

Profiles in Volunteer Excellence

Plow & Hearth closely connected to the community

By Kathi Walker
Aging Together

The Plow & Hearth has its roots firmly planted in Madison County. Founded in 1982 by Mr. Peter Rice, the company has grown from a small family owned business to an internationally recognized food and merchandise corporation. Plow & Hearth promotes volunteering and giving back to the community.

Volunteering is a natural way of life for Nancy Knighting, a long-time employee. She described the employee's volunteer efforts at Plow & Hearth as "taking pride..., bonding together to help one another within and outside the company. It feels good and people are willing to help," said Knighting. "We donate our time as well as provide monetary donations to families, individuals, schools, organizations and local agencies." Nancy and fellow employees started the Brunch Buddy program at local elementary school where they have weekly breakfast or lunch with a student. Nancy fondly recalls a student she had lunch with from first through fifth grade. Together they shared many special moments.



Music on the Lawn and the Christmas Parade are two community events that Plow & Hearth sponsors. Music on the Lawn started in 2001 as a way of bringing live entertainment to the community during the warm summer months of June, July and August. The Christmas parade first marched on Main Street in 2003 with about 10 entries. Today's parade includes over 100 entries and fills the street with music, laughter, and cheers. Plow & Hearth donates gifts for children given by a jolly 'ole Santa during the Parade and Tree Lighting festivities.

Plow & Hearth employees were instrumental in starting the Madison Business and Education Alliance and participate in blood drives four-times a year.

Sold to 1-800 Flowers in 1998, Plow & Hearth still maintains that sense of community and giving. From top executives to front line staff, the company works together to improve the lives of many. Employees take pride in the work they do and for the volunteer efforts they provide to their hometown communities.

Aging Together encourages you to invite your co-workers to join you in a volunteer activity. Check out volunteer opportunities by calling the Piedmont Volunteer Center at 540-825-7615. Share your volunteer experience involving older adults at info@agingtogether.org or 540-829-6405.

Aging Together promotes volunteerism as an essential way to support seniors and make full use of the talents and experience of older adults. Join the Madison Aging Together Team to become involved in supporting local seniors. We meet monthly on the 3rd Tuesday 1:30-2:30 at the Madison Department of Social services. Call 540-829-5405 for more information.