

WHOLESALE^R

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Making a Difference

United Pipe takes part in unique volunteer project

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Two teams from United Pipe & Steel recently took part in the “Dash For A Difference” — a charity challenge modeled after the hit TV show *The Amazing Race*. The company has long roots in the Boston area, and as project director Jody Cohen Heller described, “We wanted to get United involved in giving back to our community. In doing research, I came across Boston Cares, which puts on the event as a way of connecting companies with a number of different charities in the area. And in addition to helping raise money for these charities, it was a lot of fun to participate in.”

“Dash For A Difference” is a race through Boston neighborhoods that is designed to help those less fortunate, and encourage team members

This year’s “Dash For A Difference” raised over \$50,000 for Boston Cares.

The teams from United Pipe & Steel were so energized by participating that they plan to do it again next year, and will open up the event to customers and vendors as well.

to learn about the city while raising funds for the charity. During this five-hour adventure, as many as 100 teams — made up of two to five peo-

ple — participate in volunteer tasks at each stop. Each person participating is responsible for raising a minimum of \$100 in pledges.

Employees from United Pipe gathered prior to the race and divided into two teams, each of which had a car with a GPS. As in the TV show, the teams were given clues for their destinations, and had to do some research on their mobile devices to determine the correct answer and address for each of their stops. They could even call friends and family for help. Along the way, they visited some of the most impoverished areas of Boston, with clues for stops at eight different charitable organizations.

Teams started at 9:00 a.m., when they received the clue to their first destination. At each stop, the teams were assigned a task — some of which were very labor-intensive — to complete in order to have their passport stamped and receive the clue to the next destination.

As Noah Heller, a member of United’s sales management team, explained, “The groups we visited are very strong fundraisers and generate a lot of donations, but they just aren’t staffed for the amount of hands-on work that has to be done. By bringing in volunteers, they accomplished a lot that they normally aren’t able to do. These were time-intensive projects and the event brought together a volunteer army to accomplish the mission.

“Within our own organization, we built a lot of camaraderie. The event brought together people from many different departments within United



The “Dash For A Difference” is a charity challenge modeled after the hit TV show THE AMAZING RACE and is organized by Boston Cares. United Pipe deployed two teams of volunteers to race through impoverished Boston neighborhoods and perform various tasks to help the less fortunate.

Pipe. As we were riding around in the cars and doing the tasks assigned at each of the stops, we developed a great sense of teamwork that I think will translate into even more open communication at the office.”

Jody Heller



United Pipe & Steel Corp.
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added, “One of my favorite stops was Room To Grow. It provides an opportunity for women who don’t have the resources when they have babies to get clothes and parenting education. During the first two years of their babies’ lives, the mothers receive free clothes, education and child care. It ensures that the babies have

a healthy start to their lives, and that the mothers get the right guidance to help them properly raise and nurture their babies. Our job at that stop was to sort and separate donated clothing into seasonal collections and by sizes.”

One of the event sponsors was Samuel Adams, which provided beers

and appetizers at the Finish Line for all the teams.

Noah Heller summed up the event by saying, “It felt good to spend our day trying to help people in our community live a better life. A lot of people came up to us and said ‘thank you’. United was actually the smallest company involved in the event; there were a number of Fortune 500 organizations participating... page 2.”

Volunteers from United Pipe show community spirit in 'Dash'

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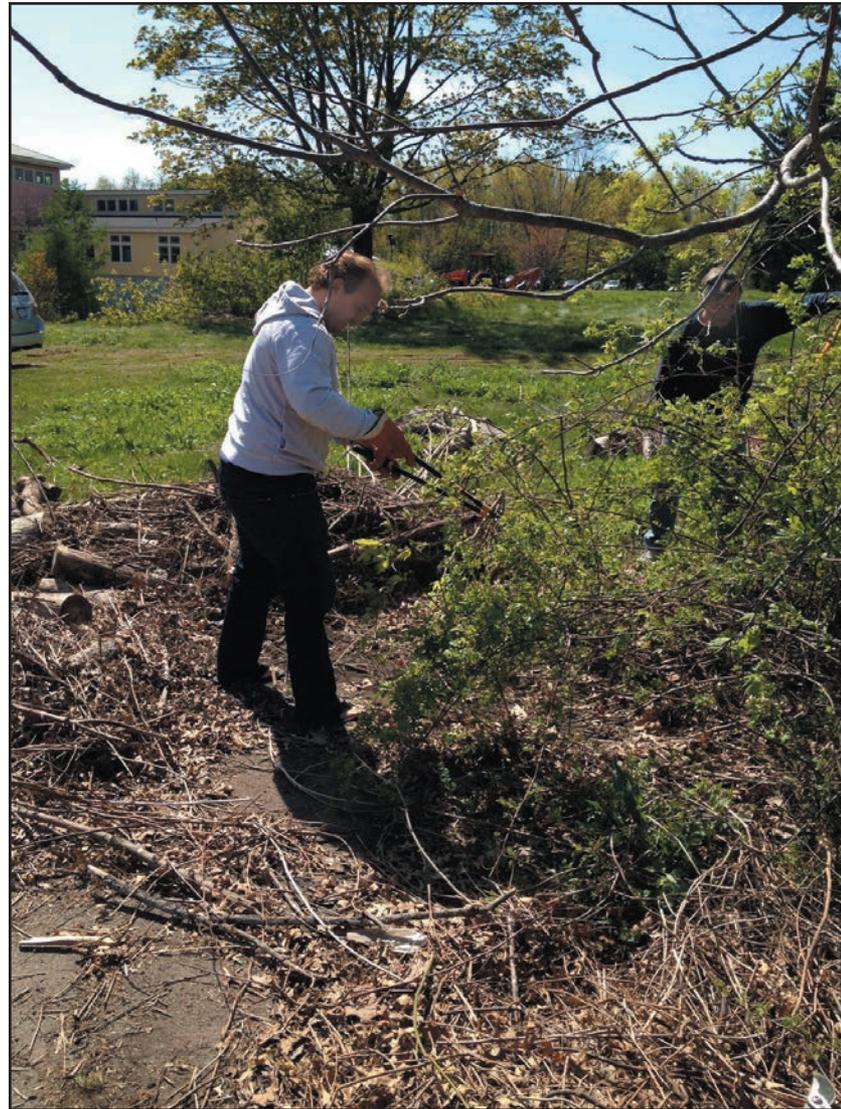
ing. But we had as many people participate as these larger organizations. In fact, about 10 of our corporate staff took part. It says a lot about our people.”

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The agencies — and tasks — that United Pipe visited along the way were:

- Room to Grow — Provides parents raising babies in poverty with one-on-one parenting support and essential baby items throughout their children’s critical first three years of life. The project called for volunteers to sort and fold a series of donations given to the agency.

- Community Servings each day prepares and packages 725 meals for men, women, and children who are struggling with acute life-threatening illnesses. For their task, volunteers helped the staff slice and chop vegetables that was used for meals for individuals and families battling HIV/



Sales management team member Noah Heller clears overgrowth from one of the sites visited by two teams from United Pipe. “It felt good to spend our day trying to help people in our community live a better life. A lot of people came up to us and said ‘thank you,’” he said.



At the Finish Line, all the teams enjoyed hospitality provided by Samuel Adams.

AIDS, breast cancer, multiple sclerosis, or other life-threatening illnesses.

- Dearborn Middle School is a part of the Boston Public Schools and is located in Roxbury. Here, volunteers were required to paint a section of the school yard in order to help beautify

quired to complete a mad lib about another agency located close to the Shirley-Eustis House.

- Car Project — As volunteers travelled between destinations, they were asked to complete a portable service project. The project was to fringe a

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the outside where the students play during recess. Their painting included a world map and other designs.

- Urban Wilds – Warren Gardens, run through the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, seeks to protect the city’s publicly-owned urban wilds and thereby ensure access and enjoyment of natural treasures to present and future Boston residents. Volunteers were asked to run a water brigade and help water plants growing at the Warren Gardens. They also assisted with light landscaping.

- Boston Nature Center encompasses eight acres of the property and provides arable land for 250 gardening families. Volunteers were required to visit the nature center and answer a series of questions about the trails located at the center.

- Shirley Eustis House is a historic home that was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960. Volunteers were asked to weed and do some light clean-up of the grounds of the historic home. They were then re-

fleece blanket. All blankets created were then donated to the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans.

United Pipe & Steel is a master distributor of pipe products, headquartered in Ipswich, Mass, shipping copper tube, linesets, steel pipe, electrical conduit, strut, threaded rod, and plastic pipe to wholesalers across 40 states. ■

Visit www.bostoncares.org for more information about this organization, or www.united-pipe.com to learn more about United Pipe & Steel Corp.

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