



A TSI team helped the hungry and homeless by lacing up for the Thanksgiving Day Trot for Hunger to raise money for So Others Might Eat. Photo courtesy TSI

Jefferson Awards

TSI feeds tomorrow's leaders

By Jarondakie Patrick

Transformation Systems Inc. is always thinking about tomorrow when it gives today.

The Arlington company's community outreach program, Feed to Lead, focuses on nurturing local youths and molding future leaders by supporting four organizations: Marine Toys for Tots Foundation Literacy Program, So Others Might Eat (SOME), Equal Footing Foundation and KISS Institute for Practical Robotics. Last year, that support included sponsoring the Run!Geek!Run! 8K race, volunteering with high school kids and designing robots for science competitions.

TSI founder and CEO Marta Wilson says the robot competition was one of the coolest things she has seen. "After school, children go the clubhouses and learn so much about science, engineering and math," she says.

The company, which has a staff of 28, offers paid time off to participate in community outreach and a carpool for early-morning service projects. Once employees sign a sheet to volunteer at an event, the company takes care of registration and parking, Wilson says.

Feed to Lead has turned into a family business of sorts. Employees recruit their spouses and children to volunteer. "One initiative, a staff's son brought about 15 people from his cross-country team," Wilson says.

TSI also provides support to the volunteer initiatives of its out-of-state employees and describes them in a newsletter. "It has created a cohesiveness that is magical and spiritual," Wilson says.

TSI has about 16 events planned for 2012, including SOME's Empty Bowls project. Artists design bowls for participants, who pay a fee to have a bowl of soup for supper, then talk about the issues surrounding homelessness. Feed to Lead plans to have bowls for

Transformation Systems Inc.

Location: Arlington

What it does: Executive strategies and management systems engineering

Leadership: Marta Wilson, CEO and founder

Employees: 28

Total philanthropy budget: \$31,600 in 2011, 0.5 percent of total budget

Community work: Gives employees paid time off for service projects, covers registration, parking and other necessities. TSI has established multiyear earmarks to fund its nonprofit recipients.

What is a Jefferson Award? A national nonprofit program that was formed 39 years ago to create a Nobel Prize for public service and now recognizes companies that build community service into their corporate culture. The Washington Business Journal will feature local nominees monthly and submit its 2011 finalist for the national awards gala in June.



the TSI staffers who live out of state so they can participate too.

TSI's goal is to move its philanthropy budget to 1 percent. It is budgeting \$40,000 this year, compared with last year's budget of roughly \$31,000. Aside from increasing volunteer hours the company plans to use new revenue to help increase the budget.

"We just signed a book deal. The proceeds for the new book will go to our four charities," Wilson says. "It's not an option in our opinion not to contribute a percentage of our budget to charity."

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including the Community Outreach & Development Center, The Children's Inn, Housing and Community Services of Northern Virginia, the Fauquier County Food Bank, Share & Service, Mother Catherine Spalding School, ASK Foundation and Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services.

● **BB&T** gave a \$5,000 donation to Volunteers of America Chesapeake.

● **Salon Antoine and Spa** of Fairfax and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington helped replenish 63 food pantries across 21 counties in Northern Virginia with their most recent food drive.

To submit your company's good work, email washingtonbusinessleads@bizjournals.com.

Good Works

Thrift store is generous giver

Unique Thrift Store in Silver Spring donated \$100,000 in the form of gift cards that can be redeemed at the store to buy clothing, winter coats, school supplies, shoes, furniture, housewares and other necessities.

Below are other local companies and organizations that performed recent good works:

● **Sheehy Auto Stores Inc.** donated \$55,000 to charities in the Washington area

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