

Cargill volunteers leave lasting impressions

Nearly 150 Information Technology leaders from Cargill Inc. spent a day at Opportunity Partners in Minnetonka and Plymouth planting, painting and cleaning the buildings and grounds, inside and out.

The Cargill volunteers came largely from North America for an IT conference and team building experience. There were also several employees who traveled from Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Brazil, and China to participate in the conference. None of them knew in advance what their day of service held for them. When they boarded their buses that evening they were covered in paint, mud and weary smiles. They left behind contributions of labor and supplies totaling nearly \$45,000, including a new Opportunity Partners sign for the east side of the Minnetonka building.

The Cargill IT professionals had gathered in the Twin Cities for four days to concentrate on building skills in areas of leadership, management, innovation and community service. Cargill has held similar meetings throughout the world, and a day of service is always an important component, according to organizers. In fact, community enrichment is one of Cargill's primary goals.

Volunteer projects at Opportunity Partners included painting, landscaping grounds and gardens, assisting in classrooms, assembling new shelving, general cleaning, and washing and detailing Opportunity Partners vans.

Thad Standley, Cargill organizational development specialist, was instrumental in planning the day with Opportunity Partners. "We wanted a project that could allow our Information Technology leaders to increase their customer focus, high performance and team building skills. At the same time, we wanted the opportunity to push them outside their comfort zone and to expose them to an organization they may not have worked with before."

The event was arranged through the Greater Twin Cities United Way's Caring Connection, a volunteer program that matches groups with volunteer projects across the nine-county metro area.



"The effort and teamwork displayed by the Cargill employees was outstanding. The beautiful gardens, freshly painted walls and many other improvements could not have been accomplished without Cargill's help."

Brigid McSherry-Scherer, Opportunity Partners director of Volunteer Services

