



## Cardinal Health Puerto Rico Essential to our Communities

BY LAURA RENTAS-GIUSTI

Cardinal Health supports employee efforts to make a difference in their communities, unified in a belief that the Company is “all in” for the health and well-being of communities. Chairman and CEO George Barrett, sets the tone for this vision in simple yet powerful terms. “There are so many areas that make communities strong, and we want our communities to be strong,” he says in a corporate web video that explains what the community relations platform “All in for Good” is all about.

In Puerto Rico, where Cardinal Health remains the largest and most technologically-advanced distributor of pharmaceutical products and medical supplies, the majority of the 550 employees bring this vision to reality through numerous efforts to support

non-profit organizations that share the Company’s purpose to improve health and well-being. Serving as liaison between the Cardinal Health Foundation and the company’s local operation is Mariela Martinez Marrero, Vice President of Information Technology.

Martinez Marrero is described as a leader in community support initiatives within the company, “I took the lead in structuring the Cardinal Health Foundation’s work locally, which allowed me to put my influencer skills to use beyond my own department. I have to admit it has not been that hard, because we believe in what we are doing and in the organizations that we support. I am not alone in this effort, I have many accomplices around me who are as committed as I am,” said Martinez Marrero.

“Cardinal Health Foundation provides a platform to enable and empower employees to help their own communities through different initiatives,” she said. In fact, the various community support activities that employees conducted allowed Cardinal Health Puerto Rico to donate \$35,000 and 500 hours of volunteer work to partner organizations last year.

Cardinal Health also provides employees the infrastructure to make direct payroll donations through Giving Station, a platform where the company matches employee donations and transfers funds directly to non-profit organizations each month. “Giving Station provides these non-profits a steady, predictable stream of income that helps support their work consistently,” said

Martinez Marrero. “These organizations have a very important role in our society and cover needs that neither the government nor the private sector have the bandwidth to address. It is important for us to continue enabling their work, especially those organizations that are aligned with our purpose as a Company,” she added.

In fact, an effort led by Martinez Marrero to communicate the growing need to help fund these non-profits, especially during Puerto Rico’s ongoing economic crisis, influenced the Cardinal Health Foundation to make a \$25,000 grant allocation to support organizations working to improve community wellness locally. These funds will be distributed for the first time in Puerto Rico this April, following an open call



that led to Cardinal Health Puerto Rico receiving over 50 proposals. “For many years we’ve been conducting different initiatives to support our communities, and now we are leveraging the [Cardinal Health Foundation] platform, which allows us to bring additional funds in addition to employee donations,” explained Martinez Marrero.

The employees are All in for Good (*Todos Por El Bien*), not just one day a year but every single day! “Our employees are what make our slogan come to life (Essential to Care) and we encourage employees to get involved and give back to communities where they live and work”, Martinez Marrero noted. In addition to providing financial support, the hours invested by employees are

matched by the Corporation through the Cardinal Health Foundation. An example of this is that for the past three holiday seasons, in support of non-profit *Iniciativa Comunitaria’s* “*Abriga un alma esta Navidad*” (Shelter a soul this Christmas) campaign, an average of 80 volunteers were engaged to receive in-store donations. This kind of partnership approach helps Cardinal Health provide meaningful support to other organizations, including Susan G. Komen and the Muscular Dystrophy Association”, said Martinez Marrero.

Another component of the company’s community support is an educational and awareness campaign called GenerationRx. This campaign was developed in response to alarming statistics

that say more than 200,000 Puerto Ricans age 15 and older have misused prescribed medication at least once in their lifetimes. The program aims to prevent the misuse and abuse of prescribed drugs through culturally-adapted educational materials, developed in partnership with pharmacy professionals, associations, universities and the local Board of Pharmacy. The first step to help prevent this epidemic is to visit the GenerationRx web site [www.generationrx.org](http://www.generationrx.org) to download the free online materials to educate others. Later this year, Cardinal Health is working with the *Colegio de Farmacéuticos de Puerto Rico* to develop an award that recognizes a local pharmacist that has demonstrated excellence in community-based prescription drug abuse prevention.

Martinez Marrero looks forward to continue supporting Cardinal Health Foundation’s work in Puerto Rico. She has set aggressive goals for Cardinal Health Puerto Rico’s community efforts and desires to increase employee participation in Giving Station and the access of grants to Puerto Rico organizations. She also expects GenerationRx to become viral, and plans to roll out a signature program focused on the physical and social well-being of children called Good4Growth™. “Our team of employees brings forth ideas and roll up their sleeves to maximize Cardinal Health Foundation’s resources and ensure we provide the greatest support possible to our partner organizations,” she said. ■