

Employee Volunteerism Spreads Holiday Cheer

Music, decorations and sugary treats help many people feel the holiday spirit, but some Avnet employees chose to spread holiday cheer by volunteering their time to help people in need.

On Christmas morning, several employees from Avnet Electronics Marketing's (EM) Milpitas, Calif., branch got up early to join representatives from Arrow and Caltron Components in preparing pancakes, eggs and coffee for the homeless. "My manager, Brian Hill, and his wife; Victoria Koehler and her sons and I each cook about 10 dozen eggs," says Linda Garcia, the sales and marketing representative who helps organize the effort. "It has become a competition to see who cooks the tastiest eggs."

A tradition for the past five years, the Christmas morning breakfasts at St. James Park also include distribution of goodie bags filled with toiletries, as well as slightly used warm clothing. "Employees save coats, blankets, gloves and other items throughout the year to donate," says Linda.

In Kansas City, Kan., four employees helped SafeHome – a shelter for abused women and children – set up and operate a holiday store so they could purchase gifts for each other. "Seeing the emotion of the women who were safe for the first time in a long time, as well as their gratitude at having the ability to have presents for their children during this emotional rollercoaster was very inspiring," says Pat Gilling, administrative assistant. "After being this involved and seeing the effect it has on these women and children, you only want to give more of your time to this cause."

Employees in Woodland Hills, Calif., lent a hand in a similar way – organizing the storage shed that holds holiday items for Ventura County Children's Services Auxiliary. They also volunteered at the Auxiliary's annual Christmas party, running games and participating in other festive activities, and donated \$2,000 worth of gift cards. Their efforts resulted in a commendation from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors.

And for the fourth year in a row, Avnet teamed with the Arizona Corporate Broadcast Center, Modavox and On Scene Productions to help military families record free five-minute video messages for their loved ones serving overseas. "Avnet appreciates the service Arizona troops have given our country – connecting them with their families during the holidays is one small way to show our support," says Michelle Gorel, vice president of public relations.

Each family received a DVD with the video message, as well as an individual link for sharing the video with anyone else who might want to view the message.