

Putting Passion into Action

This article was printed in our TAL Tribune internal newsletter.



On a Mission to Help Build Better Communities

TAL's mission of "helping to build better communities" is so much more than words on a page. It's a call to provide positive experiences for customers and a challenge to build strong, lasting relationships in the communities we serve. From store to store, employees are living out our mission by volunteering their time, energy, creativity, expertise, materials, money, and more to help individuals in need, support local causes, and contribute to the quality of life for all.

To encourage employee involvement in the community, TAL's benefits package includes volunteer time off (VTO) hours. Each employee has 12 paid-time-off hours a year to use in a volunteer capacity. This benefit makes it a little easier for staff to contribute to their community in meaningful ways.

In 2023, hourly associates alone gave 566.43 hours through the VTO program, serving a variety of organizations in diverse ways. Some hours were given by employees at Bayview Building Materials of Elma, Lake Chelan Building Supply, and Miller's Home Center, putting their passion in action to make a positive long-term impact.

All-Around Impact

Bayview Building Materials of Elma is a big part of the local landscape, touching nearly every corner of the community. As the only place to get hardware and lumber within 30 miles, they strive to provide whatever customers may need, whether it's food, office supplies, or pet supplies, said branch manager Tim Strange. Bayview's drive to serve goes beyond products, too—with regular donations of money, materials, and time going to local schools and clubs, the county fairgrounds and raceway, a home and garden show, and others. Indeed, their generosity is well known.

"Last year we had 78 kids who came in for donations" toward their 4-H and FFA club projects, Tim said. "It's hard to donate monetarily when there's so many, but those kids are super dedicated to raising animals, and they spend years doing it. What I can do is donate material, fencing, wheelbarrows, shovels, anything to keep their pens in order."

At Christmas, Bayview hosts a party with Santa, crafts, cookie decorating, and photo ops. Employees adopt families, including veterans and others in need, and shower them with gifts.

Employees line up to get involved and support these efforts—even when circumstances aren't ideal. For the local Veterans Day Parade, they celebrate local veterans by walking and handing out candy. The weather during last year's parade was freezing, and the Bayview crew was the only group to hand out candy.

"We didn't throw the candy. We went to each kid personally and handed candy or let them grab candy out of the bag," Tim said. "The smiles on the community's face, on my team members' faces, that gives you a full heart. For us at Bayview, that's what it's about more than anything else."

Putting Passion into Action

Studies show that trees enhance life in any community. They contribute to cleaner air, more comfortable temperatures, higher property values, lower energy costs, and healthier residents. Yet for all the benefits, towns and cities nationwide lose millions of trees a year to drought, development, and disease.

Robert Henderson, Department Sales Lead for Miller's Home Center in La Grande, Oregon, is doing his part to keep the community green and healthy. In his fifth year serving La Grande's Community Landscape & Forestry Commission (CLFC), he's advocating for urban forests and helping to grow and preserve green spaces.

In this role he collaborates with the city, schools, students, and families on an annual Arbor Day celebration. At the beginning of April, the city arborist teaches fourth- and fifth-grade students at local elementary schools about Arbor Month. Students participate in a tree-themed poster contest, judged by the commission, with the top picks posted on the city's social media. At the end of the month, students get a full day of educational fun and hands-on activities, one of which is led by Robert.

"I teach the kids how to plant trees successfully—what to do to get them in the ground and cultivate them over time so they're healthy and survive," he said. "Every year a couple of our employees' kids are there, so they also get to connect with mom and dad's work."

Students enthusiastically anticipate the day outdoors, even when it's chilly and cool. "Everyone's got on their shorts and sunglasses, so it kicks off that summer feeling."

Robert also plans events twice a year to invite the community to plant trees in city parks and along trails and walkways.

"The feedback is always positive, and it helps with the CLFC's spring and fall tree planting, because we're always looking for volunteers to plant as many trees as possible."

A Lasting Legacy

The Lake Chelan Building Supply logo is not just an identifier, it symbolizes a strong legacy of connections and relationships in the Chelan community.

Johnny Morfin, a member of the LCBS team for more than 20 years, said the original owners "instilled in us the importance of community involvement." With his brother, Jose, Johnny has continued the tradition by leading LCBS in supporting the local Apple Blossom Festival, which celebrates community residents, businesses, and agriculture.

Since 1921, the festival has been a popular local tradition. The Morfin brothers first became involved by partnering with the local Kiwanis club to host the festival's pancake breakfast. When the chapter no longer had the manpower for the breakfast, they saw it as an opportunity to step up and become a bigger part of the festival, which also includes a grand parade, a run/walk, pageants, art show, and more. Now, the festival is practically a parade of LCBS-branded aprons.

"We're proud of where we work, and we're happy to represent Lake Chelan Building Supply in what we do," Johnny said.

Another event that brings the community together is a "trunk or treat" Halloween party.

"People park, dress in costumes, decorate their cars, and hand out candy from the trunks," he said.

Going the extra mile, the LCBS team constructed a small house out of scrap material, which they decorate each year using a new theme, such as Scooby-Doo, Mario Bros, and Charlie Brown. Family members join in to paint and decorate stand-up characters, creating a fun opportunity for kids to take photos and get candy.

All throughout the year, store associates look for ways to help and support others.

"Our industry relies a lot on relationships," said Francisco "C.J." Orozco, branch manager. "We are all in the community and we get to know people and build personal relationships. We learn about people's struggles and can see if there's something we can help with."

Employees have helped by preparing and packing meals, coaching sports teams, donating materials, even building a ramp for someone who became wheelchair-bound. Clearly, LCBS cultivates a culture of service.