

Supporting community one cup at a time

Vancouver Foundation shares knowledge and connections with Starbucks

By Kimberley Fehr

Colette Bennett faced a challenging yet important task. As Marketing Manager for Starbucks Canada (in Vancouver), her role was to help decide which organizations to support during the company's first year of providing grants in Canada.

Starbucks' corporate granting program focuses on youth taking action in their communities, so Bennett spent a lot of time surfing the Web to research youth organizations. She quickly learned that some questions could only be answered by intimate knowledge of the non-profit community. Were the organizations doing work that really made a difference? Did they effectively engage the youth community Starbucks wanted to support? Would the organizations be compatible with Starbucks?

"We wanted to take it beyond simply giving a grant," says Bennett. "We planned to raise awareness about the incredible work that these organizations were doing, and to support the youth who were involved. We wanted to continually look at ways to engage our partners and customers in the organizations we fund."

Enter Vancouver Foundation, as Starbucks' endowment fund manager for Canada. Not only does the Foundation act as trustee for the fund, managing the investment, but the Foundation also lends its 66 years of experience in granting to the community.

"We are trying to invest in communities all over the world," says Jackie Liao, Starbucks Foundation's Manager of Community Investments in Seattle. "To do so, we need to rely on local expertise. In Canada, Starbucks decided to work with Vancouver Foundation to manage our endowment fund. We did this both because of the expert knowledge the Foundation has of Vancouver and the pressing issues facing youth in Canada, as well as its understanding of many of the great organizations out there that can help us achieve our mission."

With some advice from Vancouver Foundation, Starbucks Canada gave a total of almost \$150,000 in grants to six organizations in Canada in 2009, including the Roots and Shoots program, which received \$25,000.

Run by the Jane Goodall Institute in over 100 countries, Roots and Shoots aims to inspire young people to make positive change in their own communities.

Some of the Starbucks funding is designed to give youth a chance to learn from experts on an issue, and create project plans to take back to their communities. One Roots and Shoots group planted more than 70 trees and shrubs on a trail in Mississauga, Ontario and sold stainless steel water bottles to reduce the use of disposable plastic ones.

"With a company like Starbucks there are incredible opportunities to work together on many levels," says Jane Lawton, Executive Director of the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada. "It's those kinds of partnerships that are really valuable when a company is not just interested in helping financially, but in working with you to help expand your program and engage people."

Bennett says she will focus on connecting Starbucks store managers with local Roots and Shoots branches, and encouraging Starbucks "partners" – what Starbucks calls its employees – to volunteer.

She is also trying to decide which organizations to support in 2010. Her task became a little easier this year because of a new Vancouver Foundation initiative called *The Book of Opportunities*, a virtual shopping "catalogue" for philanthropists that outlines hundreds of community projects that sought funding from the Foundation. The projects were already vetted by Foundation staff, and ranged from arts and culture, environment, education, social services and more. Bennett found two youth-related projects that seemed like a good fit for Starbucks.

"We're trying to pick organizations that have similar values to what we are trying to accomplish," says Bennett. "*The Book of Opportunities* was great because it had so many organizations I'd never heard

of, as well as a good explanation of the mission and project for each one."

By 2015, Starbucks is committed to contributing one million hours of community service a year through its partners, customers and the projects they lead, as well as engaging 50,000 young people in taking action around the world.

How would you like some community with your coffee? Certainly something to think about, while waiting in line for a grande latté.

For more information on how your business can work with Vancouver Foundation, phone 604-688-2204 or visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca.



Double your gift Double your opportunities



During 2009, donate \$1,000 or more to the Community Fund, and we will match your gift, dollar for dollar.

Support innovative projects that address your community's needs. Call or visit our website for details.

vancouver
foundation

Working with you to build legacies for your BC community

www.vancouverfoundation.ca
604.688.2204