Common Impact showcases corporate innovation for Pro Bono Week
 Charles Schwab and Marriott International launch new models

New York, October 27, 2015 -- Common Impact, a nonprofit that pioneered corporate skills-based volunteering as a resource for strengthening local communities, showcased two new models of corporate pro bono service during Pro Bono Week (#PBW15, October 26th –30th).

These models, led by Fortune 500 companies Charles Schwab and Marriott help answer two critical questions that have arisen for companies as skills-based volunteering has gained popularity in recent years: How do you truly integrate pro bono service into your company’s culture and how do you bring it to scale?

“Skills-based volunteering has gained significant attention from the business community in recent years because of the deep impact it has on a company’s nonprofit partners, and the experiential learning opportunity it provides to employees,” stated Common Impact CEO Danielle Holly. “Still, companies are trying to figure out how to make these programs work for the specific talents and resources they bring to bear. Charles Schwab and Marriott have figured out how to shape skills-based volunteering in a way that brings the most value possible to their communities and their employees.”

Fostering a Culture of Innovation
Last week, Marriott piloted a Community Innovation Challenge as part of Innovation Days, a three day event that incubates creativity in its employees. The Community Innovation Challenge, designed and facilitated by Common Impact, channeled that innovation skill set to support partner Capital Area Food Bank in transforming their volunteers into life-long advocates for addressing hunger in the DC metro area. The challenge brought Marriott employees into a friendly competition with each other to identify new ways to inspire CAFB volunteers to join the fight against hunger.

“The ability to innovate is a critical part of our culture, ” said Anna Mancebo, Vice President insight + strategy + innovation. “We’re constantly identifying ways in which we can design new products, services and experiences for our customers across the globe. We saw an opportunity to direct those talents towards solving challenges outside of Marriott’s walls -- to support a community partner that’s working to alleviate hunger in our hometown.”

Several community members, CAFB volunteers and staff members joined each Marriott team and the panel of judges that selected the winning solution.
"Having the expertise of the Capital Area Food Bank staff side-by-side with our teams of Marriott employees really helped identify creative but feasible solutions,” said Mari Snyder, Vice President, CSR at Marriott. “Hunger and food scarcity is a key CSR issue Marriott works to address globally. The Capital Area Food Bank is a long-time community partner of ours with a proven model of success. It was a perfect match.”

At the end of the challenge, Marriott announced that it would provide Capital Area Food Bank seed funds to implement the winning solution. When asked to reflect on the day, the verdict came through loud and clear. “Let’s do it again!” exclaimed Marriott employee Julie Halstead.

Bringing Pro Bono to Scale
Meanwhile, across the country, San Francisco-based financial services giant Charles Schwab launched its Pro Bono Challenge, a six-week-long period during which day-long strategic consulting sessions engage more than 50 nonprofits and nearly 300 employees across six key regions: San Francisco, Chicago, Denver, Indianapolis, Orlando, and Phoenix. The Pro Bono Challenge selects predominately senior level Schwab professionals with expertise in marketing, finance, operations, strategy technology, human relations and client relations and matches them with community partners that are in need of that specific expertise in order to expand the impact of their services. Each of the Schwab teams in the six regions spend a full day consulting with the selected nonprofits in order to help them achieve targeted goals. Schwab incubated the model in 2014 to better understand how it could quickly scale to all of its regions.

“We knew we could make a significant, lasting impact if we offered nonprofit access to professional expertise of Schwab employees right in their home town,” said Carrie Schwab-Pomerantz, president and chair of Charles Schwab Foundation. “By sharing local Schwab employees’ deep expertise and intellectual capital across multiple business disciplines, our nonprofit partners will be better able to leverage their own strengths and maximize their impact in their local communities. We are thrilled to ramp up our pro bono efforts on a greater scale this year and look forward to expanding this work in years to come.”

One of the key elements of scale has been to equip leaders on the ground to steward the program with support from the Schwab Community Services team at Schwab headquarters in San Francisco. A Schwab employee from each region was selected and trained to implement the program in a way that fit the local culture, employee base and nonprofit organizations.

The results have been powerful. Barrie Hathaway, Executive Director of The Stride Center, a recipient of Schwab’s pro bono services, said ”We didn’t have an ‘ah-ha’ moment, we had an ‘ah-ha’ two hours. It was invaluable to tell our story and have the team reflect it back to us. We came here to work on a piece of new collateral – we’re leaving with not just new collateral but an entirely new way of marketing ourselves.”

W www.commonimpact.org
E info@commonimpact.org
P 617.492.3105
A PURPOSE-DRIVEN WORKFORCE.
A STRONGER COMMUNITY.

Schwab Employees are also reaping the benefits. Susan Forman, vice president of public relations at Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., said “The freedom to be creative was such a gift. It was very gratifying to see the impact of our work.”

Schwab’s Pro Bono Challenge is estimated to provide $350,000 in value to the participating nonprofit participants during this inaugural year. For more information, visit http://www.aboutschwab.com/community).

About Common Impact
Common Impact is a nationally-recognized nonprofit that works to build a society in which individuals and businesses invest their unique talents towards a shared purpose: strengthening the local communities in which we live and work. Founded in 2000, Common Impact has partnered with Fortune 500 companies and hundreds of the country’s leading nonprofit organizations to create this transformational change through skills-based volunteering. Learn more about Common Impact’s services, impact, and clients.