

Avnet Cares, Accelerating Community Growth

The company's culture of caring is a top-down effort

by Tyler Butler



Avnet joined forces with Benchmark Electronics on a bike build project for foster kids. Like Avnet, Benchmark believes in the power of giving back. Each company purchased 10 bicycles and then had teams compete to see how fast they could put them together. Afterward, the 20 bicycles were donated to a local foster kids program.

avnet.com
bench.com



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▶ In today's fast-paced world, time has become the most valuable of assets. As demands on schedules become more and more taxing, the one asset we are not able to replenish, time, has become a preferential way for companies and individuals to give back. Since the company's inception in 1921, helping others through service has been an integral component to Avnet's company legacy.

With a mission to promote a culture of community service through sharing best practices and ideas that encourage employee volunteerism and charitable giving, Avnet has made a concerted effort to help the communities where they work, live and play. Through the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, Avnet Cares, the company is supporting communities in more than 20 countries to aid a broad range of nonprofit organizations.

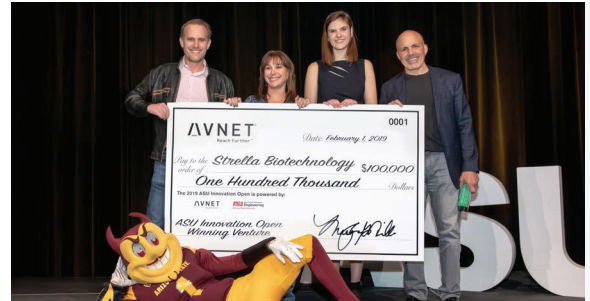
It is the employees themselves who drive the giving strategy behind Avnet Cares. Through their passions, the company is reaching further together. Avnet's tailored global commitment and culture of hands-on volunteerism to meet the needs of local communities from the Americas and Europe to the Middle East, Africa and Asia is making a real impact.

As an integral component of the company's culture, Avnet employees, friends and family in Arizona have been volunteering for the HandsOn Greater Phoenix serve-a-thon for more than 25 years. Every year, this group volunteers on a Saturday morning in April to clean classrooms, paint murals, construct tables and plant flowers for a local school.

Avnet Cares programs are designed to enhance support for employees' independent philanthropic efforts. Through the company's “dollars for doers” program, an employee receives financial support based on the amount of time that employee volunteers with a cause. The charity of choice then receives a financial allocation based on the employee's dedication and the amount of time volunteered. In addition to this program, Avnet is also matching employees' monetary donations. The Avnet matching grant program matches dollars raised for a nonprofit via employee-led fundraising events, goods drives or team charity races.

“Avnet believes our responsibility to our employees, industry and global community extends beyond achieving business and financial goals. We are proud of our long history of community involvement both through financial giving and hands-on volunteerism. By sponsoring initiatives important to our employees and advocating for the communities in which we do business, Avnet and its employees continue to make an impact around the world,” shares Jessica Daughetee, Avnet chief marketing officer and overseer of Avnet's CSR program.

Avnet's philanthropic culture is a top-down effort, to be sure. The company's CEO, Bill Amelio, and his wife, Jaime, founded and continue to lead Caring for Cambodia, a nonprofit



organization that works to educate the children of Cambodia through building schools, training teachers and providing for basic human needs. From employee activation and C-suite support to actual company finances, one would be hard pressed to find a way that Avnet is not helping communities.

The company itself also looks for alternative methods to make a positive impact. Avnet's philosophy and understanding of the power of working together has brought it to also partner with suppliers, customers and vendors to maximize its impact. This commitment includes financial support. By investing in programs and projects in its communities targeted at improving technology, education, promoting energy conservation and helping underserved groups gain skills and obtain employment opportunities, the company is exploring all means at its disposal to help causes globally.

There are a few select signature programs, though, that are elevating Avnet's impact here in Arizona. The Avnet Innovation Lab partners the company with Arizona State University and its Fulton School of Engineering. Together, they have created the lab to accelerate the success of entrepreneurs and spark next-generation technology ideas. The lab provides critical business consultation and venture support to entrepreneurs developing new technology, especially inventions that make the world a better place. Avnet is also a main sponsor of the ASU Innovation Open, which brings collegiate teams with innovative business ideas together to compete for a chance to win \$100,000. This is an annual event that attracts student teams from all over the country.

Avnet's dedication to employee engagement, financial giving and innovation has been improving communities for decades. Its dedication to supporting employee efforts is one most companies aspire to. And its top-down leadership support of its charity programs allows for an authentic approach to its philanthropic efforts. And, as the company continues to develop these efforts through signature programs, our Valley is reaping the rewards. ■

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