

2013 Newspaper Awards: The Environment Award

Guardian News and Media Ltd.



GNM's Volunteering Week - integrate, support, collaborate.

Background

Our commitment to sustainable development and responsible business practice is a crucial expression of how we live up to our core values.

Guardian News and Media has a long term goal of being carbon positive¹. This means that in addition to reducing our negative operational impacts, we will strive to deliver positive social and commercial value.

We are committed to our local communities and have developed a series of community partnerships with local organisations to deliver social and economic improvements in our neighbourhoods. Our community program works because the projects in which we have become involved are mutually beneficial for the local community and us.

Volunteering Week enables staff to integrate into the local community and to support our partners, leading to more creative collaborations.

The Guardian and the Environment

Our editorial values have always championed environmental awareness, but we have been thinking increasingly about living our values in our operations.

In 2012 our print sites reduced their carbon emissions by 9%², and we purchase 98% of our newsprint from sustainable sources³. We have also been sharing our knowledge and understanding of the impacts of digital media. Leading the way as the first media company to produce a full year's carbon footprint of our website www.guardian.co.uk based on actual use⁴.

The Guardian and The Community

Our Community Programme⁵ is centred around inclusion and diversity. Now in its tenth year, it works by supporting the different groups within our local communities: schools, youth, the elderly as well as various Inclusion & Environment groups.

One community partner explains: *"really most charities around here have some relationship with the Guardian. They're just really open"*.

An evaluation⁶ of our Community Programme conducted earlier this year found that it demonstrated the most successful of our partnerships are those in which our volunteers collaborate with departments across the business and utilise their professional skills. GNM's Volunteering Week provides an annual opportunity for staff across our company to engage with all of our Community Projects, offering their skills from across the organisation.

¹ <http://www.newstech.co.uk/index.php/green-challenge/35-green-challenge/339-gnm-makes-a-positive-impact>

² <http://www.printweek.com/news/1156121/Guardian-Print-Centres-reduce-emissions-9/>

³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-report-2012-overview-footprint>

⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-report-2012-digital-carbon-footprint>

⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-report-2012-community-introduction>

⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-report-2012-community-monitoring-evaluation>

Volunteering Week 2012

Volunteering Week, now in its second year, is fast becoming a tradition at GNM. 2012's event ran from 17-21 September. Throughout the event, 164 GNM volunteers joined 12 community partners⁷ across our locations in King's Cross, Stratford and Manchester to deliver 16 projects in the space of a week.

Highlights included:

- **Global Generation:** Guardian staff and school pupils worked together to create furniture from reclaimed materials at a 'skip garden'⁸
- **Live Magazine:** our Editor-In Chief headed up a training seminar on "The Future of Journalism"⁹
- **Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School:** we developed the "Leading For Good" skills program for pupils
- **Islington Mill Manchester:** we renovated the band rehearsal rooms used by the local community
- **HMP Pentonville:** through a series of media and skills workshops we inspired inmates to produce their own newsletters and blogs.
- We Investigated the viability of a market stall for **New Horizons Youth Centre**¹⁰
- **Carpenters Primary School:** our Print Centre staff worked on the school's Olympic Garden¹¹

The week complements our ongoing Community Partnering Programme, in which staff volunteer during lunch time and can apply for two days volunteering leave each year. Volunteering week is an important recruitment vehicle for the ongoing community partnering programme, 75% of staff had not previously volunteered and we have designed each project with longevity in mind.

Each project was tailored to the specific needs of its community partner and managed by dedicated Project and Media Managers. Each Project Manager had internal support from a Project Sponsor - typically one of our Executive Board Members or a Director. In this way, we secured broad participation and ensured that our Volunteering Program had buy-in across all levels of the organisation.

We used our media strengths to ensure that our internal and external communications were engaging new input in the projects and raising awareness of our work. This proved key to the success and recognition of the projects.

During Volunteering Week, we engaged artists to illustrate project progress live in our communal areas at Kings Place, they produced a 2m high illustration for each day.

We also produced a video of the week¹², and our websites ran editorial coverage of the events.¹³

⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-report-2012-community-partners-overview>

⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/volunteering-week-london-wildlife>

⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/community-action-blog/2012/sep/20/volunteering-week-future-journalism-guardian>

¹⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/volunteering-week-new-horizons>

¹¹ <http://www.carpenters.newham.sch.uk/documents/newsletters/2012-Sept21.pdf>

¹² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainability/video/volunteering-week-2012-video>

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/2012/sep/17/guardian-volunteering-week>

Volunteering Week - The Impact

“The week really opened people’s eye to what was possible when you collaborate across the business and share your skills with your local community.” Volunteer

“I found it invaluable in meeting people across the company that I've never had interaction with, this kind of activity helps with cross comms and making you more aware of the departments, work going on here and general awareness of GNM.”

“It was wonderful to spend time with the kids. I hope they got out of it as much as I did.”

Our staff and partners really saw the development opportunities:

“Being a project manager for Volunteering Week has been a fantastic experience and has helped me further develop some crucial project management skills.”

Indeed we were overwhelmed by some of the responses from our partners, a young worker from Live Magazine reflected about her future of journalism day:

“From originally thinking of the day as merely a part of the Guardian's volunteer week, while also gaining some information for myself, nothing would have ever prepared me for what was one of the best days of my life, on a professional and personal level.”

“The commitment given by the Guardian volunteers was outstanding. The amount of work produced in one day was phenomenal and probably amounted to weeks of work. Overall an excellent project and I’m really looking forward to seeing the new website going live.” Community Partner

“It is excellent to see the Guardian through its Volunteering Week championing the need for professionals to give their time and I have no doubt this will encourage more skilled people to get involved in local charities.”

Charities Minister, Nick Hurd¹³

Most importantly, an event like volunteering week should be judged on it’s long-term impacts, both for our partners and our business.

Assistant Head Master of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School told us:

“It was expressed to me at the end of the volunteering day that some of the participants felt that other pupils should be able to experience these kind of development days, so I have a planned schedule of pupil development days that will follow a similar model, on areas such as conflict resolution, getting your voice heard and presentation skills.”

Over 80% of staff said that Volunteering week had increased their sense of well-being and pride in working for GNM. One volunteer reflected the general mood:

“I came away from the day feeling uplifted and in high spirits. In fact, this feeling continued into the day after! Engaging with both colleagues and the community is a great motivational tool and it feels good to do something/give something back to the community.”

We are proud of the impact and reach of our Communities Program and will continue to strive to have a positive impact on our local communities, through our editorial work, our environmental commitments and through volunteering.

What next?

Planning for Volunteer Week 2013 is now underway. Who knows what we can do this time?

¹³ Charities Minister praises Guardian Volunteering Week -

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **David Mills** <david.mills@guardian.co.uk>

Date: 18 September 2012 13:21

Subject: Charities Minister praises Guardian Volunteering Week

To: Hayley Dunlop <hayley.dunlop@guardian.co.uk>

Cc: Mike Hepburn <mike.hepburn@guardian.co.uk>, Paula Tsung <paula.tsung@guardian.co.uk>, Christian Toennesen <christian.toennesen@acona.co.uk>

Hi Hayley et al

The Civil Society Minister Nick Hurd has given us quote praising Guardian Volunteering Week - see below.

The quote is:

Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd said:

“The difference people with professional skills can make to charities by volunteering is considerable. It benefits our community as a whole, fundamentally helps people who need it most and provides real value to the businesses and individuals that take part. It is excellent to see the Guardian through its Volunteering Week championing the need for professionals to give their time and I have no doubt this will encourage more skilled people to get involved in local charities.”

Best wishes

David

