

# Westin gives back to the community

As one of Edmonton's top hotels, the Westin is not only a leader in hospitality services, but in community involvement, as well.



ties within the workplace is not only a convenient way for staff to give back in a meaningful way, but it is also a great way

for employers to enhance staff engagement."

Through the hotel's involvement with the Operation Friendship Senior Society, staff members are encouraged to volunteer their time to help make Christmas stockings.

For the past 18 years, the hotel has been providing the non-profit organization with stockings filled with toiletries and other necessities to give to inner city seniors.

"Volunteers cut out the stockings, decorate them, stuff them with goodies and deliver them to the seniors at

the lodges around the city," Lovell says.

While that event is embraced by staff, many noted that they wanted to do something else outside the holiday season.

"We did an employee survey and found

## DOWNTOWN HOTEL SHOWS TRUE SPIRIT

that many of our staff mentioned that there was more we could be involved in," Lovell says.

The survey responses prompted discussions with staff to determine what kinds of charitable events and projects to undertake. In July 2008, the hotel launched a new initiative where each month would be devoted to a charity or cause spearheaded by one of the hotel's departments.

In the summer, the banquet department helped set up a free barbecue to serve lunch to the seniors at Operation Friendship Senior Society while the accounting department organized a fundraiser for WIN House.

Cheryl Pasioka, director of human resources, attributes the success of the Westin's community involvement programs to communicating with staff, and being flexible and open to new ideas.

The process is very simple, says Pasioka. "When it comes time for a department to choose their charity or activity, they come up with the idea and tell us. From there, they are responsible for organizing and advertising the event to staff."

The staff is also given time to devote to the project during work hours.

"It's about getting people involved in whatever way they can," Pasioka emphasizes.

She notes that there are few requirements for staff to become involved.

"We certainly don't make it a mandatory requirement or ask that they volunteer a minimum amount of time. It wouldn't feel genuine if we did."

While most corporations with a community involvement program promote their good deeds in the media, the Westin keeps a relatively low profile when it comes to showcasing their numerous accomplishments.

"We never really thought about telling people," Lovell chuckles. "It's something that we just do. We see needs and try to meet them, and our staff is happy to help in whatever way they can."

To learn more about the Westin Hotel, visit [www.thewestinedmonton.com](http://www.thewestinedmonton.com).

For more information or suggestions for story ideas please contact Evelyn Pham, communications coordinator at [epham@volunteeredmonton.com](mailto:epham@volunteeredmonton.com).

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Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton, believes a community involvement program is a win-win situation for both the employer, the employee and certainly our city as a whole.

"We often hear that one of the barriers to volunteering for many people is lack of time. Incorporating volunteer opportuni-



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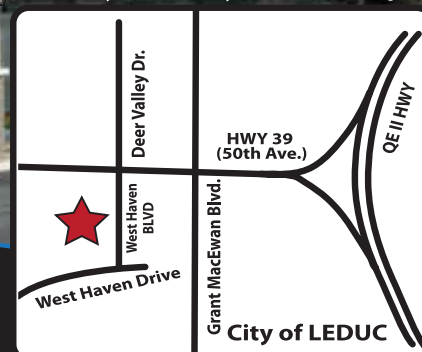


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