

Bringing more to **life**, the world over





“A culture of caring is part of the Group’s passion. It permeates every business division, every store and every employee, everywhere.”
- A S Watson CSR Policy



MEMBERS OF THE A S WATSON GROUP (ASW) are always busy bringing more to life in the communities in which they operate, and during the month of October 2011, they were particularly so.

October played host to the first ever ASW Global Volunteer Month, an idea conceived by the ASW Global Committee following the release of the ASW Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy.

Although Global Volunteer Month is the first global collective effort in support of the CSR policy, most ASW business units around the world have long been engaging in philanthropic activities on their own. In 2009 alone, the ASW’s global collective effort resulted in the contribution of more than USD13 million in

charitable donations. In environmental and emotional terms, the contributions have been priceless.

“What we really want to accomplish through Global Volunteer Month is to engage everyone across ASW and around the world all at once. What better cause for everyone to unite around than giving back to our community,” explained Mr Gerard van Breen, CEO of A S Watson Benelux and Member of the ASW CSR Global Committee, which is responsible for defining the ASW’s CSR Policy and direction. “This is a very important effort, because we have such a great responsibility to the local communities in which we operate. We absolutely cannot thrive without considering the needs of our community, and that must go beyond simply what products they need.”

October was selected as Global Volunteer Month because it is the off-peak period for most of the ASW health and beauty chains. “We saw this as the perfect time to engage all of our employees at once in something extremely meaningful,” said Mr van Breen.

Local ASW units, based on the needs of their local communities, independently determined the priorities for their contributions to the global volunteer efforts, spanning across health, environmental and disaster relief causes. “For instance, there might be some relevant services provided by the government in one country that are not provided by the government in another. That provides a gap that we can attempt to help fill with our





Together with students of the Hsin-chieh Elementary School in Taiwan, the staff, suppliers and families of Watsons Taiwan teamed up to raise money for underprivileged Taiwanese children through the Child Welfare League Foundation.

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efforts,” explained Mr van Breen. “It really is all about bringing more to life.”

“What is great about our global group of volunteers is that we have many resources at our disposal that we are able to use in giving back to our communities,” added Mr van Breen. “Of course we have the gifts of time and labour, but also the gifts of knowledge and familiarity with our communities, which are really the most important.”

Exemplifying Selfless Service

Kicking off both the Global Volunteer Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month, more than 5,000 breast cancer patients, survivors, friends and families participated in the Watsons Pink Ribbon Walk and Pink Glove Dance in Singapore on 1 October 2011, handily setting the record for the largest Pink Ribbon event in Singapore to date, making their way into the Singapore Guinness Book of Records.

The 3.8 kilometres walk was accompanied by a carnival to encourage whole-family involvement – a key to success in the fight against breast cancer, according to Mrs Noor Quek, President of the Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) in Singapore. “We believe that no woman should be alone in her fight and, thereby, believe in the crucial role that her family and friends play in supporting her.”

Watsons Singapore chose this cause as the focus of their



volunteer efforts due to its strong significance to both the Singaporean community and to the local Watsons philosophy.

“Breast cancer is the number one cancer killer among women in Singapore. We strongly believe that our support in the fight against this disease should continue to grow,” said Ms Cathy Yeap, Managing Director of Watsons Personal Care stores in Singapore. “Advocating preventative healthcare is what we believe in, and that is why we support the BCF in this effort.”

In-store, Watsons customers were able to purchase the BCF Breast Book, which contains information about breast cancer and a step-by-step guide to breast self-examination.

In addition to achieving record-setting participation in the Watsons Pink Ribbon Walk, Watsons Singapore is taking their commitment to this issue even further by partnering with four of its suppliers – Brands, Johnson & Johnson, L.D. Waxson and Proctor & Gamble – to raise additional funds through the reintroduction of its “Pink Shelves” programme. For approximately six weeks in October and November, 40 Watsons stores throughout Singapore featured products

from these four partner suppliers on special pink-coloured shelves. For every product purchased, 10 cents were donated to BCF, reaching a grand total of SGD100,000 (about USD76,700) donated.

Along with the Pink Shelves, donation boxes were placed at sales counters to encourage Watsons customers to show their support for the cause. BCF pink ribbon pins were also sold in stores, helping Watsons Singapore to raise an additional SGD20,000.

“Giving back to the community is part of the A S Watson ‘DNA’. Just as we are committed to enhancing the lives of our customers by providing them with the best of beauty and health products, we also aim to bring more to the lives of those in need through community involvement,” said Ms Yeap.

Singapore was not alone in their successful efforts to make a positive difference in the community they serve. Indeed, ASW units around the world found ways to make an impactful difference in their local neighbourhoods.

Employees of the ASW regional office in the Battersea district of London spent a sunny

Left top and bottom: Staff at Watsons in the Philippines participate in “Watsons Family Health Day” with their fellow colleagues and family members.
Right: Employees of the A S Watson regional office in London spent a sunny Friday afternoon in early October volunteering at the London Wetland Centre.





Staff from PARKnSHOP China bring health and wellness advice to the homes of elderly community members.



Top: A group of young participants pause for a team photo following the Watsons Taiwan Hand-in-Hand with Love charity fun race.
Middle: Members of Retail Hong Kong chaperone a trip for underprivileged children that included coral viewing and kite flying.
Bottom: Staff from the Superdrug Head Office host a Cycle to the Moon charity bike race.

Friday in early October 2011 helping the London Wetland Centre prepare for the changing of the seasons. The team of volunteers, led by Chris Lindsay, ASW Group HR Director (Europe), spent the day planting over 2,500 autumn bulbs in preparation for autumn visitors to the London Wetland Centre and raised just over EUR500 (USD670) in donations through the sponsorship of their families and friends. “This was a truly fantastic opportunity for us to give something back to the local community whilst continuing to strengthen our team,” said Mr Lindsay.

Following the tragic 5.7 magnitude earthquake in Turkey in early November 2011, Watsons Turkey was moved to continue their Volunteer Month efforts by donating 1,000 personal care items to victims, alongside a donation of TL10,000 (about USD5,400) to the Red Crescent, the local disaster relief organisation.

Joining Watsons Turkey and the Battersea team in the European effort was Marionnaud in Spain and its “Week of Hugs” campaign, which raised funds for many causes over the course of a week. Marionnaud partnered with local NGO Ayuda en Acción for this event, during which visitors to Marionnaud stores were invited to hug staff members in order to raise money for a new cause each day. For example, all ‘hug money’ raised on Monday was donated to support hunger alleviation, all hugs on Tuesday raised money for the equal treatment of women, and so on. For each hug given and received, Marionnaud donated EUR1 to Ayuda en Acción. In total, 10,950 hugs were given and received during the Week of Hugs, and so a total of EUR10,950 was donated.

Back in Asia, Watsons Taiwan teamed up – and tied






The A S Watson Group's 1st Global Volunteer Month was held in October 2011, with 28 business units and over 15,000 people participating in support of their local communities.

up – with its staff, suppliers, families and the students of Hsin-chieh Elementary School to raise money for the Child Welfare League Foundation. These four hundred-plus participants joined in a “ten people, eleven-legged slow race” and together raised TWD580,000 (just over USD19,000) in the hope of ‘bringing more to life’ for the underprivileged children of Taiwan.

In total, the A S Watson Global Volunteer Team, comprised over 15,000 local ASW staff and their family members worldwide, donated over HKD11 million to charitable causes and participated in more than 53,000 loving gestures during the month of October 2011. Upwards of 15,000 people benefited from these donations and gestures, including underprivileged children, mentally or physically disabled citizens and cancer survivors.

“This was such an inspiring first year,” said Mr van Breen, reflecting on the success of the Global Volunteer Month. “It has been heartening to see our theoretical discussions in May 2011 successfully materialise in October and to see the incredible progress made.”

Plans are already in the works for the 2012 Global Volunteer Month, also slated for October, according to Mr van Breen. “It was great to see everyone come together like this. I know that we have touched the lives of many of our customers, and that feels really good.” 

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