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## Contributing to the communities they serve

By Mary K. Pratt

CEO Rob Hale had the typical entrepreneurial ambition to build a strong company when he started his business, Granite Telecommunications LLC, 11 years ago.

But, from the start, Hale also wanted to contribute to the community. He made good on that goal soon after starting his Quincy-based company by starting a benefit for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Now the company's biggest event, the annual Granite Day Carnival to benefit Dana-Farber, celebrated its 10th anniversary this past June. This year's event raised almost \$500,000.

Hale said he sees giving back as an expectation he's happy to fulfill. "Being active in our community is part of who we are," he said.



CEO Rob Hale greets a youngster at the annual Granite Day Carnival to benefit Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The company pays for the annual carnival, inviting workers, their families and Quincy schoolchildren to attend for free. Any donations attendees give go to Dana-Farber, as do sponsorships made by Granite's vendors. Hale contributes to Dana-Farber because his late father was treated for pancreatic cancer there.

Locally, many business leaders remain committed to their philanthropic pursuits.

Eastern Bank supports organizations that provide basics such as housing, employment, education and food.

"We have a very long and rich history of wanting to help build our community. We really look at that as part of our responsibility," said Nancy Stager, executive vice president of human resources and charitable giving.

Cambridge-based Genzyme Corp. has a similar take on giving. "Giving back to the community is part of our culture and history, and we see it as part of our responsibility," said Genzyme spokeswoman Caren Arnstein.

Genzyme focuses its grants and sponsorships on science education, access to health care and any unmet community needs.

The law firm of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo focuses much of its giving and its pro bono work around domestic violence and sexual assault issues.

Although the Boston firm gives money to other charitable pursuits, the leadership there believes that focusing on one area can help it make a bigger impact, said Sue Finegan, partner and chair of the Pro Bono Committee.

“There was a realization that if you could donate not just intellectual capital but also money, you could really make a difference over time. It’s a multiplier effect,” she said, noting that over the past few decades the firm has moved beyond representing victims in court to also advocating for related legislation and working with advocacy groups.

Financial giant State Street Corp. likewise sees an ability to affect change through targeted efforts. State Street seeks to support education and workforce development initiatives through its foundation.

Joe McGrail, COO of the State Street Foundation, said State Street sees the donations it makes through the 36-year-old foundation as “investments” more than just checks to be spent.

“We’re looking for strong partners in that area who will help economically disadvantaged populations,” he said, adding that the foundation supports organizations, including Year Up and City Year, each year with annual grants running from \$15,000 to six figures.

Boston-based New Balance’s foundation supports nonprofit organizations with annual grants and select multiyear grants, said Megan Bloch, the charitable programs manager.

The foundation supports approximately 65 organizations and focuses on working toward the prevention of childhood obesity.

“We believe in partnerships that are long-standing and sustainable so we are able to have the greatest impact on children and families,” Bloch said.