



volunteer **efforts** that change our world

Investing in community

Have the highly publicized scandals and bailouts involving the banking industry in recent years left you cynical? There's an antidote for that. It's found among those financial institutions that are thriving and sharing their success with the communities they serve. Case in point: The LaPorte Savings Bank.

Established in 1871 and headquartered in LaPorte, Indiana, The LaPorte Savings Bank (LPSB) has just under \$500 million in assets and 112 total employees in eight locations. It has been traded on the Nasdaq since 2007, but its spirit is firmly entrenched at home. You'll find LPSB people and resources at the local hospital, Habitat for Humanity building sites, university, community celebrations, arts venues, nonprofit fundraisers, and more.

In part, it's because those who lead LPSB believe it's the right thing to do, but "it's also good business," says Bank President Michele Thompson. "The banking industry has addressed the need to invest in our communities through the Community Reinvestment Act; however, many banks choose to go well beyond what's expected through this regulation. To me, the reasons are obvious: For a business to thrive, its community needs to thrive. Because we serve the public directly, the people who use our services are also those who use community resources like the YMCA, the hospital, and our schools. It just makes sense that we should invest time, talent, and financial resources in areas that significantly impact our customers' and employees' quality of life."

It's one thing to say this, but another to implement it. For example, how does a business like LPSB choose its philanthropies? How does it balance "good works" with profitability? Marketing Manager Liz Kaminski answers, "Certainly, it's a challenge. We weigh the hard and soft dollar costs and try to find a good balance. We include a specific line item in our budget each year for hard dollar donations and monitor it monthly as requests are approved. In particular, we seek to make an impact on economic development, education, and access to health care, which are three critical areas for a vital community."



Helping hands. Senior management staff from The LaPorte Savings Bank pause from their work on a Habitat for Humanity house in Michigan City, Indiana.

As a result, the bank is a major donor to the area economic development commission, and participates in a community development corporation working to drive economic growth. It has long supported the Indiana University Health LaPorte Hospital Foundation and contributes to health care-related nonprofits on behalf of its customers in lieu of holiday gifts each year. In addition, it has endowed a scholarship at Purdue University North Central and supports local schools through volunteerism, donations, and event sponsorships.

LPSB expects its management team members to be actively involved in community nonprofits and is flexible in providing time to do so. Several volunteer to serve on boards, teach Junior Achievement, and get involved in the local radio station's annual Roof Sit to raise money for children in need.

And it's not just managers who get paid leave to do good work in the community. For example, the bank identifies dates when

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employees can work at a Habitat for Humanity site rather than in the office and still be paid for the day (with the bank picking up lunch for all workers). Many employees are inspired to return on their own time.

“Our employees are proud of what we do and it’s clear they enjoy opportunities to support our community,” says Deb Varnak, senior vice president, human resources. “They often give examples of positive comments they’ve heard from customers or friends about our efforts. In addition to signing up for company-supported programs, they organize fundraisers

like bake sales and raffles for events such as Relay for Life, and get their friends and neighbors involved. And we all find it rewarding to interact with our customers in settings that we help underwrite as well as in banking settings.”

LPSB’s employees also give generously to United Way, making the bank one of the top 15 companies in the organization’s local campaign. The bank makes a corporate contribution as well.

So what do customers say? “We often hear, ‘I see the bank everywhere,’ and we love that,” says Varnak.

Call for Nominations

Do you engage in a volunteer activity you would like to see in *Creative Living*?

“Good Works”

highlights the philanthropic and unpaid efforts of

Northwestern Mutual clients like The LaPorte Savings Bank, whose Financial Representative is Tom Armstrong of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and other members of the **Northwestern Mutual** family, such as Richard Worrell of Charlotte, North Carolina.

To suggest a candidate for this column, please contact your Financial Representative or *Creative Living* editor Catherine O’Neill Grace at cgrace@tmgcustommedia.com.

Sharing the love

It has been said that a parent’s love for a child can move mountains. For Richard Worrell, managing director of Northwestern Mutual Financial Network – Charlotte, the love he has for his son is moving mountains for others as well, through Easter Seals United Cerebral Palsy (ESUCP) of North Carolina and Virginia.

Richard and Alanna Worrell began their relationship with ESUCP as parents seeking the best services for their child, Little Rich, who has special needs. As Little Rich gained in his abilities through the Charlotte Children’s Development Center operated by Easter Seals, the couple has grown more passionate in their support of the organization and its mission.

“Easter Seals is about helping children and adults with disabilities maximize their potential and make the most of their lives,” Worrell says. “The effort that Little Rich and his classmates put out to be the best they can be in every way is incredible.”

To help these children make the most of their efforts, Worrell is striving to make the facility and the organization even better. As chair of the Charlotte Development Advisory Board and member of the ESUCP State Board’s Development Committee, he is a key advisor on mission-driven fundraising and volunteerism. He has also engaged Northwestern Mutual colleagues and other supporters throughout North Carolina and around the country to support ESUCP.

Worrell is spearheading a campaign to raise \$250,000 to construct a state-of-the-art multisensory environment (MSE) at Little Rich’s former school. (Little Rich entered first grade in a traditional school system this past fall.) MSEs provide a rich array of pleasant, controllable sensory experiences for youngsters whose conditions render normal daily sensory input either overwhelming or inadequate. They are designed to enhance auditory, sensory, visual, and tactile development for children of all abilities.

“Easter Seals UCP helps hundreds of families and children overcome obstacles every day,” says Worrell. “The MSE will help us further our mission to create opportunities and choices for them.”

For more information, go to nc.eastersealsucp.com. To watch a video about Little Rich Worrell, go to youtube.com and search for “Northwestern Mutual Richard Worrell.”



Amy Korpi is managing editor of *Creative Living*.