthly to senior centers and housing facilities. Volunteers also sorted and gleaned 1,200 apples to be stored and given out at Capital Area Food Bank.

Impact: Senior citizen hunger is a pressing issue in the United States. By making these nutritious food bags for the Senior Bag Program, centers receiving this food will be better resourced to serve their residents. Additionally, according to Capital Area Food Bank, the work these volunteers put in sorting and packaging food contributes to the yearly 60,000 hours of 'sweat equity' calculated which saves CAFB \$1,200,000 in personal costs and allows them to serve over 2 million meals to the neighbors of the DC community.



LIFT ME UP!

Description: Volunteers did grounds beautification, planting along the side of the barn, and grass maintenance by mowing and cutting back overgrowth. They also cleaned a horse stall by power washing and dry vacuuming. In addition, they cleaned all the buckets used to feed all the horses. Lastly, volunteers created a new rock driveway beside the old smaller barn.

Impact: As a result of all the hard work the volunteers put in, LiftMeUp! is able to maintain and utilize their barn and riding circle better. Due to the volunteers providing some assistance and care to the physical property of the barn, the staff will be able to direct more of their attention and effort to their horses and riders. The work that was done also makes the facility more welcoming and open to individuals who want to come ride.



MARTHA'S TABLE

Description: BCBSA Volunteers made about 1,000 sandwiches which will all be given out to individuals in the Washington D.C. region experiencing hunger and/or housing insecurity. The sandwiches were made with jelly and almond butter in order to be more widely distributed, in case people have allergies.

Impact: The 1000 sandwiches were given to McKenna's Wagon program which is a program within Martha's Table that distributes sandwiches and snack packs to people 365 days a year as a strive to end hunger. Many people in the D.C. community rely on these sandwiches as an option for their next meal. By receiving a sandwich, this allows D.C. residents to feel cared for and a part of their community, not just living within it.



SMYAL

Description: Volunteers packaged 300 toiletry kits filled with 7 hygiene products for the LGBTQ youth within the D.C. region. Each kit also included a handwritten note of encouragement.

Impact: LGBTQ youth are disproportionately homeless, disadvantaged, and under-resourced compared to non-LGBTQ youth. SMYAL strives to create opportunities for LGBTQ youth to build confidence, develop critical life skills, and engage with their community. Volunteers contributed to this mission by making these toiletry kits as a way to not only give a resource, but also to show them that they are cared for and matter. LGBTQ youth can often feel cast aside and vulnerable, giving them the basic necessities can help these youths feel empowered and resourced.



WASHINGTON YOUTH GARDENS

Description: BCBSA volunteers worked hard to garden and clean out the Washington Youth Gardens. They weeded, covered beds and flowers with protective materials, cleaned vines and overgrowth off the fences, and helped with other general maintenance of the garden. Additionally, volunteers picked pumpkins to make a pumpkin patch and cleared paths for their upcoming fall festival.

Impact: Because of the work the BCBSA volunteers completed, families of the D.C. region will get to continue to come back to the beautiful gardens and get to experience the many programs they have. The gardens connect families and children to where their food comes from and allows for learning about healthy communities and how food grows. The work that the volunteers put in helps keep these programs alive and with the overall maintenance of the garden. Additionally, the gardens will now be fully protected during the winter and will be ready for the springtime!





SUMMARY:

According to the Independent Sector, and the Do Good Institute, the estimated value of volunteer work, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's volunteers have an estimated value of \$2,150.94 for the projects done in Virginia, and \$30,600 for the projects done in Washington D.C. Additionally, 8 different nonprofits benefitted from the work of BCBSA volunteers and will be able to keep fulfilling their mission of servicing the community around them.