

Size Doesn't Matter in Corporate Civic Engagement

Just Ask 2017 Honoree Teacher Created Materials

By PETE WEITZNER

Last year, for the first time in a local market, the Business Journal presented the 2017 Civic 50 Orange County in partnership with OneOC, recognizing the 50 most community-minded small, medium and large Orange County companies.

OneOC is taking entries for the second annual Civic 50 now through June 29 (see Call for Entries below).

Research proves community-minded companies do well by doing good. The companies get a measurable business lift in consumer preferences, company reputation, and employee attraction and retention.

Community engagement isn't just for large companies; small and medium-size businesses feel increased expectations to be more strategic in their philanthropy and empower employees to give time, talent and money. And millennials make up an increasing portion of the new workforce with high expectations of employers.

Not all local companies have the same level of resources or engagement in all of the activities the survey measures. Therefore, scoring and awards are based on the number of local employees: small 15-99; midsize 100-499; and large 500 and up, and similarly sized companies were measured within their peer groups and compared only on community engagement programs in Orange County.

Fountain Valley School Teacher **Rachelle Cracchiolo** founded publishing



School takeover: in 2016, TCM relocated for a day to Meairs Elementary in Garden Grove for Read Across America Day. (Left) founder and CEO Cracchiolo, EVP Mendoza. (Right) Marketing Assistant Tara Domink

company **Teacher Created Materials** in 1977 in Huntington Beach. Today TCM has over 200 employees, more than 100 at its Surf City headquarters, and its products and services are in 50 states and 89 countries.

In those 41 years, the company was also growing its culture. Employees regularly engage in a number of programs that enrich our community and made the family-owned business and its employees an easy 2017 Civic 50 selection.

TCM supports **AbilityFirst**, which helps children and adults with developmental disabilities; helps fund a **California State University-Fullerton** endowment that provides \$1,000 to \$5,000 scholarships for teachers working toward their master's degrees; and provides food and money to **Bruno Serato's Caterina's Club** to feed hungry children in the county.

Its most robust volunteer efforts are on display at the annual Read Across America Day. The company effectively closes, send-



ing more than 100 employees to volunteer at a different school each year. In 2016, TCM volunteers descended on Meairs Elementary School in Garden Grove, and last year Monte Vista Elementary in Santa Ana. It's a Teacher Takeover:

■ **Read Across America:** Volunteers read, reflected and completed literacy-focused activities with students in small groups.

■ **Teachers' Outdoor Lounge Mini-Makeover:** Volunteers painted the area, added plants and improved the decor.

■ **Garden Projects:** Volunteers cleaned and beautified school grounds by adding plants and inspirational signs.

■ **Fence Mascot and Values Designs:** Volunteers used decorative cups to create designs for four chain-link fences.

■ **Painting Projects:** Volunteers painted a colorful U.S. map on the playground blacktop. They also painted pencil images on poles around the school and chalk message boards on all teachers' classroom doors.



Volunteer: TCM President Connie Burton at Monte Vista Elementary for 2017 Read Across America

■ **Backpacks:** All students received a free backpack filled with student and parent resources. Teachers received professional resources and a \$100 gift card.

"Truly a magnificent day," said school Principal **Meg Greene**.

Cracchiolo says it's a great way "to encourage kids to keep reading," but her team also gets to see, "the great things schools are doing every day to make students succeed and foster their love of learning."

Teaching Tree

Schoolteacher-turned-entrepreneur Cracchiolo has handed the reigns to her daughters, President **Corinne Burton** and Executive Vice President, **Deanne Mendoza**, who have combination teaching-business backgrounds.

On March 15 Team TCM was inducted into the Family Business Hall of Fame at the CSUF Center for Family Business at the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics. ■

Community-Minded Companies Wanted for Our Annual List

CALL FOR ENTRIES: Website will take entries through June 29

Is your company about much more than its bottom line? Does it also use its resources to better the Orange County community?

Please tell us about it.

The Business Journal, in partnership with OneOC, will present the second annual local Civic 50 list of the most community-minded companies this fall.

Our list of small, medium and large businesses that lead OC in civic involvement will be published on Oct. 15 as part of a Special Report highlighting businesses included on the list. The Business Journal will further recognize honorees at an Oct. 11 luncheon ceremony.

We're soliciting companies to take part in our selection process. It involves an online survey administered by New York-based **True Impact**, which has worked with the **Points of Light** organization since 2012 to conduct a survey for a national Civic 50 ranking.

Benefits to You

Making the list comes with benefits. Your company can take a leadership position in OC's corporate community involvement and have the opportunity to share your best practices. Past national participants have said the process helped them understand how they can improve their own strategies.

Requirements

Public and privately owned companies with

OC operations, employees and community-engagement programs can participate.

Scoring and awards will be based on the number of OC employees—small: 15-99, midsize: 100-499, and large: 500 and larger. The top scorer in each category will receive special recognition.

The online survey includes quantitative and multiple-choice questions, plus optional, un-scored narrative information for possible publication in the Business Journal and to promote companies' practices.

Businesses will be considered based on their investment of resources in local community

engagement, including employee time and skills, cash, in-kind giving and public leadership; how their community engagement supports business interests and integrates into business functions; how they support community engagement through policies, systems and incentives; and how they measure social and business efforts and outcomes of community engagement.

Companies that participate in the survey but don't qualify won't be cited in any way. Only the top 50 and their case studies requested in optional questions will be shared publicly, with attribution. All other information submitted on the Civic 50 application may be aggregated and shared for benchmarking and continuous-improvement purposes but won't be attributed to a specific company. Our stories on the employers will be general profiles.

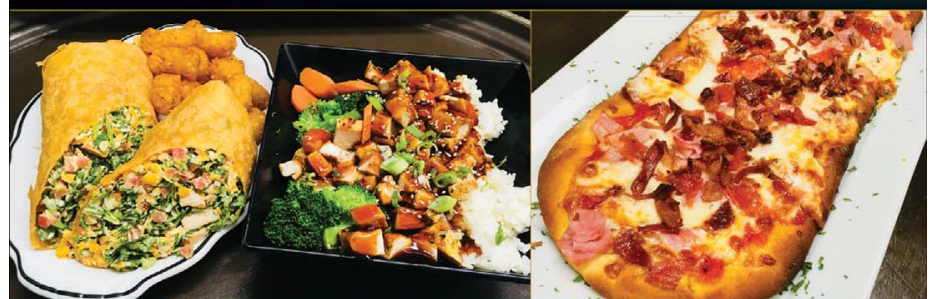
You can apply and learn more about Civic 50 Orange County at oneoc.org/OCCivic50.



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THE CLASSIC Q

4251 MacArthur Blvd • Newport Beach, CA 92660

949-261-9458 • info@classicq.com

www.classicq.com

Twitter: @theclassicq • Facebook: Classic Q Sportsbar • Instagram: @classicqsportsbar