

CASE STUDY



Community Giveback Program Supports Bay Area Nonprofits

The Situation

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC) to shut its doors in the spring of 2020, staff were stunned—and worried. The nonprofit, which is based in Oakland, California, but serves the entire San Francisco Bay Area, helps children and their families recover from trauma through community-based services, including counseling, youth empowerment programs, and a therapeutic nursery school.

“For a couple of weeks, we were in shock. Then we started sourcing masks, supplies and equipment so we could disinfect our buildings and keep our facilities safe,” said Operations Manager Debbie Christou. “I heard about electrostatic sprayers and decided I wanted one, but so did everyone else. I was three weeks too late.”

Christou contacted some local companies to request bids for cleaning and disinfecting services. The responses she received were disheartening.

“What they were bidding was crazy money. I thought, ‘You’ve got to be kidding,’” Christou said. “They were charging that much because they could.”

Finally, Christou reached out to her fellow members of the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) and asked if anyone knew how she could get an electrostatic sprayer. Thomas Holland, CEO of APEX Surface Care, responded and offered to disinfect the organization’s facilities at no cost through APEX’s Community Giveback Program.



“The technicians were very professional, very helpful and very friendly. I can’t express how appreciative we were that this opportunity arose.”

The Solution

APEX established the Community Giveback Program in March after a Fortune 50 company headquartered in Northern California committed to paying for its contracted building maintenance services even though the company's offices were closed due to the pandemic. Instead of investing the generous gift for later use, APEX decided to invest in its employees and the communities in which they live and work.

Through the Community Giveback Program, APEX provides cleaning and disinfecting services to nonprofits that support women and children in crisis as well as the homeless. Besides supporting organizations in need, the program allows APEX to keep its employees working and offer additional training opportunities.

Many of EBAC's programs transitioned to virtual models. The organization offered therapy sessions by phone and video, and grief support groups met via Zoom. But EBAC staff still needed to be able to access their offices to ensure the continuation of these much-needed services. Thanks to APEX's Community Giveback Program, EBAC's facilities were kept safe and healthy.

"Honestly, it was the best thing since sliced bread," said Christou. "The technicians were very professional, very helpful and very friendly. I can't express how appreciative we were that this opportunity arose."



The Results

Since March, about a dozen nonprofits have benefited from the Community Giveback Program. This includes St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, which provides shelter, job training and other assistance to those in need in the Oakland area. The organization serves 600 meals a day and provides shelter for up to 90 homeless people each night.

"About six APEX staff came to St. Vincent de Paul for about three weeks at the beginning of the lockdown and helped us make the transition and filled in for our volunteers at a time when we were not even sure we would be able to remain open," said Facility Manager Amando Corpus. "They really saved us."

The Community Giveback Program has become a permanent part of APEX's social mission. The company has vowed to provide 1,000 man-hours per year of pro bono cleaning and disinfecting services for women and children crisis centers, homeless shelters, and other nonprofit organizations in the communities it serves.



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