

healthy tomorrow award

KITSAP SUN & KITSAP CREDIT UNION

Firm's culture of community involvement makes Kitsap better



The Rice Fergus Miller team assembled recently within their downtown Bremerton offices for the Healthy Tomorrow Award presentation.

Every savvy business owner knows that a healthy, vibrant community is good for business. And that's certainly true of the leadership at Rice Fergus Miller. But there's more to it at this Bremerton architecture and planning firm – it's as if there's a philanthropic chemical in the water cooler that seeps into the staff's psyche with every sip.

Nearly all of the company's 37 employees donate time, money, or both to nonprofit organizations. The list of causes they support is long and varied, ranging from United Way and March of Dimes to local service clubs and church committees.

Is it a coincidence?

"Evident in their deeds, leadership, staff and even their facility is a culture of talent, creativity and care, all to the benefit of their customers and community."

– Charles Horton
Kitsap Sun Publisher

Not really, says director of administration Monica Blackwood: "It's pretty ingrained in our culture."

Blackwood says employees are encouraged to share their philanthropic passions with each other. That fosters an environment of support for each other's causes that creates "a cyclical pattern that is positive for all of us."

Formally, the company sanctions two activities: an annual workplace campaign for United Way and a charitable giving committee to decide how its donations budget will be spent. The United Way campaign includes fun activities like chili cook-offs, silent auctions and tricycle races. The charitable giving committee reviews applications from nonprofit organizations quarterly, and awards financial donations to a wide range of organizations, usually local.

Informally, employees talk with each other about the organizations they hold dear. There's time at weekly staff meetings for them to invite colleagues to attend a fundraising event. And it's not unusual

for an email to circulate the office with a plea for help with a specific charitable project.

"The collective whole," says Blackwood, "is a good example of how even if we have our individual groups that we hold close to our heart, it doesn't take much to really get that power going – to really infuse the community with good things and good people and make that positive change, that positive difference."

In recognition of its remarkable culture of community giving, Kitsap Sun and Kitsap Credit Union have presented Rice Fergus Miller with the Healthy Tomorrow Award.

In presenting the award, Kitsap Credit Union president and CEO Elliott Gregg noted that Rice Fergus Miller is the first company to receive a Healthy Tomorrow Award, "in recognition of the exemplary culture this organization has cultivated that inspires their employees to make a positive difference in their communities."

Kitsap Sun Publisher Charles Horton agrees. "Evident in their deeds, leadership, staff and even their facility is a culture of talent, creativity and care, all to the benefit of their customers and community."

Blackwood points out that the recognition belongs to all who work at the firm.

"We are a group of individuals who all strongly believe in being a part of a community – to be active in our community – and [the Healthy Tomorrow Award] is even more valued to us because it is the community which supports our firm. We are thankful for the recognition this award gives to all of our staff."



Shown at left is Wendie Johnson, Kitsap Credit Union Board Chair with fellow presenters at right, Elliot Gregg, Kitsap Credit Union CEO and Charles Horton, Kitsap Sun Publisher. Accepting the award on behalf of honoree Rice Miller Fergus are Steve Rice, Monica Blackwood and Shawn Dinkuhn.

Lend a Hand Donate!

Rice Fergus Miller suggests you can help create a stronger community – it's easy! Share your talents with a group that supports your interest; donate to a cause that has touched your life personally; and advocate by sharing the message daily for which you feel passionate.

The Healthy Tomorrow Award Program is a partnership of Kitsap Sun and Kitsap Credit Union, and honors individuals, families, businesses and organizations whose contributions to the community significantly improve our quality of life. To nominate someone you know for the Healthy Tomorrow Award log on to www.kitsapsun.com/healthytomorrow or complete a nomination form at any Kitsap Credit Union branch.

There is no deadline for nominations.